



॥ साधारण्य भाष्यम् ॥

# SĀDHARṂYA BHĀṢYAM

People - Culture - Places

VOLUME II • ISSUE 2 • JULY - DECEMBER 2023 • HALF YEARLY



Literature

Folklore

Crafts

Trends

Life Style

Festival

Opinion

Film

Language

Fine Art

Cover Story

## Folk Theatre of Uttarakhand



साधर्म्य भाष्यम्

SĀDHARMYA BHĀSYAM

People - Culture - Places

Volume II- Issue 2- July-December 2023- Half Yearly

**PATRON**

Dr. Davis Varayilan

**MANAGING DIRECTOR**

Shaiju Njezhungan

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Renish Antony

**EDITORIAL BOARD**

Dr. Benny Thettayil

Dr. Paulachan Kochappilly

Dr. Naiju Kalambukattu

Vinod Padinjarekaithackal

Sijo Muthanattu

Sebeesh Vettiyadan

Dr. Anoop Pynadath

**ADVISORY BOARD**

Dr. Augustine Keemattam

Dr. John Chakkanattu

Prof. D R Purohit

George Thekkekara

**DESIGN**

Sinoj Antony

Davis Varghese

**EDITORIAL OFFICE**

Sadharmyam

Research and Dialogue Center

Upper Bhaktiyana, Srinagar

Pauri District, UK-246174

Tel: 01346-252884

Mob: 9870837140 | 9412079619

Email: sadharmyam@gmail.com,

rmanuvely@gmail.com

“Whatever is true,  
whatever is honourable,  
whatever is just,  
whatever is pure, whatever is lovely,  
whatever is commendable,  
if there is any excellence,  
if there is anything worthy of praise,  
think about these things.”  
(Philippians 4:8)

# CONTENTS

## COVER STORY

- ▶ **Folk Theatre of Uttarakhand**  
Towards Formulation of a Poetics  
[Prof. D R Purohit]
- ▶ **Uttarakhand's Ramlila**  
Delving into the Depths of Dramatic Heritage  
[Dr. Rakesh Batt]
- ▶ **Harmony in Art and Heritage**  
Exploring Kumaon's Unique Ramlila Tradition  
[Dr. Suchitra Awasthi]
- ▶ **The Tradition of Ramman**  
A Celebration of Heritage, Dance, and Faith in Uttarakhand  
[Jothish Gildiyal]
- ▶ **The Pandavalila of Kedar Valley**  
Unveiling the Epic Drama  
[Acharya Krishnanand Nautiyal]
- ▶ **Theatrical Flourish in Hilljatra**  
An Ode to Rural Traditions  
[Kailash Kumar]
- ▶ **Khelutha Comedy Theatre**  
Preserving Traditions and Cultural Heritage  
in Jaunsar - Bawar's Unique Diwali Celebrations  
[Dr. Nandlal Bharati]
- ▶ **Dhol's Resonance**  
An Integral Rhythm in Uttarakhand's Folk Theatre  
[Girish Badoni]



08

28



36

42



50

56



75



60



68



82



78



88

## INTERVIEW

Preserving Garhwal's Cultural Ensemble :  
A Profound Journey with Prof. D R Purohit

## OPINION

संस्कृति का संस्कार  
[Dr. Paulachan Kochapilly]

## LEGACY

Messmore's Legacy :  
An Outstanding Chapter  
in the Educational History of Uttarakhand  
[Dr. Yogesh Dhasmana]

## MUSINGS

Back to the Source  
[Yann Vagneux]

## ART SERIES

Lippan kaam :  
A Craft Form Blending Art and Utility  
[Sebeesh Vettiyan]

## WISDOM SERIES

Brahmagupta :  
Breakthroughs in Mathematics and Astronomy  
[Prof. Francis Arackal]

# THEATRE

## An Artistic Pursuit Towards an Ideal State of Being



Renish Manuvely

The theatre, a dynamic manifestation of human creativity, holds profound significance in reflecting the cultural, social, and technological nuances of different epochs. From ancient rituals and classical performances to modern experimental productions, theatre, has evolved as a mirror of human expression, capturing the essence of diverse civilizations and their ever-changing narratives. Theatre today stands out as significant medium to address the pressing issues, fostering a sense of relevance and immediacy. The stage has become a space for dialogue, introspection, and societal reflection, engaging audiences with thought-provoking narratives that resonate with the complexities of the present moment.

It is also seen that the various approaches and development to this art form has opened up the horizon to speculate this discipline from various dimensions and perspectives. This expansion has facilitated the incorporation of a wide spectrum of interpretations and expressions. The deconstruction patterns reflected in theatre, theatres from the feminist lens, emphasising the ecological themes and interconnectedness are the various illustrations of the new perspectives and expressions of theatre today.

traditions.

In this regard, delving into the origin of the human pursuit of these artistic endeavours becomes imperative. The exploration of why humans engage in such pursuits and the underlying reasons for their creative endeavours has long been a subject of serious speculation. Numerous thinkers have offered profound insights into these questions. William James in his seminal psychological work *The Principles of Psychology* explains that theatre,



*“We know that the wildest  
and most moving dramas  
are played not in the theatre but  
in the hearts of ordinary  
men and women.”  
(New Paths in Psychology,  
Collected Works of C J Jung)*

as a profound and timeless artistic pursuit of humankind, emerges from two intrinsic instincts deeply embedded in our nature: the instinct of imitation and the instinct of harmony and rhythm. The instinct of imitation speaks to our inherent desire to mirror and understand the world around us, while the instinct of harmony and rhythm reflects our innate connection to the rhythmic and harmonious patterns that permeate existence.

Perhaps, this psychological speculation based on instinctual nature of human being connects the innate quest of humankind for perfection. Throughout history, we observe that humanity has embarked on varied journeys in its pursuit of the ideal state of being. In this regard, theatre, which is an artistic pursuit is one of the distinct paths that humankind is chosen for his pursuit of perfection. Carl Jung, the founder of analytical psychology, sheds light on the profound nature of this artistic quest. According to Jung, theatre as an art form is one of the significant sources through which one is able to realize the real self. The characters displayed in the narratives are nothing but archetypal images situated in the deep layers of the psyche, labelled as the collective unconscious. With this profound insight on theatre, he wrote, “We know that the wildest and most

moving dramas are played not in the theatre but in the hearts of ordinary men and women.” (New Paths in Psychology, Collected Works of C J Jung).

All the creative endeavours of humankind in this regard are an attempt to unfold this deeper realm of the psyche. This process of unveiling gradually exposes one’s own real self. In Jungian terms, the journey towards wholeness or individuation depends on how clearly an individual can perceive their real self.

Indian thinkers provide a metaphysical foundation for the artistic quest of human beings. Abhinavagupta, a distinguished thinker in Aesthetics, emphasizes the transcendent nature of theatre in his work *Abhinavbharati* while he delineates on the aesthetic delight known as *Rasa*. According to him, *Rasa*, which is the essence of all artistic expressions is not of mundane but a reflection of supreme bliss itself. तत एवविशेषान्तरानुपाहित्वात् सारसानियासती न लौकिकी न मिथ्यानिर्वाच्या न लौकिकतुल्या न तदारोपादिरूपा। “This perception is apt to become the object of a relish, and, as such, it is neither a form of ordinary cognition, nor it is erroneous, nor ineffable, nor like ordinary perception, nor does it consist of a superimposition.”

Hence, through the medium of performance, individuals embark on a sacred journey, transcending the mundane and connecting with the divine essence that resides within the aesthetic experience. The inner delight, which reflects the supreme bliss is what captivates the audience and drew them to such performance. A few episodes of Ramlila that I had the chance to watch this year at Bhaktiyana village in Srinagar Garhwal can be associated with the depth and significance of this aesthetic delight.

Traditionally, Ramlila performances are conducted during the Navaratri festival; however, the organizing committee in this village organized



*This perception is apt to  
become the object of a relish, and, as  
such, it is neither a form of ordinary  
cognition, nor it is erroneous,  
nor ineffable, nor like ordinary  
perception, nor does it consist  
of a superimposition.  
(Abhinavbharati)*

moments. The passion of Sita and the challenges of Rama becomes theirs. This identification with their gods fulfils the inner gratification of inherent quest within. These gratifications ultimately assist in unveiling one's own true identity itself, which is rooted in the cultural fabric of a society.

I believe therefore, this profound understanding is necessary to uplift the folk traditions especially the folk theatrical forms. These folk forms, which are reflections of our inner reality has the healing power with the potential to balance the rhythm of life. Moreover, they play a crucial role in preserving and transmitting cultural heritage as it reflects the values, norms and shared experiences of the community.

In this respect the folk theatre of Uttarakhand holds a significance in current discourse. Uttarakhand stands as a repository of rich folk theatre traditions, many of which remain undiscovered and unexplored. Unfortunately, due to a lack of appropriate preservation methods, a considerable number of these traditions have faded into obscurity today. Prof. DR Purohit, a distinguished scholar in this field, who has taken the initiative to document the folk traditions of Uttarakhand



# FOLK THEATRE OF UTTARAKHAND

Towards Formulation of a Poetics



*By Joy Elakunnappuzha*

The traditional folk theatre forms in Uttarakhand, deeply ingrained in the fabric of local communities, range from ritualistic enactments associated with myths and traditions to processional dramas and entertaining plays. The vibrant theatre traditions are characterized by their diverse content, performances, ritual spaces, musicality, vibrant costumes, gestures, and interaction with the audience.



**Prof. D R Purohit**

These forms based on their association with rituals and processions, detailing the specific theatrical elements, performances, the involvement of characters, the background music, costumes and gestural expressions with the audience. The significance and aesthetic evolution of these performances, reflecting how they have become an integral part of Uttarakhand's cultural ethos.



Photo Credit DR Purohit

*Burdeva play at National School of Drama in Delhi*



## I THE TRADITIONAL FORMS

The Traditional forms, which by Indian and western theories qualify for the definition and category of folk theatre have been classified as follows:

### 01. Plays Performed During the Processional Rituals

#### (A) Pandava Theatre

For Pandvas a ritual dance performance is held in several villages of Ganga and Yamuna Valleys for durations ranging from 15 to 90 days, as pandavas are treated as their ancestors by the Khetriys of Garhwal. During the ritual, dramatic enactments of several episodes of folk Mahabharata are presented, using full dramatic and theatrical texts, costume, make up, and dialogue exchanges. The performances are listed hereunder:

##### (i) Ritual as Drama

- (a) *Gainda* (Rhinoceros) killing and *Shradha* to Pandavas.
- (b) *Moru Dwar* (A ritual of bringing a tree from Khandara Forest).
- (c) *Kangra Ka Jogi* (Bheem as an ascetic from Kangra).
- (d) *Hathi - Duryodhana* (Slaying of Duryodhana)

##### (ii) Drama as an Entertaining Adjunct of the Primary Ritual

Drama serves as an entertaining adjunct to the primary ritual, featuring episodes such as *Chakravyuh*, *Garur Vyuh*, *Kamal Vyuh*, *Makar Vyuh*, *Suchi Vgroh*, *Kiyān Danu*, *Kalangiri Danu*, *Kulneti*, *Gajari Mariyam*, *Nathu Pande*, *Kashi Gaman*, and *Chorvanya*.

##### (iii) Performance Space

*Vyuh* performances are held in open fields where

the topography is amphitheatrical. The circular or elliptical arrays are drawn up with the help of colorful saris, tied to bamboo sticks. The performances last for about three hours each.

#### (iv) Music

##### (a) Vocal

The typical lyrical lines in fire metre called *Pandwani* are used for dialogues. The narrative parts are sung by the drummers in fixed metric lines.

##### (b) Instrumental

Instrumental music is supplied with the pair of *Dhol* and *Damun* and *Bhankoras* (long trumpets), cymbals, bells and gong. The background music to processions, battles and choreography is supplied by the instruments. They keep the potentials of processions of the artiste alive and enhance the scope of empathy.

#### (v) Costume

The costume is long white frocks, satin cross belts and tall turbans. The colour of the costume changes as per the status of the character. Women wear bodices and ghagras.

#### (vi) Gestures

The gestures used are typically ritual. Meeting is mimed by embracing, salutations, by touching one's and own forehead, challenges by thumping the thigh muscles.

#### (vii) Audience

The audience stands in circles or semi circles. During the performance the audience appears to be unattentive, but unconsciously follows the text of the play.

#### (B) Bagdwali

Bagdwals are worshiped as gods of the land. The myth of the protagonist Jeetu Bagdwal is re-enacted during the ritual. Jeetu was a handsome, talented and romantic chieftain with the tragic





Photo Credit DR Purohit



Photo Credit Jyothish



Photo Credit DR Purohit

*Mask Dance Theatres of Uttarakhand: Hilljatra at Pithoragarh (left above), Ramman (left below), and Dance theatre at Lata village in Chamoli (right).*

weakness for beautiful women and music. In pursuit of the most beautiful women he confronts mountain fairies, who take him away body and soul and eventually the Bagdwal family is ruined.

During the ritual the following theatric performances takes place: -

#### **(i) Ritual as Drama**

Ritual takes a dramatic on the following occasions:

- Fixation of plantation date
- Fairy encounter
- Meeting with the beloved.
- *Ropni* (puddy plantation)

#### **(ii) Performance Space**

The ritual dramas and entertaining comedies are presented in the arena, where the ritual is held.

#### **(iii) Medium of rendition**

The ritual dramas are rendered through dance, choreography, melodious songs and rhythmic music of Dhol and Damaun.

#### **(iv) Music**

The vocal dialogues in free long verses and the rhythmic poetry sung to the drums are used. Trumpets, cymbals and twin flute are used for the background music too.



### (v) Audience

The audience is local and become very sentimental to the catastrophe of Bagdwals.

### (C) Sahaja Devi

Sahaja devi is the ritual enactment of the apotheosis of a young girl to divinity. A Keatriya girl, who fell in love with a high lander called Dhuliya Marcha, had to become sati with her husband, who was poisoned by Sahaja's step mother. She was consecrated as a goddess. Her love story and death are reenacted every third year in Sirwadi village of Rudraprayag district.

### (D) Goril or Gollu

Golu was a kind and miraculous king of Champawat. After being killed by deceit, Gollu became a god and is worshipped all over the hills of Uttarakhand. Two episodes of his life are presented as entertaining drama.

(i) Conspiracy of the seven queens of Jhalurdi against Golu as baby.

(ii) Conflict between Golu and Kaintura.

## 02. Plays performed during the Processional Rituals.

Pattar is the term used for masked character acting

out their parts in the arena. The pattar takes place on two occasions.

Processional journey is made from village to village of the deities like, Jakh, Dwari, Chandika, Kans and Ksetrapal. Every night, some 18 characters donning masks represent the personages of scriptures-humans and animals - and dance and act in the arena for the processional period of the six months. Narad or Burdeva weaves together all the characters with the theme of mimesis of various aspects of life. The characters dance to the song sung by Bhan, the director of the performance.

Narad, Vaidi-Vaida, Ganpati-Ganesh, Ksetrapal, Kanonu, Ishwara, Lata-Lati, Ganna-Gunni, Narsimha, Varah, Harin, Chittal, Bagh, Ram, Laxman, Sita and Hanuman are the character or Pattars. Narad also enacts the contemporary themes like Indian parliamentary election.

### 03. Non-Processional Pattars

The same pattars are presented on and around Baisakhi festival in and around Joshimath town in Alaknanda valley.

#### (A) Mask Dance Dramas of Hiljatra

Hiljatra is of the most spectacular and powerful form of the mask dance -dramas of Pithoragarh district. Hiljatra is held in about 12 villages of Sor Valley and the chief of them are Kumor, Balkot, Bajethi, Shatgarh, Tharkot, Kanaalicheena.

#### (B) Bardic Theatre

The bards given the duty to entertain and maintain record of family history, presented two forms of drama:

##### (i) Talwar

The ballads of the warriors of the past are presented through narrations and songs interspersed with dance choreography. The lead singer is assisted by the group of male and female singers, which pick up



Photo Credit DR Purohit

*Chakravayuh Episode of Pandava lila: Abhimanyu is brought to the war.*



Photo Credit DR Purohit

*Planting seedlings in Jeetu Bagdwal outfit.*



Photo Credit DR Purohit

*Hulkia Baul (Labour and Ballad)*

from his narrative cue and sing and dance.

### **(ii) Swang**

Swangs are the comic depiction of certain situations and characters. The traditional Swangs extant are Albeli, Jangli Mahar Bandukya and Budullu. Most of such Swangs were rich in amority.

### **(C) Khels of Diwali**

In the villages of Yamuna Valley, there are comic plays satirizing certain characters and situations. The plays do not have a fixed text and are produced impromptu. Only two plays called "Harya" and "Harin" have a fixed text.

### **(D) Swangs of Holi and Rateli**

During Holi season, the women in Kumaun improvise comedies enjoying their roles as males and satarize hitting at the oddities of the society. A large number of comic plays are produced every year.

The same kind of Swangs are produced impromptu on the night of wedding, when all the males have gone to the bride's house and only female are left in the groom's village.

Swangs were also a common form of dramatic presentation in all the villages, which found expressions on the occasion of festivals like Diwali and Holi and ritual celebration like

Pandava dance. Now the Swangs have found a new platform in Ramlila performances, when the local artiste create and present a rich and fertile variety of Swangs.

## **II RAMLILA**

Uttarakhand's Ramlila performance, being absolutely musical, holds special significance among other Ramlila performances of North India.

In 1860, Bhawani Dutt Joshi wrote and staged a Ramlila script in Almora town on the proactive support of the local majistrate, S.D.Joshi. The Lila was performed sans break until 1883, when Bhawani Dutt Joshi published his Ramlila text. Since then, the script and the performative text has been travelling from place to place and this excellent musical performance is held for 10 days every year during the Dussehra festival and in some villages in the free times of May-June.

## **III AESTHETICS OF THEATRE**

The theatre has its typical poetics of performance, which may reflect the tenets summarized by Richard Schechner in *Environmental Theatre* (1973). but which stand as independent processes having been evolved in the cultural and artistic ecology of the Central Himalaya. The main traits are given below.



*Processional theatre 'Chandika' at Gopeshwar*

### 1. Deliberately Distancing from Histrionics

The murti itself is abhinaya and its sattvic abhinaya is brought out by continuously living in a particular sthayi bhava. Even the dialogues supposed to be spoken by the dramatic personae are sometimes uttered by the drummer or the pandit.

### 2. Thrust on the Angika and Vachik Abhinaya

There is the maximum scope and space for exhibiting the talent of the actor involved here. The famous comic characters appear in almost every form of the folk theatre. The very protagonist in the mask dramas performed during the night halt of the procession of Jakh, Chandika, Dwaari, Krishna, Guanidyl and Narada uses both the witty and farcical humour, while enacting Puranic events and the continuum of the chores of daily life.

### 3. Frequently Mixing Sport and Theatre

Fixing the locale of an event, for example Morudaar makes prefixes the norms of the play. In a sport like fashion the characters of the play

run around the fields scarring away the noisy children.

The audience collected from all around and up and down the stepped fields also rush along with the characters, shouting, and cheering up.

### 4. Possession and Rasanubhuti

There is an intriguing parallel between the emotional experiences in theatrical performances and ritual

practices. There are instances of possession happening during dramatic scenes, especially in performances such as Chakravyooh and Ramlila. They witnessed ritual performers being overcome by trance during particular dramatic scenes, suggesting a convergence between theatrical and ritual techniques. Interviews with ritual performers revealed that possession occurs in specific sacred settings, yet it requires more than just the ambiance or music; it hinges on a combination of a complete poetic narrative, melodious voices, and powerful accompanying music. While the initial stages of emotional engagement in both theatre and ritual performances seem similar, the final stage in ritual dance elevates the performer into another dimension, resulting in a transcendental experience akin to "Brahmanand sahodaram," as described by Abhinavgupta.

### 5. Choice of the Colours for Costume and Property

The choice of colours for the costumes in folk theatre is usually bright red, maroon, blue and green. But the colours chosen for comic characters are the duller grey and ruffled. Characters in Pandav Lila, Ramman, Gulu, and Mahasu wear long cloaks superimposed by colourful cross-belts. The performer of the goddess wears the brightest of all costumes—bright shining red cloak and turban.

### 6. Tendency to Ritualize the Mundane and Secularize the Ritual

There is a strong tendency of secularizing a ritual situation by asking the character to sit down and have a cup of tea. The characters sometimes bow down to the village elders. Or there are cases when the characters of Kauravas generally wear wrist watches and sunglasses during the performance. On the contrary, two wives of Naarad playing comic strips have also to be given sacred paste and rice.

### 7. Rituals and Enactments Interspersed

In this folk theatre the script runs through a linear movement and is often punctuated by ritual happenings. The Chakravayuh play begins with a dancing ritual, is followed by a dramatic sequence, and is supported by a coconut sacrifice when Abhimanyu is killed. Any killing in a play becomes ritual killing and has to be attenuated in effect, by a sacrifice

### 8. Arena Performances

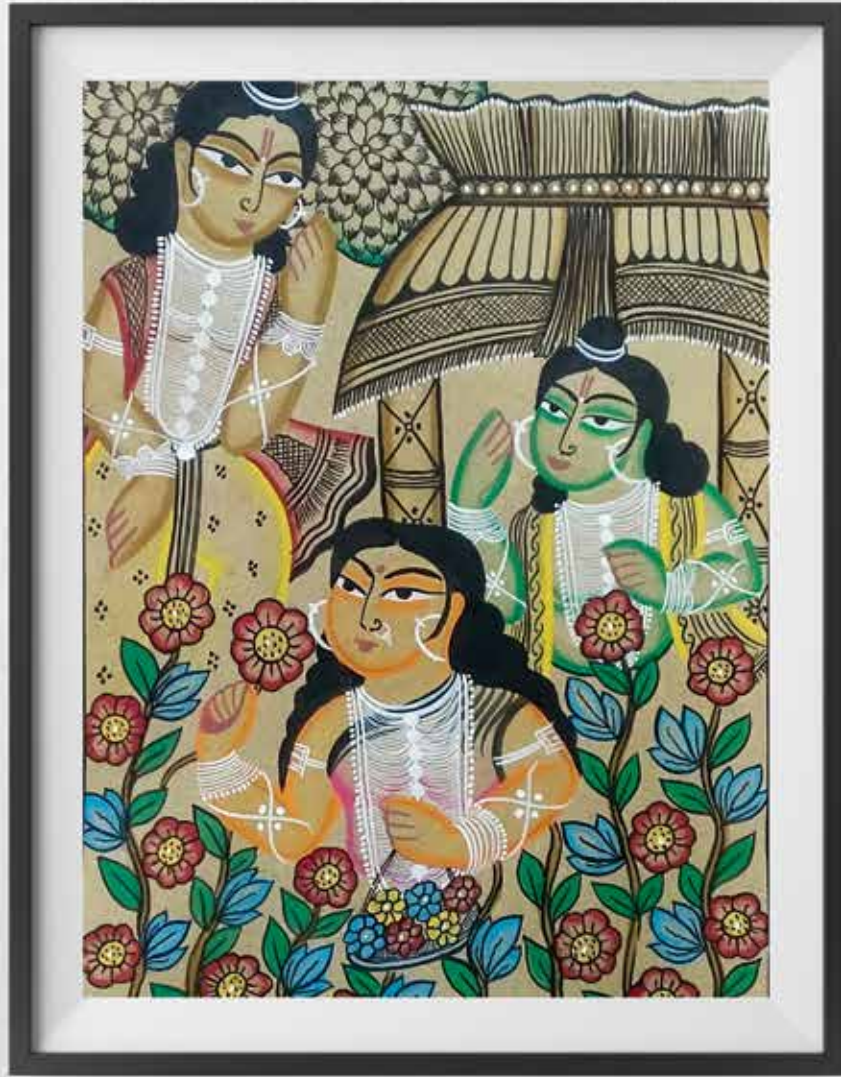
All folk theatre performances, except Ramlila, are held in an arena or in the cultivated fields outside. The most adequate arena structures were built in the temple yards where Pandava Lila and Bagdwali etc were held. Some such famous arenas were present in front of the temples of Joshimath,

Lata, Gopeshwar, Hat (Alaknanda Valley), Makkoo, Okhimath, Naalaa, Fyogu, Agastyamuni, Silla, Munyaal (Kedar valley) Baraahaat, Palethi, Devprayag, Maneri (Bhagirathi valley) Hanol, Lakhamandal, Devalsari, Gundiyatgaun (Yamuna Valley). ■

## The Performance Spaces

The folk plays in village public spaces primarily revolved around mythological stories like Pandava Lila, Bagdwali, Golju, Sahja Devi, Jakh Devta Ki Yatra, Nirankar Most Manav, and more. The performance spaces consisted of a room or chamber enclosed by three walls, where plays unfolded in the glow of centrally placed burning lamps. Over time, the traditional torches were replaced by lanterns, petromax, bulbs, and today, these plays are illuminated by floodlights. Initially performed in any available room, a Yavanika (curtain) was set up near the stage, with characters making entrances accompanied by the beats of Dhol-Damau, sometimes entering from doors outside the courtyard.

The traditional dramas in various temples across Uttarakhand were hosted in the courtyards of these sacred structures. The Tons Valley, Yamuna Valley, Bhagirathi Valley, Lastar Valley, Mandakini Valley, Dhauri Ganga Valley, and Nayar Valley each contributed to this rich tapestry of cultural performances. Temples such as Someshwar, Rudreshwar, Ganga, Kedarnath, and countless others became the cultural stages for these vibrant folk theatre traditions, showcasing the deep-rooted connection between spirituality and the performing arts in Uttarakhand.



# UTTARAKHAND'S RAMLILA

Delving into the Depths of  
Dramatic Heritage



**Dr. Rakesh Batt**

*Dr. Rakesh Bhatt from Mangoli, Ukhimath, is a seasoned artist with 30 years of experience in folk and Hindi theatre, folk singing, film, and documentary work. As the director of Utsav Group in Uttarakhand since 2013, he has contributed significantly to institutions like the National School of Drama and the Indira Gandhi National Center for Arts. Currently, he serves as a Theater and Arts Professor at Doon University, Dehradun.*

Since ancient times, Uttarakhand has been associated with the Rambhakti tradition. According to the statement of Dr. Shivprasad Naithani, in Valmiki Ramayana, the first epic of Shri Ram Katha, there is mention of giving this region as a kingdom to the sons of Lakshman, “which is delightful and fearless. Since then, i.e., two thousand years ago, it should be assumed that the worship of Shri Ram, Lakshman, Sita and Hanuman was being propagated here for a long time.

## Historical Development and Regional Impact

Dr. Vishnudutt Kukreti writes in this regard: King Dilip’s service to Nandini cow in Vashishtha’s ashram, Vashishtha cave, Dashrath’s Danda, Kamleshwar Temple (Srinagar), Raghunath temple (Devprayag), Ramasirai, Ramashram Badarikaashram, Hanuman’s mountain are plots of the Lila. It is proved from the stories of taking medicine etc., that in the Himalayas Ram is not being forcibly associated with the worships but he is automatically closely associated with it. According to Shivcharan Pandey, editor of Purvasi Patrika, in 1860, Badridat Joshi Sadar Amil of Danya had organized the first Ramlila at Badreshwar Maidan in Almora. It is also believed that Shri Devi Dutt Joshi first organized Ramlila on Parsi basis on Kumaoni lines in Bareilly and Moradabad in 1830 and it was by him that Ramlila was staged in Almora in 1860, which was later renamed as Badridatt Joshi, and Govind Lal Shah and others took it forward.

According to popular belief, due to the efforts of Durga Sah ji, the first staging of Ramlila took place in Nainital in 1897. In 1902, Leela was presented

by Ganga Ram Punetha in Pithoragarh. Similarly, in 1930, Shiv Lal Shah started staging Ramlila in Bageshwar. It is also described that due to the efforts of Janakinath Joshi, Kumaoni Ramlila was performed in Shimla in 1931.

## Ramlila Tradition in Dehradun

In Garhwal, Ramlila of Srinagar has an important place from the religious ritual point of view. This Ramlila has been happening during Dussehra for centuries. According to Nityanand Maithani, "Many Ramlila tunes have been included in the poems of the famous poet and late Amba Shayar, born in Srinagar in 1817. For this reason, he is called the father of Ramlila of Srinagar.

In 1896, a meeting was held in Kamleshwar Temple under the chairmanship of the then Mahant Shri Dayal Puri in which it was decided to start Ramlila. Ramlila in Srinagar is characterized by a distinctive singing style. Ragas like *Radheshyam*, *Geet*,

*Chaupaiyaan* and *Raganis* like *Malkaus*, *Bhim Palasi*, *Jaijivanti* etc. have been used in Ramlila from the beginning, Sarangi, harmonium, dholak and tabla were used among the musical instruments. But as soon as Sarangi player Fajitu left the world, Sarangi disappeared from Ramlila. An amazing feature of Srinagar Ramlila is that there is a hereditary tradition of playing the role in which the son has been playing that role after the father.

Regarding Ramlila of Devprayag, Jai Prakash Pandit notes that most of the pundits of Devprayag go to Badrinath for business and return only after the doors of the temple are closed, hence Ramlila is held here in October. Earlier, Ramlila was organized for ten days, now it is staged for fifteen days. Before the start of Ramlila, the main characters are selected so that they remain committed to performing Ramlila under certain restrictions.

There is a belief associated with this Ramlila that those who do not have children play the role of King Dasharatha and get a son. Musicians Bankelal Todariya and Govind Prasad Alkhanian had made important contributions in composing the Chaupais of Ramlila. Some of the characters are played live by Vidyadhar Dangwal (Ram), Bhagwati Prasad Kotiyal (Sita), Lakshminarayan Kotiyal (Surpanakha),



*Ramlila in Srinagar is characterized by a distinctive singing style. Ragas like Radheshyam, Geet, Chaupaiyaan and Raganis like Malkaus, Bhim Palasi, Jaijivanti etc. have been used in Ramlila from the beginning*



### *Ramlila at Bhaktiyana Village in Srinagar*

and Chandrashekhar Karnataka (Ravana). Ramlila Committee has its own beautiful stage.

Dimmer is a famous village of Chamoli district, which is the original village of Dimri caste and is especially known for its cultural traditions. According to Shri Dwarka Prasad Dimri, in 1918, a 'Gyananand Company' was opened by the great musician Shri Gyananand Dimri in which 72 artists were working at that time. This company presented Ramlila in many villages of Chamoli during that period and got a lot of fame. The day of staging Ramlila is decided by looking at the calendar on Basant Panchami festival and this Ramlila is always staged on Holi festival (March).

The prominent usage of Sanskrit in verbal

performances is evident in this Ramlila, with the Ravana-Angad sequence being particularly engaging, showing purely Sanskrit exchanges.



*The prominent usage of Sanskrit in verbal performances is evident in this Ramlila, with the Ravana-Angad sequence being particularly engaging, showing purely Sanskrit exchanges.*

The first reason for this is that the influence of Ramcharitmanas and Samayan is clearly visible on the script of Lila and the second reason is that a Sanskrit school was established in Dimmer village in 1905-06, whose knowledge had an impact on Ramlila and its dialogues.

## The Legacy of Ramman

Dehradun has been the center of rise of many Ramlila Committees but at present only two-three committees are functioning. Dehradun's oldest organization "Shri Ramlila Kala Samiti" has been successfully staging Ramlila for almost 140 years. This Ramlila Committee was started under the patronage of highly revered Shri Guru Ram Rai.



Rakesh Bhandari, who has been associated with him for a long time, observes that Ram devotee Jamuna Das, with the help of Seth Lakshmi Chandra, wrote a book after following Tulsī's Ramayana and other Ramlilas, on the basis of which Ramlila was started. Ramlila began on the first Navratri with the installation of Kalash, regular recitation of Durga and recitation of Sunderkand. But on account of the shortage of artistes, Ramlila is organized by inviting troupes from Moradabad, Vrindavan etc. for the last five-six years.

Another Ramlila organization in Dehradun named Shri Adarsh Ramlila Committee, Dehradun, was established in 1965 by Santram Sharma. The specialty of this Ramlila is that it is staged through light and sound on five different stages.

Now I consider it necessary to discuss Lila Ramayana because this is the only Ramlila which was staged in Garhwali language. Gunanand Pathik, the father of Lila Ramayana in Garhwali language, along with his colleagues, formed "Garh Sahitya Sanskriti Vikas Parishad" on 4 April, 1977.



The Parishad gained immense popularity by organizing Garhwali Ramlila (Lila Ramayana) for fourteen consecutive years since 1977.

“Ramman” (tradition of masks) of Salud-Dugra village of Pankhanda development block in Chamoli border district of Uttarakhand was declared a World Heritage by UNESCO on October 02, 2009 with the efforts of Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts, New Delhi. Ramman means Ramlila. The main feature of this Ramman is that eighteen taals, eighteen masks, twelve drums and eight bhankoras are used in it.

Observing the Ramlilas of Garhwal reveals a notable absence of the Garhwali language, indicating a lack of effort to incorporate it into the performances. Yes, it is true that according to time and circumstances, there are changes in the staging of Lila. It has been more than a hundred years since many Ramlilas were staged, but nothing is visible except assurances in the name of protection. The persistent question is why have these cultural spectacles not evolved into celebrated fairs and festivals, or found a place within the pages of school textbooks? Perhaps it is essential to contemplate the fate of a theatrical genre before it teeters on the brink of extinction.

As we reflect on the current state of Ramlilas, it becomes evident that more proactive measures are warranted to ensure the enduring vibrancy of this rich cultural tradition, embedding it firmly within the fabric of societal consciousness and educational discourse. ■



## SOCIAL HARMONY IN PAURI RAMLILA

Pauri Ramlila stands as a beacon of cultural unity, renowned for its remarkable ability to foster social harmony through the active participation of diverse religious communities, including Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. Within this rich tapestry, key contributors have emerged as pillars of the Ramlila tradition, transcending religious boundaries.

Individuals such as Mohammad Saddiq, Jabbar, Ikram Ali, Gyan Victor, Chhote Yakub, Muddi Bhai, and Hussain have played pivotal roles, contributing to the vibrant and inclusive nature of Pauri Ramlila. Their collective efforts not only showcase the cultural integration within the performance but also underscore the power of communal collaboration in promoting harmony.

The significant role of drawing the curtain by Alam and Jalam, Mehtab Singh Ji's distinctive style in Akashvani narration, Daya Sagar Dhasmana's portrayal of Ravana, Pitambar Semwalan, and Jagdamba Pant's skillful depiction of female characters enhance the narrative depth. And the indelible mark left by Puran Chandra Thapliyal through his memorable performances contributes to the enduring appeal of Pauri Ramlila.

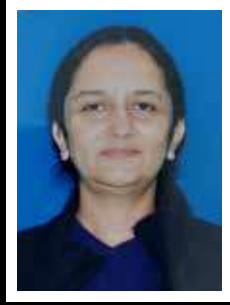
Their collective contributions, each a unique thread in the intricate fabric of this cultural phenomenon, continue to resonate, leaving a lasting impression on the audience and reinforcing the significance of cultural inclusivity within the community.

By Dr. Yogesh Dhasmana

# HARMONY IN ART AND HERITAGE

Exploring Kumaon's Unique  
Ramlila Tradition





**Dr. Suchitra Awasthi**

*Dr. Suchitra Awasthi is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Uttarakhand Open University.*

Kumaon's Ramlilas, an endangered but esteemed folk performative art, stand as a vibrant symbol of cultural heritage. This rich artistic tradition has not only gained UNESCO recognition but also offers a captivating blend of classical and folk elements, expressing a mesmerizing musical narrative. Tracing back to the nineteenth century, these performances have not only secured a place in history but have evolved into a significant cultural phenomenon. They have been a subject of academic exploration, blending music, theatre, and poetic recitations, making them an exceptional form of artistic expression. This article delves into the development and significance of Kumaon's Ramlilas, exploring their historical roots, musical expressions, and the evolving societal roles within this age-old tradition.



## The Development and the Significance of Kumaon's Ramlila

The historical roots of the Ramlilas in Uttarakhand, particularly in the Kumaon region, trace back to the nineteenth century. In 1860, the inaugural Ramlila of Kumaon graced the stage at the Badreshwar temple in Almora, the then capital of Kumaon. This pioneering effort was spearheaded by Devi Datt Joshi, the Deputy Collector of Almora and an accomplished musician. Subsequently, Ramlilas found their place in other Kumaon cities such as Nainital, Bageshwar, Pithoragarh, Champawat, and Gangolihat, among others.

The origins of Kumaon's Ramlilas are subject to debate among cultural anthropologists. Some suggest a connection with the Ramlilas of Brij in

artists, including figures like Pandit Ram Dutt Joshi, Astrologer Badri Dutt Joshi, Kundan Lal Sah, and Banke Lal Sah, have significantly contributed to popularizing Kumaon's Ramlilas. These performances have earned the moniker "Operas of Kumaon."

Academic research on the religious and cultural aspects of Northern India, particularly Ramlilas, has gained traction among scholars, both in India and the West. Researchers have delved into the aesthetics, textual analyses, performative techniques, and stylistic nuances of Ramlilas. Figures such as Induja Awasthi, Philip Lutgendorf, Paula Richman, and Richard Schechner have explored Ramlilas as a cultural expression for Hindus and the interplay of religion and the divine play of lila. While Ramlilas are staged across



Photo Credit THC

India, they are especially prominent in Rajasthan, Ramnagar, Brij, and Uttarakhand. Feminist perspectives are also being incorporated into Ramlila research.

Comprehensive studies of Uttarakhand's Ramlilas have been conducted, with notable works such as Bhawani Dutt Joshi's *Aadarsh Ramlila Natak* (1883), Chammi Lal Dhaundiya's *Sri Sampurna Ramlila*

Mathura and Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh, while others propose a link to Ramlilas from the Rajasthan region in Western India. Regardless of their origin, what sets Kumaon's Ramlilas apart is their unique musical rendition, which defines their distinct character.

Devi Datt Joshi played a pivotal role in experimenting with Kumaon's Ramlilas. He blended elements of Parsi theatre, Krishna Raslila (depicting Krishna's amorous escapades with Radha and other cowgirls), and the *Nautanki* (gimmickry) of Brij, ushering in an era of progressive experimental theater in Uttarakhand. Around 1940, renowned classical dancer Uday Shankar added further embellishments by infusing elements of classical, Western, and folk dances into the Ramlilas.

Numerous Ramlila enthusiasts, scholars, and folk *Abhinay* (1956), Anusuiya Prasad Kala's *Sanghakit Ramlila Ramayana*, and Pankaj Upreti's *Kumaoun ki Ramlila: Ek Adhyan*, which highlight the diversity and fluidity of the classical Ramlilas in the Garhwal and Kumaon regions. Legendary figures like Mohan Upereti and Himanshu Joshi have made significant contributions to Ramlila productions in Uttarakhand.

Ramlilas, traditional Indian dance forms, have garnered worldwide recognition for their musical



*Kumaon's Ramlilas are particularly unique because they are presented in verse, drawing from an oral tradition that has been passed down through generations via tradition, sermons, hymns, religious stories, and the divine play. The Kumaoni Ramlila's finesse extends to the classification of chaupais into rajasi chaupai, rakshashi chaupai, and others, each reserved for different character portrayals.*

performances in various locations, including Patonda village in Rajasthan, Ramnagar, Benaras, and the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand. While their origins may be traced back to a common source, possibly in Rajasthan during the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century, contemporary migrations have led to the growing popularity of Kumaoni Ramlilas not only in India but also overseas, including South East Asia and Trinidad and Tobago.

Ramlila holds a prestigious place in India, as evidenced by its inclusion in UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The legend of Lord Rama permeates several performing traditions, and the region of Kumaon in Uttarakhand, known for its scenic beauty and spiritual ambiance, boasts a rich cultural heritage.

Notably, efforts to document this endangered art form have begun, preserving its legacy for future generations. These Ramlilas are akin to Euro-

American opera, characterized by their grand musical enactments spanning from nine days to a month. The late Banke Lal Sah aptly referred to Kumaon's Ramlilas as the world's longest opera performances.

## Musical and Poetic Cadence in the Artistry of Kumaon's Ramlilas

In terms of music, Kumaon's Ramlilas draw from Hindustani (North Indian) Classical music, employing classical *ragas* such as *Bilawal*, *Peelu*, *Dagra*, *Jajiwanti*, *Bhairavi*, *Jhinjhoti*, and *Malkaus*, among others. These musical dialogues, the heart of Ramlila performances, require the actors to showcase both acting and singing talents. These classical ragas effectively convey the narrative and evoke a range of emotions in both performers and the audience.

The poetic metre of Kumaoni Ramlila, based on the





Ramcharitmanas, is divided into *chaupai* (four-line quatrains), *doha* (couplets), and occasionally *sorthas* and *chhandas* (two other Hindi verse forms). While Kumaon's Ramlilas share similarities with Western operas, one distinguishing feature is the exclusion of female artists. This restriction, rooted in traditional stigmas, has persisted for centuries. However, there is a growing movement breaking this gender barrier. The Badri-Kedar Samiti, an all-women Ramlila group in Karnaprayag, Uttarakhand, defied age-old norms by allowing women to participate in Ramlilas, transcending biological concerns. The emergence of women on the Ramlila stage is not only empowering but promises to inject new creativity and vibrancy into the performances.

Kumaon's Ramlilas not only bear the weight of history but also serve as an ever-evolving

cultural treasure. Their musical resonance, poetic grace, and inclusive spirit highlight a legacy worth preserving. With deep roots in tradition and a dynamic spirit embracing change, these performances stand as a testament to the resilience and adaptability of cultural heritage. The ongoing strides in breaking gender barriers and promoting inclusivity across faiths promise a future where these Ramlilas continue to enchant and reflect the diverse cultural tapestry of the region. In documenting and celebrating these performances, we honor not only the past but also ensure the longevity and relevance of Kumaon's Ramlilas for future generations. ■



COVER STORY

# THE TRADITION OF RAMMAN

A Celebration of Heritage, Dance,  
and Faith in Uttarakhand



**Jothish Gildiyal**

*Jyothish Gildiyal is a writer from Srinagar, actively involved in producing written works that focus on socio-cultural topics related to Garhwal. This is a translation from his collected works.*

Ramman, aptly named, finds its origins in the epic Indian tale of the Ramayana, which recounts the life journey of Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram, the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu. This centuries-old tradition, known as Ramman, is a distinctive Ram Katha event that has thrived in the Chamoli and Rudraprayag districts of the Garhwal division in the Central Himalayan region.

Ramman stands as a remarkable folk drama, offering a harmonious blend of singing, musical accompaniment, and traditional folk dances. It beautifully encapsulates the entire narrative, from

the birth of Lord Ram to the dramatic episode of Lanka Dahan. Notably, in the village of Salud-Dungra in the Alaknanda Valley, there is a one-day ritual presentation that focuses on the events leading up to the coronation of Shri Ram. These rituals take place during the month of Vaishakh.

## **The Development of Rama's Legacy in Uttarakhand**

Uttarakhand, known as a Shaivite region according to the Vedas and Puranas, was influenced by Shaiva-Shakta traditions due to its proximity to Parvati's Maiti region and the revered Kailash of Rudra Shiva. However, in ancient Puranas, there is a mention of Nar-Narayan performing penance for Lord Shiva in Gandhamadan, and Vishnu's request for the Badarika Ashram area is believed as the inception of Vaishnavism in Uttarakhand.

During the sixth and seventh centuries, the region witnessed the arrival of Buddhists from Tibet, contributing to the spread of atheistic beliefs. In the eighth century, Adi Shankaracharya made his debut in Uttarakhand, embarking on a journey of self-enlightenment under the Kalpa tree in Joshimath. He established the seat of Atharvaveda and discovered the idol of Lord Vishnu in the Alaknanda

region. Many followers from the southern regions also migrated here, disseminating the tales of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna through songs and dances. The wooden masks, typical of the southern traditions, found their way to Uttarakhand with these groups.

Around 1500 AD, the formation of the Vishad Garhwal state by Ajaypal played a pivotal role in the propagation of Ram Katha. Ram temples were constructed, and the performance of Ramlila commenced in temples and royal courts, especially in Srinagar. During the Bhakti movement, influential Vaishnavite saints like Ramananda and Ramanujacharya made their way to the region, further bolstering the prominence of Vaishnavism. It was during the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the Pahari style

of Ramlila began to develop, spreading to various villages throughout the region.

The stories of the Mahabharata, the struggles of the Pandavas, and the tragic tales of Kunti and Draupadi resonated deeply with the people of Uttarakhand. The character of Lord Rama, known as Yogiraj, became ingrained in the hearts and minds of the local populace, giving rise to various forms of expression such as *Ramlila*, *Ram Katha*, *Ram Sankirtan*, and *Ramman*, which continue to flourish in the region today.

Ramman is a special ceremony that takes place in conjunction with the Vishuvat Sankranti festival, which often coincides with the annual worship of the principal deity of the village or region, referred to as *Bhumyal*, *Kshetrapal*, *Bhumipal*, or *Jakh*,

*Vishwakarma oracle pierced a knife on his stomach*



Photo Credit Jothish

among other names. This tradition is particularly organized in three distinct regions:

### 1. Ramman Dance and Singing during Bhumyal Puja

This pooja is celebrated on Baisakhi in fairs held in the Mandakini Valley. The Ramman tradition is deeply rooted in these regions, with fairs held to mark Bhumyal puja.

### 2. Ramman Singing on the Occasion of Banyath

This event occurs after Jakh Devra in the Urgam area and the Rudranath-Tungnath area. It involves the singing of Ramman songs and is a significant part of the celebration.

### 3. Pattar (Mask) Dance and Ramman Singing during Bhumyal-Kshetrapal Puja

This takes place in the Alaknanda/Dhaul valley during Baisakhi. The inclusion of mask dances adds a unique dimension to the festival's festivities.

### Mask Dance and Ramman Singing of Alakananda/Dhaul Valley

Ramman, celebrated in the villages of the Pankhanda belt, traces its origins to Bhalla singers from Subhain. Although the older generation of these singers has passed on, a dedicated group of individuals from Salud-Dungra is working diligently to learn Ramman singing from the residents of Bhal village, ensuring the continuity of this unique art form. The Salud-Dungra rendition of Ramman is particularly exceptional, boasting a 500-year history with the temple of Bhumyal as its epicenter. The village celebrates an annual Puja in Baisakh, dedicated to the village deity Kshetrapal. The



*Bhumiya Devta*

festival spans 15 days and features a choir and characters performing a pantomime. The deity is ceremonially transported to the Bhumyal temple, where he stays until the end of the Ramman festival.



*Ramman stands as a remarkable folk drama, offering a harmonious blend of singing, musical accompaniment, and traditional folk dances.*



*Masked characters Baniya and his wife*

In 2008, this traditional festival was successfully showcased at the Indira Gandhi National Center for Arts in New Delhi. This ritualistic performance played a crucial role in securing Ramman's recognition as a World Intangible Heritage by UNESCO in 2009.

## Sequence of Mask Dance

Mask (Pattar) dances, an integral part of the Baisakhi festival, are meticulously handcrafted from Bhojpatra wood and grace the stage each night until the culmination of the Ramman festivities. These masks, revered as sacred representations of deities, undergo consecration through special rituals and receive daily worship. There are eight distinct sequences of mask dances, each contributing to the rich tapestry of Ramman:

1. Surya-Ishwar Pattar: In this sequence, Jagar singers narrate the origin of the universe while a character, holding the Ishwar Pattar with the Sun, performs a symbolic dance posture.
2. Ganesha-Kalinka Dance: Here, a character adorned with a Ganesha leaf engages in a spirited dance, accompanied by Jagar singing that recounts the origin of Lord Ganesha.
3. Burdeva: The comic character Burdeva takes center stage, entertaining the audience with his comical persona, flute-playing, and dance performances.
4. Sugarcane-Gunni Dance: This segment delves into the history of goiter, a condition caused by iodine deficiency prevalent in Garhwal.

5. Mvar-Mvarin Dance: This captivating dance showcases the utilization of traditional herbal medicines to treat Mvar, a cattle herder.

6. Baniya-Baniyan and Khelyari Dance: These sequences employ different rhythms to satirize local customs, food habits, lifestyles, and prevalent superstitions, offering both entertainment and cultural commentary.

7. Sunrata: It is a folk-dance drama performance, commencing from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> night and continuing until the first night of Ramman. It features various characters like priests, and workers who engage in the morning ritual within the Bhoomyal temple.

8. Ramman: The final sequence of mask dance is Ramman, where the characters sing about various incidents, perform engaging mask-wearing dances, and dance with the sign of the Bhumyal deity between episodes. This extraordinary tradition adds depth and cultural richness to the Ramman festival.

## Significance of Eighteen Taal

The significance of the 18 taals in Ramman

*Ram, Lakshman and Sita dance on drum beats*



singing and dancing cannot be overstated, as this number holds great sacred importance. Therefore, meticulous care is taken of these taals during the rituals of Ramman.

The Ramkatha ritual involves a series of dances performed by various deities, including Ram, Lakshman, Sita, and Hanuman. These rhythmic performances narrate key episodes from the Ramayana, and the episodes are divided into eighteen taals. After the completion of each taal,

*Airtal dancing with Nishan(deity) of Bhumyaal devta*





*In 2008, this traditional festival was successfully showcased at the Indira Gandhi National Center for Arts in New Delhi. This ritualistic performance played a crucial role in securing Ramman's recognition as a World Intangible Heritage by UNESCO in 2009.*

a vertical line is drawn from the square situated above the main gate of the Bhumyal temple, a task designated to a specific individual.

The commencement of this remarkable sequence begins with jagar singing, recounting the birth of Lord Rama. Subsequently, various events unfold, including Rama's journey with Vishwamitra, his visit to Janakpur, the birth of Sita, and King Janak's promise. These sequences are embellished with special presentations, such as the Mvar-Mvarin, Rama's marriage, and his triumphant return to Ayodhya.

The ritual festivities extend further to encompass a two-hour Mall dance, a folk drama depicting the final days of the Gorkha king, and an enthralling dance featuring the Puracheli character. These events culminate in a climactic battle between Rama and Ravana, during which the deity executes an enchanting and awe-

is infused with fervor and enthusiasm, evoking a palpable sense of war, with the Puracheli character symbolizing the celestial realm.

## THE CULMINATION OF RAMMAN

Bhumyal Devta, Tuna Devta, Nanda Devi, Chandika, and Bisakam embody their respective Pashwas, engaging in mystical rituals to bestow blessings upon their devotees. Following these divine events, attendees are gifted with offerings of lustrous satin clothing and sacred prasad. The ornately adorned Kandis, brimming with Ramman's masks, are transported to a chosen family's home for safekeeping until the following year.

Subsequently, amidst the harmonious beats of Dhol-Damaun players, the priest, Brahmins, laborers, and spectators embark on a procession to escort the deities to their new abode. At this sacred site, they partake in offerings of ghee, rice, and delectable sweet rotis. The day concludes with a communal dinner, and all depart with cherished memories of the Ramman festivities and the divine blessings of the Gods.



Photo Credit Jothish

*Masked characters Mvar and his wife from animal rearing community*





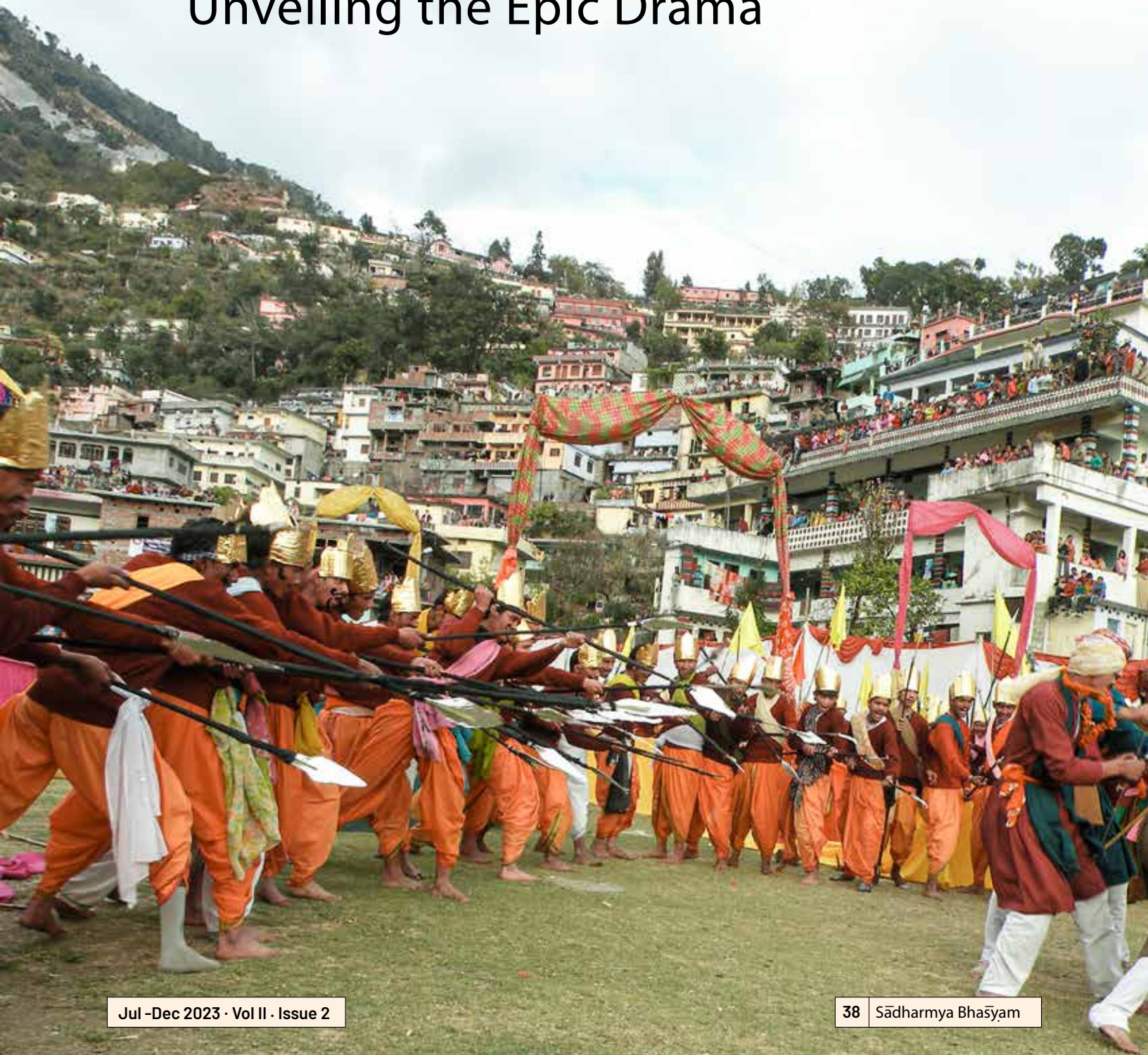
## THE NARASIMHA AVATAR

There are some intriguing facts about the Narasimha avatar. The Narasimha mask, weighing approximately 25 kg, is donned by the Pashwa of Narasimha atop his head. To ensure coordination, the ropes connected to this mask are secured around the Pashwa's waist. It is important to note that not everyone is capable of wearing the Narasimha mask; only the chosen human vessel of Narasimha can bear this responsibility. Presently, the exclusive privilege of becoming the king of Narasimha is bestowed upon the people of the Bhandari caste in Salud-Dungra.

Dr. Kushal Bhandari recounts a cautionary tale: Once, an individual from the village vehemently insisted on wearing the Narasimha mask for the year's festivities. Despite the priest's earnest warnings, Thakuri was unyielding in his determination and forcibly donned the mask, proceeding to dance. Tragically, this man experienced a rapid mental decline and met an untimely demise. Since that unfortunate incident, no one has dared to wear the Narasimha mask without proper authorization.

# THE PANDAVA LILA OF KEDAR VALLEY

Unveiling the Epic Drama





**Acharya Krishnanand Nautiyal**

*Acharya Krishnanand Nautiyal is a retired Principal and esteemed folk litterateur. He is the pioneering author of Garhwali plays such as Chakravyuh, Kamalvyuh, Makarvyuh, and Vinduvyuh. He currently serves as the President of the Kedarghati Mandan Sanskrit Group in Guptkashi Kedarnath.*

Uttarakhand, often referred to as the “Land of Gods,” earns this title through its rich cultural heritage, deep-rooted traditions, and divine rituals. The state’s mountainous landscapes seem to echo a message of mutual cooperation and harmony, reflected in the vibrant tapestry of social practices. One notable example of this cultural richness is the Pandvarta ritual, also known as Mahabharata Mandana, a captivating manifestation of social harmony deeply embedded in the regions of Kedarghati in Rudraprayag and some places in Chamoli districts.

### **The Significance of Pandvarta Ritual**

The Pandvarta ritual, derived from the words Pandavas (referring to the legendary figures of Mahabharata) and Varta (talk or story), is a meticulously performed traditional ceremony that epitomizes social harmony in Uttarakhand. The ritual encompasses a vast area, stretching from Yamunaghati to Gwaldam in Garhwal Mandal. However, its detailed and enchanting execution is most prominent in the Kedarghati of Rudraprayag District and selected villages in Chamoli District.

### **Legend and Beliefs**

Rooted in folk traditions and Puranic quotations, the Pandvarta ritual



traces its origins to the aftermath of the Mahabharata war. According to local lore, the Pandavas, after the war, relinquished their weapons on the sacred land of Uttarakhand. Before entering the holy abode of Lord Kedarnath, the Pandavas entrusted their weapons to the godlike residents of Uttarakhand, pledging a perpetual bond. This unique resolution forms the basis for the Pandvarta ritual, symbolizing the enduring connection between the divine and the people of Kedar Ghati.

### **Execution of the Pandvarta Ritual**

The ritual unfolds over 15 to 45 days, commencing with the lighting of lamps in various Kedar Valley villages on Dev Uthani Ekadashi. The entire community actively participates, showcasing social harmony in action. The Pandvarta ritual involves meticulous planning, emphasizing the following key aspects:

#### **Expenditure Arrangements**

Before the ritual, every villager is requested to contribute a specific amount to cover expenses. Rations are also collected for guest receptions with exemptions for the extremely poor or vulnerable families.

#### **Arrow Making**

Village woodworkers craft arrows related to the Pandava Dance, irrespective of caste, demonstrating dedication and faith.

#### **Oil Arrangements**

Individuals from any caste can contribute oil for the lamps used during the ritual.

#### **Complete Ritual Work**

Led by the main guru, known as Auji, ritualists

follow instructions to ensure a seamless execution. The drummer (Auji) plays a pivotal role, showcasing a departure from traditional Brahmin-led rituals.

### **Inclusive Guests and Offerings**

External guests are considered village guests, and all married daughters are focal points. Irrespective of caste, daughters receive offerings and alms, embodying the equal distribution of blessings.

## **Mahabharata Mandana and Vyuha Compositions in the Kedar Valley**

In the ancient war of Mahabharata, spanning 18 days, 36 arrays were deployed on both sides. However, in the villages of Kedar Ghati, a mountainous region, *Mahabharata Mandana* takes place, lasting from 15 to 45 days. During the Mahabharata ritual, five arrays are typically formed, with the most renowned being the Chakravayuh.

### **Chakravayuh**

Created by Acharya Drona on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the Mahabharata, the Chakravayuh served the purpose of trapping a Pandava warrior. Only Arjun could penetrate it. However, thanks to his son Abhimanyu's knowledge acquired from his mother Subhadra, Abhimanyu bravely reached the seventh gate, where he was betrayed and killed by seven great warriors. In the aftermath, Arjuna, upon learning of Abhimanyu's death, vowed to kill Jayadratha before sunset the next day or face self-immolation. The Chakravayuh episode showcases the unique and preserved cultural tradition of Kedar Ghati.

### **Kamalvyuh (Mahapadmavyuh)**

Equal in popularity to the Chakravayuh, Kamalvyuh was created by Guru Drona on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the war. This octagonal array, considered the most formidable, consists of seven Chakramandalas, seven Kamalmandalas, one Sushyamandalah,



*Kamalvyuh*



*Chakravayuh*



*Makaravyuh*

and one Garbhamandalam. Protected by Kaurava warriors, it becomes impenetrable in a single day. Lord Krishna intervenes, causing a temporary sunset, enabling Arjuna to reach the 14<sup>th</sup> gate and kill Jayadratha.

## **Makaravyuh (Mahamatsya Vyuh)**

Crafted by the warrior Karna on the 16th day, Makaravyuh, shaped like a crocodile, aimed to defeat Arjuna. It featured Karna at the first gate, Dushasan at the fourth gate, and Duryodhana in the inner part. The unfolding of this Vyuh includes the death of Ghatotkacha, a fierce battle between Arjuna and Karna, and a mace fight between Bhimsen and Dushasan. The episode emphasizes the valour of Karna and the complexities of war.



## **Garudavyuha**

Created by Pandava commander Dhristadhyumna on Lord Krishna's advice, Garuda Vyuh aimed to save Arjuna from the serpent Vishwaksena. The serpent had vowed revenge after Arjuna's previous actions. This array, formed on the 16th day, disintegrates the snake army and showcases the strategic brilliance guided by divine advice.

## **Vinduvyuh or Hathi-Duryodh**

On the 18th day of the war, the Vinduvyuh incident



unfolds. Duryodhana hides underwater in fear of the Pandavas. Shri Krishna, along with Arjuna and Bhimsen, challenges Duryodhana to battle, leading to a fierce fight. Bhimsen breaks Duryodhana's thigh, concluding the eighteen-day Mahabharata war.

While the Vinduvyuh's form may have changed over time, the essence of folk traditions remains intact, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Kedar Valley. The preservation of these age old rituals in Kedar Valley and the parallel tradition of Ramayana Ramman in Badrinath Valley exemplify the enduring Shruti-Smriti tradition in Sanatan Dharma.

## **Social Harmony through Rituals**

The Pandavarta ritual not only preserves ancient traditions but also reflects the principles of social harmony, cooperation, and rural cleanliness. The villagers' commitment to faith and unity, regardless of social strata, breathes life into the words of the Rigveda,

सं गच्छध्वं संवदध्व सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।  
देवा भागं यथा पूर्वे सञ्जानानां उपासते ॥





**FRIENDS PUBLICATIONS**



# FRIENDS PUBLICATIONS & SOPHIYA PUBLICATIONS



Educational Publishers

Head Office : 56, Sector-16 B, Avas Vikas Colony, Agra-282007 (UP), India  
 Corp. Office: Plot No. A-4 & 5, 3rd Floor, Logix Park, Supremework,  
 Near Metro Station, Sec-16, Noida-201301  
 Phone: 8755909948, 8077499153, 8077499184  
 E-mail: info@friendspublication.com, orders.friends@gmail.com  
 Website: www.friendspublication.com  
 Branches: Delhi, Lucknow, Indore, Bengaluru, Jaipur

**SOPHIYA PUBLICATIONS**



# THEATRICAL FLOURISH IN HILLJATRA

An Ode to Rural Traditions



Mr. Kailash Kumar

*Kailash Kumar, a distinguished theatre artist and director hailing from Pithoragarh, is the founder of Bhaav Raag Taal Natya Academy. His remarkable contributions were further acknowledged with the National Youth Award and Ustad Bismillah Khan Award in 2021, specifically for excellence in Theatre Arts direction.*

The Hilljatra, observed in selected parts of Pithoragarh district, is deeply rooted in the traditions of pastoralists and agriculturalists. Originating from the Sorar (Mahakali) region of West Nepal, this festival found its initial introduction in Kumaour village before spreading to neighboring communities. The celebration





underwent modifications when embraced by the people of Bajethi, Kanalichhina, and Askot, where it transformed into the captivating Hiran Chital festival.

Linked to the agricultural and pastoral labors of the rainy season, Hilljatra, where *Hill* signifies mud and *Jatra* refers to Jaat (caste), mirrors the rhythm of ropai (paddy plantation). As rain graces the fields in the month of Bhadau, farmers, accompanied by their oxen, engage in the symbolic act of planting paddy. Consequently, Hilljatra features characters with drums and expressive gestures, depicting the planting activities in the fields. The festival encapsulates various societal activities such as bullock pairing, *Haliya*, hookah seller, *putari* (women), and grass seller.

Additionally, Hilljatra carries historical significance,

intertwined with the triumph of the Champawat ruler. Legends narrate the journey of Kuru, a representative of a Chand King, who, after a buffalo sacrifice in Sorar, aimed to introduce the festival to Sor valley. This led to the acquisition of masks, Lakhiabhoot, Halwaha, two bullocks, and the Nepali plough, marking the formal introduction of Hilljatra in Sor.

The festival unfolds in three distinctive parts. In the initial segment, worship and the ritual sacrifice of goats set the spiritual tone. The second part presents various pastoral and agricultural activities dramatically, with highly expressive masks adding entertainment value. The final part features the recitation of traditional and contemporary songs, accompanied by the lively circle dance (*Chanchari*), extending late into the night.

# Aanthu Festival: The Theatrical Tapestry of Hilljatra

In the heart of Bhadon, the Aanthu Festival paints the Kumaon region with vibrant hues, celebrating nature's abundance. Amidst ripening grains and flourishing landscapes, communities honor Lord Maheshwar (Shiva) and Gaura



(Parvati) for a prosperous harvest.

The festivities kick off with the crafting of a Gaura idol from paddy plants, adorned with vivid colors. Led by virgin girls and wise elders, a melodious Gaura song guides the idol to the central Aanthu courtyard. A lively procession follows, with communal rituals, dances, and pot-balancing activities, showcasing a seamless bond with nature.

The next day sees Lord Maheshwar joining Gaura, welcoming offerings of seasonal fruits—Aru, Guava, Malta, Orange—symbolizing hopes for a fruitful harvest. A unique tradition unfolds as these fruits transform into joyous Prasad, distributed amid spirited songs. Culminating in a three-fold toss of fruits skyward, the third catch deems the fruit sacred.

The Gaura and Maheshwar idols find a lasting home, triggering eight days of post-dinner song festivities, encapsulating the enduring cultural wealth of the Aanthu Festival.

The Hilljatra unfolds as a vibrant theatrical spectacle, weaving together pastoral and agricultural traditions with a dramatic flair. In the



*The Hilljatra, a festival celebrated in specific regions of Pithoragarh district, unfolds as a vibrant theatrical spectacle, weaving together pastoral and agricultural traditions with a dramatic flair.*

festival's second act, diverse activities related to farming and herding take center stage, captivating onlookers with a compelling presentation enhanced by a variety of expressive masks. This dramatic showcase stands out as the most entertaining segment of the entire festival.

## Bulls in Hilljatra: A Symphony of Rural Life

The procession of bulls in Hilljatra serves as a lively and symbolic representation of the intricacies of rural life, each bull embodying a unique facet of agricultural and pastoral activities.

### Mature Bull

The inaugural entry features a pair of older bulls, known for their calm demeanor and expertise in plowing, symbolizing the seasoned hands guiding the early stages of agricultural work.

### Young Bull

Following suit, a pair of young bulls takes the spotlight, showcasing their strength and enthusiasm as they ardently undertake the bulk of planting activities.

### Small Oxen (Bodo)

The arrival of small, swift Bodo bulls injects speed into the proceedings, their agile movements contributing to the educational display of plowing techniques. Haliya, through expressive gestures, imparts his wisdom in teaching the bulls, leading to lively interactions, including playful bouts.

### Markhwa Bull

The Markhwa bull, marked by its unruliness, adds an element of unpredictability, showcasing its prowess by dehorning other bulls, heifers, and even

engaging with the public. This character adds a touch of excitement to the spectacle.

### Galya Bull

The solo appearance of *Galya* Bull, characterized as a lazy bull that frequently dozes off, introduces a humorous element to the festivities. Troubling Haliya playfully, *Galya* Bald serves as a charming embodiment of rural wit and culture.

## Cultural Icons and Symbolic Offerings: A Rich Tapestry Unfolds

The Hilljatra transcends mere agricultural displays, incorporating a myriad of cultural elements that contribute to the festival's unique charm.

### Arrival of Daughters

The entrance of daughters carrying *Dhalia* and *Dokka*, offering grass for the bulls and sustenance



*These celebrations, with their theatrical flair, rituals, and expressions, offer a timeless connection to the roots of rural life, embodying a living tradition that perseveres in the face of societal changes. It unfolds as a multifaceted celebration, seamlessly blending theatrical elements, cultural icons, and agricultural symbolism.*



for the Haliyas, symbolizes the harmonious relationship between agriculture and familial bonds. The act reflects a communal sharing of abundance.

### Hookah Seller

Hudkiya Bol, a traditional song sung by a hookah seller, resonates with the festival's cultural roots. The song encapsulates the spirit of rural life, emphasizing the intrinsic value of mountains and fields.

### Sinne Wala (Nettle Grass)

The stitcher's application of long nettles, entangled in a banana stem, serves dual purposes as a pain reliever for humans and a nourishing agent for cows. This act showcases the festival's connection to holistic well-being.

### Lata-Lati (Non-Speaking Couple)

The wooden-masked duo, Lata and Lati, enlivens the proceedings with their entertaining expressions and special Pahari dance, becoming a focal point that delights onlookers and adds a humorous touch.

### Mahakali

The arrival of Mahakali, resonating with the beats of drums, embodies a powerful cultural icon. Villagers revere Mahakali as a motherly figure, seeking blessings for good health and a bountiful harvest.

### Hiran Chittal

The enchanting sight of a man wearing a deer mask, accompanied by three individuals covered in deer-colored cloth, mimics the graceful movements of a large deer. This symbolic act pays homage to the reverence for nature and showcases the village's unique cultural expressions.

*The evolving songs reflect the living tradition of Hilljatra, emphasizing the need for preservation in a dynamically changing society.*

### Lakhiya Ghost

The Lakhiya ghost emerges as the pinnacle attraction, drawing crowds from far and wide. Believed to be Veerbhadra born from Shiva, this ghost is controlled by two Shiva Ganas through a thick chain. The exclusive celebration in Kumaud village adds an air of mystique to Hilljatra.

## A Living Tradition Amidst Change

In essence, Hilljatra stand as vibrant reflections of the cultural diversity and agricultural heritage of the Pithoragarh district. These celebrations, with their theatrical flair, rituals, and expressions, offer a timeless connection to the roots of rural life, embodying a living tradition that perseveres in the face of societal changes. It unfolds as a multifaceted celebration, seamlessly blending theatrical elements, cultural icons, and agricultural symbolism. The festivals serve not only as entertaining spectacles but also as poignant reminders of the harmonious coexistence between nature and human communities. ■

# The Hilljatra Craft



The Hilljatra Craft, is located at Pithoragarh town in the hills of Uttarakhand. The Hilljatra Craft was set up in the Year 2019 by Mr. Kailash Kumar. The first and foremost aim of the Hilljatra Craft is to safeguard and preserve the tradition of making wooden masks and traditional folk musical instruments. Colourful masks are donned by storytellers while the beats of the traditional Damau drums add drama and flair to the theatrics. The scripts, the characters and the masks have remained identical in design for the past 500 years, with a few variations in colours.





### Artisan Profile

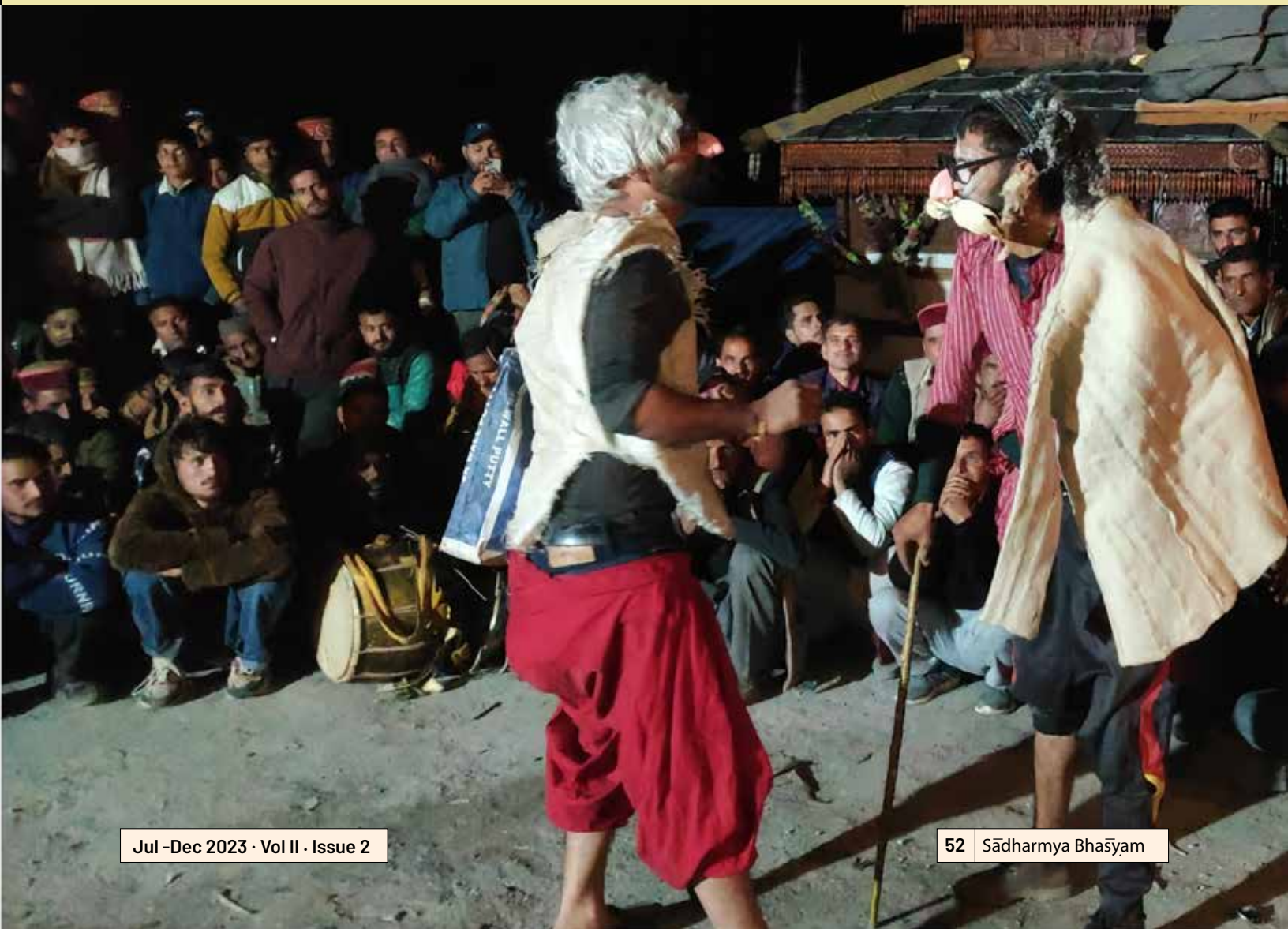
Digar Ram is involved in this carving work for about 10 years and a Mask and Instrument maker. He learnt these skills from his grandfather. This traditin of mask

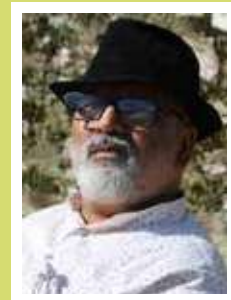


and instrument making is in the family for 3 generations and he wants the next generation to continue this tradition. There are 8 members in his family and he is the only one who is currently engaged in this tradition and the female members helps in the trade. He is connected with Bhaav Raag Taal Natya Academy and makes product only for them. The raw materials like wood and copper come from Pithoragarh.

# KHELUTHA COMEDY THEATRE

Preserving Traditions and Cultural  
Heritage in Jaunsar-Bawar's Unique  
Diwali Celebrations





Dr. Nandlal Bharati



In the Jaunsar Bawar tribal area, the celebration of Diwali spans a significant period of 7 days. In the past, this festive period extended to 15 days but due to the breakdown of joint family structures, and increased migration, the Diwali celebrations in this tribal region now last only for 7 days. Notably, the Diwali festivities in Jaunsar Bawar occur a month after the rest of India celebrates the festival. This timing discrepancy is rooted in the historical



*the Khelutha dance acts as a form of social accountability. It humorously highlights shameful actions of individuals, creating awareness and teaching important lessons. On the contrary, it praises exemplary deeds in various fields, instilling a sense of pride and motivation within the community, especially among the youth.*

account of Lord Shri Ram's return to Ayodhya from exile. The news of his return reached the tribal area a month later, establishing the tradition of observing Diwali a month after the nationwide celebration.

While other explanations exist, such as the peak of agricultural activities in November in the tribal area, the prevalent narrative passed down through oral history, stories from elders, and traditional songs highlight the festival's origin as a commemoration of Lord Ram's

return.

The Diwali celebrations are rich in diverse customs and rituals. Integral to these festivities are traditional folk dances like *Jaita Raso*, *Tandi Harul* performed by women, and various forms of *Mukhoutha* (mask) and *Khelutha* dances. These performances serve as a visual representation recounting the events and experiences of the entire year. Particularly, the *Khelutha* dance, enacted in the Panchayati courtyard, humorously depicts the good and bad deeds of individuals throughout the year.

This unique dance form involves individuals donning masks and performing in a satirical manner. It serves as a medium to convey messages through folk art and tribal expressions. The *Khelutha* dance portrays historical events, such as the subjugation of the villagers under British rule, reflecting the suppression, exploitation, and fear instilled by the colonial power. This artistic expression vividly portrays the villagers' struggles and the injustices they faced.

Moreover, the *Khelutha* dance acts as a form of social accountability. It humorously highlights



shameful actions of individuals, creating awareness and teaching important lessons. On the contrary, it praises exemplary deeds in various fields, instilling a sense of pride and motivation within the community, especially among the youth.

However, the traditional fabric of these celebrations is currently threatened by migration, disintegration of joint family structures, and the shift from agrarian to urban livelihoods. These factors cast a shadow over the historical and traditional significance of such festivals.

One anecdote from the village narrates an incident during the British rule when two Englishmen behaved inappropriately towards the women of the village. The villagers, dismayed by their behaviour, refrained from direct confrontation due to the prevailing authority. However, as the misconduct persisted, a group from a neighbouring village eventually confronted and severely injured the men. Upon returning to their barrack in a wounded state, they falsely accused the villagers to the British authorities, provoking a potential reprisal.

As the enraged British contingent approached the village, a discerning local intervened and inquired about their purpose. The British soldiers asserted their intention to capture the alleged attackers, to which the astute villager proposed a different course of action. He assured them that the village's Panchayat (local governing body) would address the matter through their own judicial system.

Employing clever persuasion, the villager insisted that the Panchayat would punish the offenders by subjecting them to a severe beating with nettles, an act beyond the capability of the British soldiers. The British, respecting the local customs, accepted the explanation and withdrew.

However, the following day, out of curiosity, the British returned to witness the punishment. Upon their arrival, the quick-witted villager brilliantly

*the Khelutha dance serves as a folk theatre form deeply rooted in the region's cultural heritage, combining elements of play, song, and dance in a comical arrangement. It not only entertains but also serves as a vehicle for cultural preservation and societal messages.*

staged a dramatic reenactment of the supposed punishment, convincing the British of the severity of the penalty. Impressed by his skilful performance, the British rewarded the villager with a pair of trousers. The villagers, in reality, did not administer any punishment; it was the shrewd acting of this man that appeased the British authorities.

The essence of such stories is encapsulated in the mask dance, a renowned tradition during Diwali. It resonates with the audience, leaving a profound impact. The mask dance represents an integral part of the Jaunsar Bawar tribal area's culture, engaging and delighting individuals of all ages in every village courtyard.

Khelutha dance serves as a folk theatre form deeply rooted in the region's cultural heritage, combining elements of play, song, and dance in a comical arrangement. It not only entertains but also serves as a vehicle for cultural preservation and societal message. The Diwali celebrations, rich with these vibrant traditions, play a crucial role in preserving the unique cultural identity of the Jaunsar Bawar tribal area. ■



## Dr. Nandlal Bharati

### *A Legacy of Cultural Resurgence*

Dr. Nandlal Bharati, born on 8 January, 1964, stands as an internationally renowned tribal folk artist and a distinguished figure in the world of cultural preservation. Despite being born into a modest family of the Jaunsari Bandua tribe in Uttarakhand, Dr. Bharati has not only overcome challenging circumstances but has also been instrumental in reviving the almost vanished tribal folk culture on an international scale.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND TITLES

#### Father of Jaunsari Tribal Music

Dr. Bharati was given the esteemed title of 'Father of Jaunsari Tribal Music,' recognizing his instrumental role in preserving and promoting the unique musical heritage of the Jaunsari tribe.

#### Historical Contributions

In the 1970s, faced with the near extinction of tribal folk dances, Teej festivals, and traditional costumes in Jaunsar, Dr. Bharati co-founded the Lok Kala Manch. This initiative conducted extensive studies, surveys, and presentations related to folk culture, ultimately saving the Jaunsari tribe's cultural heritage, the largest in Uttarakhand.

#### International Recognition

Dr. Bharati's efforts have gained global recognition, with presentations made before world leaders such as former President of the United States Barack Obama, former President of India K R Narayan, and Ram Nath Kovind.

#### Leadership and Accomplishments

Dr. Bharati's leadership extends to various cultural fronts, including leading 400 artists from Uttarakhand in the World Culture Festival, setting 12 Guinness World Book Records in 2016. He has also led cultural groups in national events and showcased Jaunsari tribal culture at international platforms.

### NOTABLE AWARDS AND HONORS

- Indian Folk Art Sarathi • Awarded by the



World Forum for Art and Culture in 2023.

- Doctor of Letters Honorary Degree
- Conferred by Uttarakhand Open University in 2023.

#### **Leadership in World Culture Festival**

Led 400 artists in a cultural program before Heads of State, Deputy Prime Ministers, and Vice Presidents of 155 countries, setting world records.

#### **National and State-Level Recognitions**

Dr. Bharati has received numerous awards at both national and state levels, showcasing his exceptional contribution to preserving and promoting tribal folk culture.

#### **Cultural Contributions Beyond Borders**

His influence extends beyond India, with training and direction provided

to Jaunsari tribal artists in Australia, Germany, South Africa, and America through the Valham School, Dehradun.

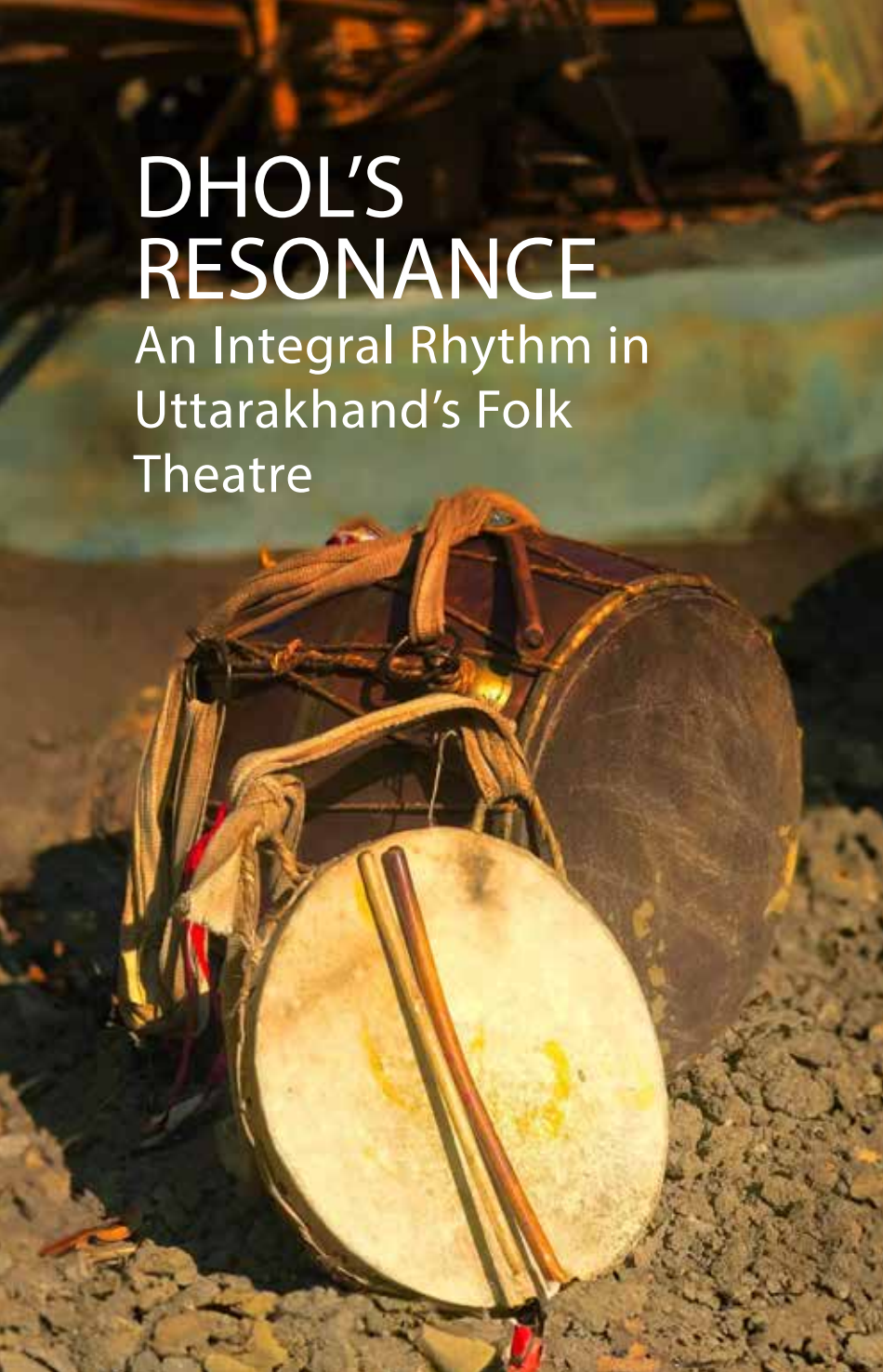
#### **Film and Artistic Contributions**

Dr. Bharati has contributed to the film industry, directing Jaunsari dances in films such as Dhaage and writing the story and songs for the Jaunsari film Maati.

As a four-time Guru under the Guru Shishya Parampara Yojana and with numerous awards to his name, Dr. Nandlal Bharati's journey exemplifies resilience, cultural leadership, and a relentless commitment to preserving and celebrating tribal folk traditions. His legacy continues to inspire generations and contribute significantly to the rich cultural tapestry of Uttarakhand and beyond.

# DHOL'S RESONANCE

## An Integral Rhythm in Uttarakhand's Folk Theatre



### COVER STORY

In Uttarakhand, a myriad of musical instruments enriches the cultural landscape, with the Dhol occupying a special place of prominence. This rhythmic instrument is intricately woven into the region's cultural fabric, deeply embedded in its folk life. The Dhol Damau, a pair of drums played in tandem, holds a special status, often considered auspicious and integral to various festivities and joyous occasions.

In the wedding celebrations, the Dhol takes center stage, symbolizing the commencement of auspicious events. While numerous musical instruments contribute to the festive atmosphere, the Dhol stands out with its unique importance and cultural significance. Emotionally, the people of Uttarakhand share a profound connection with the Dhol, considering its players as highly esteemed and cherished individuals.

### The Unique Attributes of Dhol

In the village, the drum plays a crucial role in various plays and performances. From a scientific perspective, its significance lies in the ability of Dhol sounds to travel considerable distances without the need for amplification. Unlike singing and various other musical instruments, which often require amplification, the drum's inherent acoustic properties



Girish Badoni

*Mr. Girish Badoni is a renowned traditional music artist specially a master of dhol. He has been an integral part of the folk theatre in the Garhwal region. Currently, he holds the position of the Head-master at the Government School, Budhna in Rudraprayag.*

enable it to reach a broad audience naturally.

People typically craft two main types of Dhols, one from copper and the other from brass, each with slight variations. The copper drum requires exposure to sunlight, whereas the brass drum performs well even in colder conditions. Additionally, there is a subtle difference in the sound produced by each drum: the copper drum has a slightly deeper tone, while the brass drum produces a somewhat thinner sound. In Garhwali, these variations are referred to as "Chhali." The goat skin is commonly used to prepare its structure.

## Significance of Dhol in Folk Theatre of Uttarakhand

In the realm of Uttarakhand's folk theatre, the Dhol occupies a pivotal role, resonating far and wide with its distinctive sound. The significance of this instrument becomes evident in the multitude of festivals celebrated in every village, whether grand or intimate, and spanning events related to deities, spirits, and supernatural entities. In essence, the rhythmic beats of the Dhol accompany and characterize these diverse cultural occurrences, rendering them incomplete without its vibrant presence.



A notable historical instance underscores the importance of the Dhol. In 1956, Indramani Badoni, often referred to as the "Gandhi of Uttarakhand," led a delegation of 35 artists to Delhi. On this occasion, they presented the Kedar dance before Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. The Kedar dance, rooted in the rhythmic traditions of Kedarnath, exemplifies the deep connection between dance patterns and the Dhol. The dance drama initiated by Indramani Badoni, named after Madhav Singh Bhandari, further emphasizes the integral role of the Dhol in its spirited performances.

In contemporary times, popular plays continue to showcase the paramount importance of the Dhol. One such notable production is "Chakravayuh,"



*The Dhol Damau, a pair of drums played in tandem, holds a special status, often considered auspicious and integral to various festivities and joyous occasions.*



Photo Credit DR Purohit



a renowned play authored by Sarveshwar Dutt Kandpal ji, Acharya Krishnanand Nautiyal ji, and Purohit ji. The director of the Utsav Group, skilfully leads these productions with outstanding direction and artistic finesse, further accentuating the indispensable role of the Dhol in these cultural performances.

In Ramlila theatre also the Dhol plays a significant role. The resonance of the Dhol becomes a visceral link to the emotions and psyche of the people, fostering a deep connection. The heartbeat of the Dhol, in these instances, serves as a cultural touchstone, echoing the spirit of the community.

## Masters, Innovations, and Craftsmanship

Uttarakhand's vibrant Dhol tradition thrives through the efforts of skilled individuals and academics, with notable figures like Prof. D R. Purohit and Pritam Bharatwan. Prof. D R Purohit is a pioneer in promoting Dhol in Uttarakhand. Through extensive visits to villages, he engaged with master drummers, showcasing their techniques on stage. His commitment led to comprehensive documentation, fostering the growth of many

talented artists under his guidance. Pritam Bharatwan, with contributions like lectures at the University of Cincinnati, underscores the global recognition of Uttarakhand's Dhol tradition.

Figures like Dr. Nand Kishore Hatwal and accomplished performers like Shivjani, late Omkar Das, and Sohanla are notable in this field. Sohanlal was honored with a Doctorate for his drumming prowess, and he carries forward this rich legacy.

The emerging talents like Uttam Das introduces a new dimension to Dhol performances, earning recognition at national and state levels.

Uttam Das's artistry stands out for his simultaneous play of Dhol Damau, a skill born out of necessity. Faced with a shortage of accompanists during marriage ceremonies, he ingeniously mastered the art of playing both drums simultaneously, exemplifying the adaptive nature of the Dhol tradition.

While some individuals have dedicated efforts to document and understand these nuances, a



*The Kedar dance, rooted in the rhythmic traditions of Kedarnath, exemplifies the deep connection between dance patterns and the Dhol.*

comprehensive compilation in the form of a book is still lacking. Nonetheless, there are persistent endeavours by individuals who continue to explore and study these regional variations. A notable contribution in this regard comes from Barangi ji, a renowned litterateur in Garhwal, who has undertaken significant work in this domain.

The craftsmanship of artisans is pivotal in shaping the Dhol, with figures like Jaidayal from Srinagar achieving widespread recognition. The meticulous construction, including the frame, skin, and intricate details like strings and ornaments, collectively contribute to the instrument's unique and captivating appeal. The Dhol's popularity extends beyond Garhwal, with its variations finding

a place in Kumaon as well. S.S. Negi (BEO of Dwarikal, Pauri), is from Kumaon, who immensely contributes to this cultural exchange. He personally crafted a Dhol. The distinctions in the Dhol's characteristics are discernible not only between Garhwal and Kumaon but also within different locales of Garhwal itself. These variations extend to the intricate patterns employed, the diverse ways in which these patterns are played, and the unique notations associated with them. The Dhol in Uttarakhand is not merely a musical instrument but a living tradition that resonates across festivals, celebrations, and theatrical performances, weaving its beats into the very fabric of the region's rich cultural heritage. ■

*With best compliments from :*



# MARINA PUBLICATIONS PVT. LTD.

an ISO 9001:2015 company

**OUR UNITS**



**Spring Hill**



**Turtle Books**



**Edugrow Publications**



**Amrita Prakashan**



**Aditi Prakashan**

**Sudhir (Managing Director) +91-9415203826 • Aditya (Executive Director) +91-8130595619**

**Adm. Off. :** 4/37 Site-2, UPSIDC Industrial Area, Ajanta Compound, Mohan Nagar, Sahibabad  
**Delhi NCR - 201007 • Mob. :** +91-8130194610

**Regd. Off. :** D 61/18-8, Plot No. 9, Sidhgiri Bagh, **Varanasi - 221010 • Mob. :** +91-9452008021, 7753888106

**info@marinapublications.com**      **www.marinapublications.com**

**DELHI • BANGALORE • LUCKNOW • BHOPAL • RAIPUR • PATNA • GUWAHATI • KOLKATA • PRAYAGRAJ • RANCHI • JAIPUR • VARANASI**

*Our digital footprints to empower and accelerate progress in school education.*








# PRESERVING GARHWAL'S CULTURAL ENSEMBLE

## A Profound Journey with Prof. D R Purohit

Amidst the majestic landscapes of Uttarakhand, where the Himalayas cast their spell, Prof. D R Purohit emerges as a guardian of the fading heritage of folk art. His journey into this realm began not in the corridors of academia but in the heart of his childhood, where the vibrant hues of Ramlila theatre ignited a passion that would shape

his life's work. Sadharmyam's interview with Prof. D R Purohit offers a comprehensive portrait of a cultural custodian whose work spans from the grassroots to international collaborations, ensuring that the vibrant legacy of Uttarakhand's folk art endures for generations to come.

## Early Initiatives and Childhood Inspirations

*Prof. Dr. Purohit, you have played a pivotal role in preserving and revitalizing the fading heritage of Uttarakhand's folk art. To begin, what initially drew you to this field, and what were your first initiatives within it?*



Well, I was initially drawn to folk art through my childhood experiences as an actor in Ramlila theatre. The allure of Ramlila was strong, and I started a Drama club in my village during high school. One of my early successes was adapting a ballad of Sarvaranir into a theatrical form, consciously using the tunes and meter of Ramlila. This play became popular in my village, and I continued staging various plays, including those from scripts I found in the market, written by Pandit Natharam Gaur and Pandit Radhesam Saravan.

I adapted plays like "Amar Singh Rathore" and "Bhakta Morad Dwas Raja Harishan" for the stage. This interest persisted through my MA, but I had to take a hiatus when I joined the Post and Telegraph Department after completing my B.A.

## Comparing Global Traditions

*Your PhD focused on Medieval English Drama and the Folk*

*Theatre of Garhwal. What unique elements of comparison did you discover between these two distinct theatre traditions?*

After joining the university, I encountered new theatrical techniques through a visiting student from the National School of Drama, Delhi. Witnessing two folk plays during his visit inspired me to pursue a PhD on folk theatre. My childhood memories of folk plays like those of Golu Devta and the curiosity about plays performed by traveling artists near Joshimath fueled my interest.



Although my initial PhD idea faced some resistance, I persisted in my desire to explore the folk theatre of Garhwal. Unfortunately, my initial supervisor passed away, leaving my idea incomplete. Later, with the support of another teacher, Arun Senan, I decided to compare Garhwali folk theatre with medieval English folk drama. This comparison involved looking at elements such as Miracle and Morality plays in medieval Europe, drawing parallels with Garhwali folk plays and exploring their historical evolution.

The research process involved studying folk plays from around the world, including America, France, Germany, Italy, and Poland. I encountered challenges in obtaining references from the English-speaking world and understanding the theoretical aspects of folk theatre. Reading works by scholars like Richard Schechner, Victor Turner, Malinowski, and Bakhtin was essential to my research.

In summary, my PhD aimed to establish parallels between Garhwali folk theatre and other global folk traditions, such as Roman drama and religious plays, despite facing difficulties in accessing references and understanding diverse theoretical perspectives.

## Extensive Research and Documentation

*Despite your renowned expertise in English literature, you have dedicated considerable effort to studying the folk forms of Uttarakhand. Could you share insights into the extensive research and documentation you have conducted in this domain?*

Delving into the world of folk theatre, I discovered

approximately 50 plays from Mahabharata alone in Garhwal. My documentation journey involved both live recordings and acquiring scripts from various sources. Some scripts, like those of Ganda play, Murudar, Hathi Duryodhan, Potalya, Kangra Ka Jogi, Gujri Maryam, and Tony Rai, were never written, so I attended live performances, recorded them, and then transcribed them into English, creating what I call "performance scripts." I covered around 25 plays from Mahabharata in this manner.

Subsequently, I expanded my focus to mass dance dramas, recording 32 scripts, and delving into other dramas related to bards. While I had childhood exposure to Parsi dramas, I concentrated on exploring deeper into the folk traditions. Notably, one mass dance drama script, Burudeva play, ran into a substantial 108 pages. Additionally, I documented smaller scripts like Bedi-Beda, Ganpati Ganesh, Lata-Latu, Lal-Bhora, Ram, Lakshman and Sita, Dasavatar, and more. I traveled to different locations to study the variants of mass dance dramas, including the script of Ramman, which was later declared a World Heritage art. Being the first to thoroughly document the performance of Ramman was a significant achievement.



*The vision behind founding the Centre for Folk Performing Arts and Culture stemmed from the recognition that there was a lack of institutional mechanisms to preserve and experiment with the rich folk culture of Uttarakhand.*

After completing my thesis, I expanded my focus to fairs, festivals, Bardic theatre, Udgiya theatre, Ramlila theatre, and Holi theatre. Documenting diverse theatre forms wherever I found them became a passion. My interest also extended to narratives, leading me to study Nanda Devi, including the entire Nanda Devi Rajyat, an enactment of the myth of Nanda Devi's journey from Maharmaika to Zaza.

In 2000, I organized a month-long workshop for drummers with the help of Rij Dehradun. We documented all the taals of the drummers in Dehradun and concluded with a concert directed by Narendra Singh Negi, featuring 18 instruments. I also took the initiative to support drummers like Sohanlal, helping him establish Dholnath, a successful orchestra with ten groups of Dhol players earning a respectable income.

Furthermore, I explored fairs, festivals, and various theatres like Holi, Ramlila, Jhark, and Bagdwal. I documented the Bagdwali ballad, totaling 220 pages, and worked on aspects central to folk theatre, such as music, costumes, properties, and cultural rituals. The extensive documentation, including 300 audio cassettes, is preserved, with a portion handed over to Professor Andrew Alter in Australia, who has digitized around 100 audio cassettes.

*You have mentioned that there appears to be limited research on the folk forms of Uttarakhand. Could you provide more insight into the existing research and documentation available regarding these art forms?*

*Indeed, the research landscape on Uttarakhand's folk forms is quite unique. Most playwrights focus on*

*creating plays for the stage, but what sets my work apart is the adaptation of folk performances for the stage. Traditionally, adapting these forms for the stage was considered difficult and futile. However, I took the daring step to present them on stage, starting with the play "Chakravayuh," which focused specifically on the Chakravayuh performance.*

While many scholars have documented aspects not directly related to folk theatre, my focus has been on writing plays based on my extensive research. I wrote a play on Jesus Christ, drawing inspiration from miracle plays. This play incorporated elements such as a woman caught in adultery, the birth of Jesus Christ, the short play of Three Magi, the Second Shepherd's play, and the Passion play.



Combining these elements, I created plays like “Yaklu Bhatoi, the Solitary Sojourner.”

Beyond that, I crafted full-length plays on various themes, including Nanda Devi Raj jaat, Ganda, Burudeva, Panjbhai Kathet, and Roop Kund Ki Dukhad Yatra. The passion for these endeavors led to the documentation of a thousand-page Mahabharata in 1996. Continuing this journey, I recently documented a folk story on the creation of the universe—Vishwa Karma, spanning 36 hours. Additionally, I captured the dance drama of Dwari Devi.

## Reviving the Center for Folk Performing Arts and Culture

*You were instrumental in establishing the Center for Folk Performing Arts and Culture at HNB Garhwal University and introducing various courses and diplomas. What was the primary vision behind founding this institution, and what are your expectations for its future?*

The vision behind founding the Center for Folk Performing Arts and Culture stemmed from the recognition that there was a lack of institutional mechanisms to preserve and experiment with the rich folk culture of Uttarakhand. This realization emerged during a three-day conference organized by R.S. Tolia, the Chief Secretary of Uttarakhand Government, where intellectuals, including Kapila Hassan, discussed the need for a dedicated center.

In 2004, the NAC peer team emphasized the necessity of such a center in our university. Dr. N. Natarajan, the then Vice-Chancellor, approved the idea in 2006, leading to the establishment of the center. However, due to certain challenges, my tenure as the director faced obstacles, leading to my departure.

Nonetheless, the center continued its functions, with a building funded by the central government. Unfortunately, mismanagement and lack of support resulted in a decline in its operations. In 2020, the present Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Anupona Nautiyal,

*D R Purhit receives Sanggeth Natak Academy Award from the Indian President*



recognizing the potential, invited me to take charge once again. Despite challenges, we are working towards revitalizing the center and hope that, under future leadership, it will become a thriving hub for folk performing arts and culture, preserving and promoting the rich traditions of Uttarakhand.

## International Collaborations and Recognition

*Your tenure as a visiting Professor of Performing Arts at Ruprecht Karl University in Heidelberg, Germany, brought recognition in the form of the Baden-Württemberg Fellowship in 2018-19. Collaborating with eminent figures like Prof. William S. Sax and Prof. Friederick Smith, you translated the Garhwali Mahabharata into English. Can you share an overview of your experiences and the impact of collaborating with these internationally renowned personalities?*

In 2018, I held the Rupprecht-Karl chair at Heidelberg University in Germany. Although I was granted four months, due to departmental issues, I utilized three months during my tenure. Speaking of the Baden-Württemberg fellowship, my second visit in 2018 post-retirement, allowed me to collaborate with Prof. William S. Sax and Prof. Friederick Smith on translating the Garhwali Mahabharata.

Our collaborative process involved understanding the Garhwali syntax and then translating it into English. We meticulously selected the most fitting words, creating a bridge between the cultural richness of Garhwali and the nuances of English. It was a challenging yet rewarding experience, exploring the intricacies of language and culture with these esteemed scholars.

## Contributions to Garhwali Theatre

*Your play, “Nanda Devi Raj Jaat,” received international recognition when staged at Heidelberg University. What was the response from Western audiences, and what new insights did you gain from this experience?*

Staging “Nanda Devi Raj Jaat” at Heidelberg University was a remarkable experience. While we couldn't present the entire play, the scenes were highly appreciated. Several German newspapers covered the performance, and it was even broadcasted on a German radio channel. The play garnered attention for its unique cultural narrative, and the photographs from the performance captured its essence. The play's translation into multiple languages and its subsequent staging in Mumbai further extended its reach and impact.

*The Garhwali community highly regards the play “Chakravyuh,” initially staged in Garhwali and later translated into multiple languages. Could you elaborate on the genesis of this play, its subsequent developments, and adaptations, considering your significant contribution to revamp the script alongside S. Karnpal and Krishnanand Nautiyal?*

“Chakravyuh” has its roots in my childhood experiences of witnessing it at various locations. In 1993 or 1994, while watching it with anthropologist Prof. R.S. Nehru, he questioned the play's linguistic diversity. This moment sparked the idea of transforming the play, and I collaborated with Krishnanand Nautiyal and S. Karnpal.

In 2000, we embarked on a drummers' documentation project, securing funds for a concert. Later, in 2001, I expressed my desire to

create a play. Collaborating with Sarveshwar Kanpal and Krishnanand Nautiyal, we crafted a play with Garhwali tunes and a unique design. Despite initial challenges, the play gained popularity, with over 200 shows and translations into English.

## Adapting Christian Themes

*We have discussed your script for the Christian play “Yakhlu Bhatoi,” considered the first Garhwali play based on Christian themes. What was the context of creating this play, and how do you see the relevance of adapting such themes to the Garhwali theatre landscape today?*

Fr. John Chackanatt inspired the creation of “Yakhlu Bhatoi” for Christmas celebrations. Drawing from the life of Jesus Christ, the play presented a unique perspective. The relevance of such themes lies in fostering understanding and appreciation for different faiths. By delving into Christianity, the play encourages empathy and contributes to a synthesis among civilizations.

The play was broadcast on German radio, emphasizing its international recognition. In today’s interconnected world, appreciating diverse religions and creating a synthetic model of coexistence becomes essential. Democracy, a prevalent religion in the western world, derives its values from various faiths, including Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. This synthesis serves as a model for fostering unity in our diverse society.

## Unique Elements of Garhwali Theatre

*Each folk theatre tradition possesses unique characteristics. What, in your opinion, distinguishes Garhwali theatre, and, are there elements within it that could inspire other forms of art?*

Modern theatre cannot simply amalgamate our idiom with Yakshagana of Karnataka, Kathakali of Kerala, or Kudiattam. Each theatre form carries its own singular qualities and uniqueness. While we, too, have our distinct characteristics, such as the masked dance Rama Buddeva, which can be applied to contemporary issues. For instance, someone can approach Buddeva and ask about the number of political parties, as per the idiom. In my interpretation, there are three political parties. One is “Hambi Khata Tumbi kha” (UPA), the second is “Hamare Alawa Koi Na khae” (BJP), and the third is “Sabane Khadiya Hame Nahi Mila” (Uttarakhand Government). Burdeva’s versatile character allows the idiom to be incorporated seamlessly.

I recall an incident in Badrinath where a hardcore communist, Nandikeswar Hathwa, became the Chairman of Badrinath Temple Committee. When Buddeva was questioned about this transformation, considering the individual’s staunch anti-religious stance, Buddeva explained it by referencing the myth of Ajamal. Ajamal, an atheist, unknowingly named one of his sons Narayan. In his dying moments, he called out to his son, saying, “Narpali” instead of Narayan. Buddeva creatively used this



*Democracy, a prevalent religion in the western world, derives its values from various faiths, including Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. This synthesis serves as a model for fostering unity in our diverse society.*

tale to shed light on the communist's unexpected role, adding a layer of complexity to the narrative. This kind of idiom can be effectively employed to convey contemporary issues.

## Future Steps for Garhwali Theatre

*While various government organizations strive to preserve and promote folk traditions, what additional steps do you believe are essential for the future of Garhwali theatre, considering the current scenario and the efforts undertaken by the Uttarakhand Government?*

The government should make crucial decisions for the future of Garhwali theatre. All exponents, whether they are singers, drummers, drama directors, or actors, should be financially supported. Providing them with the necessary funds to practice theatre is essential. These artists, once adequately supported, should be appointed as gurus. Similar to the practice in Rajasthan, the government should grant stipends to these gurus. Rajasthan's government financially supports gurus involved in Ravan Hatha, tabla, and traditional singing, fostering a Guru-Shishya Parampara. Uttarakhand should adopt a similar approach by paying gurus and disciples appropriately.

Surprisingly, the Guru-Shishya Parampara initiated by the government currently has only six gurus for the entire state. Given the abundance of talent in Uttarakhand, the selection of only six gurus is inadequate. The government should recognize and financially support the multitude of masters and performers across the 13 districts, ensuring the preservation and transmission of cultural traditions. Individuals skilled in various forms, such as singing traditional songs, or creating ceremonial flags, should be acknowledged and funded to teach and sustain these traditions. If the German government can invest heavily in maintaining opera theatres to

prevent their decline, we, too, should allocate funds to preserve the Pandava theatre in Garhwal.



*The government should make crucial decisions for the future of Garhwali theatre. All exponents, whether they are singers, drummers, drama directors, or actors, should be financially supported. Providing them with the necessary funds to practice theatre is essential.*

*Prof. D R Purohit's journey is not just an academic pursuit: it is a profound commitment to preserving, promoting, and celebrating the cultural treasures of Uttarakhand. Like a Himalayan winter scarf woven with dedication, passion, and a profound commitment Purohit's multifaceted contributions to folk art, from extensive documentation to international collaborations, leave an indelible mark on the cultural landscape. As Uttarakhand navigates the intersection of tradition and modernity, Prof. D R. Purohit stands as a guiding force, ensuring the vibrant legacy of folk art endures for generations to come. His endeavours, reveal a scholar whose work transcends the confines of academia. Through his dedication, the vibrant traditions of Uttarakhand find a voice that resonates far beyond the Himalayan Valleys. ■*

# संस्कृति का संस्कार



*By Joy Elakumapuzha*



Dr. Paulachan Kochappilly

*Dr. Paulachan Kochappilly is a catholic priest and professor of Christian Ethics at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram in Bangalore. He is also actively engaged in various literary ventures.*

संस्कृति के मंगल वचन से इस रचना का प्रारंभ करना चाहता हूँ, क्योंकि निम्नवत् मांगलिक मंत्र एक सभ्य और समग्र संस्कृति की दशा और दिशा रेखांकित करता है।

सर्वेषां शान्तिर्भवतु सर्वेषां स्वस्थिर्भवतु  
सर्वेषां पूर्णं भवतु सर्वेषां मंगलं भवतु।।

इस मंत्र में एक अच्छी संस्कृति का परिचय हमें मिलते हैं जो कालजयी है। मानव के प्रत्येक परिश्रम और प्रयाण इन लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने में समाहित है। इसलिए कला-संस्कृति को इन आदर्शों को मद्देनजर रखते हुए मार्गरेखा बनानी है और उस पर अमल करना है।

मेरे अभिप्राय में संस्कृति के मूल वचन में है। वचन से सबकुछ का सृजन है। आचरण की संहिता और सभ्यता भी वचनबद्ध है। वचन से जीवन की निष्पत्ति हुई। संसार का प्रारंभ प्रभु-वचन से प्रसृत होता है। सृजन के समय परमेश्वर ने कहा: "प्रकाश हो, और प्रकाश हो गया" (पवित्र बाइबल, उत्पत्ति 1:3)। संस्कृति की उत्तपत्ति भी वचन और प्रकाश से होती है। इतना ही नहीं वचन की सत्ता और प्रभुता के बारे में पवित्र बाइबल में उल्लेख मिलता है। "आदि में शब्द था, शब्द परमेश्वर के साथ था और शब्द परमेश्वर था। वह आदि में परमेश्वर के साथ था। उसके द्वारा सब कुछ उत्पन्न हुआ और जो कुछ भी उत्पन्न हुआ, वह उसके बिना उत्पन्न नहीं हुआ" (पवित्र बाइबल, योहन 1:1-3)। वाक्यपदीयम् में भर्तृहरि भी अनादि निधन शब्द ब्रह्म को नमन करते हुए कहते हैं।

अनादिनिधनं ब्रह्म शब्दतत्त्वं यदक्षरम् ।  
विवर्ततेऽर्थभावेन प्रक्रिया जगतो यतः ।।

संसार और संस्कृति वचन की लीला है। वचन से जीवन निर्गलित होता है। प्रकाश में जीवन फलता-फूलता है। समाज और संस्कृति का संस्कार भी वचन से और प्रकाश से होना नियमित है। संस्कृति की सारी धारार्यें वचन और प्रकाश से ओतप्रोत हो। तभी जीवन समृद्ध और सुन्दर होगा। वचन जीवन का पदप्रदर्शन करेगा और उससे संस्कृति – कला – साहित्य – जीवनार्थ परिणत होगा।

### यथा सपना तथा संस्कृति

संस्कृति मानव जीवन-यापन के उद्भव – विचार और आचार – की कहानी से मेल रखती है। मनुष्य अपने समय-परिस्थिति के अनुकूल देखने, सुनने, सोचने, परखने, समझने, बोलने, लिखने, करने, मनाने का अथक परिश्रम किया करते थे, जिसके फलस्वरूप समाज के सभी लोगों को हितकारी कार्य में संलग्न होने तथा तदानुसार जीवन लक्ष्य को प्रस्तुत किया जाता है। संस्कृति जीव और जीवन से संबन्धित है। जीवन को समृद्ध और अनन्त बनाने के विचार से संस्कृति पल्लवित और पुष्पित होती गयी। अर्थात् संस्कृति की राह जीवन की चाह से जुड़ती है। जहाँ चाह है वहाँ राह। संस्कृति के विकास और विलीन होने में यह तथ्य सार्थक है।

मानव मन की अथाह अभिलाषा संस्कृति के मूल है। इस प्रभल इच्छा के परिणामस्वरूप मनुष्य अनवरत अन्वेषण के पथ पर जुट जाता और प्रगति के मार्ग पर निरंतर अग्रसर होता रहता है। समाज और



संस्कृति श्रुतियों, स्मृतियों और सदाचारों के संगम से गढ़ी जाती है। समाज के विभूतियों और सामान्य जनता की आवाज सुनने से संस्कृति का बीजारोपण होता है। शास्त्र ग्रन्थों या धर्मग्रन्थों में जीवनार्थ अनमोल विचारधाराओं का प्रवाह है। प्रौढ़ चिन्तन से ओतप्रोत इन ग्रन्थों का अध्ययन, मनन और क्रियान्वयन संस्कृति को समृद्ध बनाने में सहायक है।



परिवर्तन का प्रारंभ किसी भी व्यक्ति विशेष से हो सकता है, फिर भी समाज-सुधार और संस्कृति का उत्थान और विस्तार गिने-चुने साहित्यकारों, कलाकारों, समाजसेवकों, राजनीतिज्ञों, धार्मिक पुरुषों से हुआ करता है। बदलाव की नींव महानुभावों से रखी जाती है। लेकिन उन गहन और महान विचारों का प्रचार और प्रसार कला के विविध विधाओं से होती है।

संस्कृति साथ-साथ चलता है। वे हैं आपस में एक दूसरे का पूरक। समाज की सुस्थिति संस्कृति पर निर्भर करती तथा संस्कृति की स्वीकृति समाज की मानसिकता पर। समाज की प्रगति संस्कृति से संपन्न होती। प्रगतिशील समाज संस्कृति को स्वागत करने के साथ-साथ उसे परिमार्जित करने के लिए अथक परिश्रम भी करता है। मानव के विकास के लिए समाज की सभ्य और सम्यक् संस्कृति अनिवार्य है। संस्कृति को सुन्दर और सुखद बनाये रखने में समाज की अपनी भूमिका है।

संस्कृति युग-युगों की देन है। शिशु का जन्म किसी न किसी संस्कृति में होता है। उसकी परवरिश भी किसी संस्कृति विशेष से मिलता-जुलता है। इसका मतलब यह नहीं कि संस्कृति का अन्धानुकरण करने के लिए किसी का जन्म होता। बच्चे का विकास होने पर उसके मानस पटल पर विभिन्न विचारों का आदान-प्रदान होना स्वाभाविक है, स्वतन्त्र, स्वच्छ और सुन्दर विचारों के अनुसार संस्कृति को समृद्ध और सशक्त बनाना समाज के प्रत्येक सदस्य का कर्तव्य है। परिवर्तन जीवन का अभिन्न अंग है। समाज और संस्कृति भी बदलाव के लिए तैयार होना चाहिए। बदलाव के सिद्धांत पर समाज और संस्कृति की मंजिल खड़ी रह सकती है। अन्यथा काल बीत जाने पर वे भी तिरोभूत हो जायेंगे, विस्मृति में विलीन। संस्कृति श्रुतियों, स्मृतियों और सदाचारों के संगम से गढ़ी जाती है। समाज के विभूतियों और सामान्य जनता की आवाज सुनने से संस्कृति का बीजारोपण होता है। शास्त्र ग्रन्थों या धर्मग्रन्थों में जीवनार्थ

अनमोल विचारधाराओं का प्रवाह है। प्रौढ़ चिन्तन से ओतप्रोत इन ग्रन्थों का अध्ययन, मनन और क्रियान्वयन संस्कृति को समृद्ध बनाने में सहायक है। इसी प्रकार पवित्र ग्रन्थों पर आधारित व्याख्या भी संस्कृति को समृद्ध बनायेगी। कभी-कभी यह हो सकता है कि श्रुति की आवाज विस्मृति में डूब जाती है। ऐसी हालात में संस्कृति पर प्रभु-वाणी को दुबारा जीवित और जीवन्त बनाना संस्कृति को जागरित करने के लिए सहायक बन जाता है। ईश्वरीय सुसमाचार को मानव हृदयों में पुनः प्रतिष्ठित करने से समाज और संस्कृति की आभा और शोभा बढ़ जायेगी। वेदोपदेश जीवन के लिए हितोपदेश सिद्ध होगा। इसलिए वेदोपदेश विचारधारा का भण्डार है, जीवन में तब्दील करने से संस्कृति और समाज की पुष्टी होगी। अतः श्रुति-वचनों को स्मृति



पथ पर जीवित रखना मानव समाज में धार्मिकता के विकास के लिए अत्यन्त आवश्यक है। धार्मिक ग्रन्थों की नहीं, धार्मिक लोगों और सज्जनों की बातों को भी जीवन में अपनाना संस्कृति को सजीव और सार्थक बनाये रखने में अनिवार्य है।

संस्कृति विभिन्न धाराओं का समागम कहा जा सकता है, दरअसल एक अद्भुत संगम, जहाँ हैं विविध विचारों और आचारों का मिलन। संस्कृति सुन्दर और सुरभित तब होगी जब विविधता का समावेश हो और उसका उत्सव हो। विविधता में एकता का आदर्श भारतीय संस्कृति की पहचान है। हर प्रकार की विचारधाराओं और व्यवहारिक भिन्नता का निरंतर प्रवाह ही संस्कृति को समुद्र समान गहरा और आकाश – सम विशाल बनाती है।



Credit: Joy Elakumapuzha

विचारों के समुन्द्र में मन्थन की जरूरत पड़ती है संस्कृति को सुव्यवस्थित और आकर्षक बरकरार रखने के लिए। आशयों के जलाशय में समय की पुकार के अनुसार सफर करने और जनता को आगे ले चलने के लिए नित्य-निरंतर जल प्रवाह को सुनिश्चित करना चाहिए। इस बहुमूल्य और चुनौती भरा कार्य कला जगत के दिग्गजों से निभाया जाता है। कलाकार सजगता और सहजता से इस क्षेत्र में अद्भुत कार्य करते हैं। कला और साहित्य संस्कृति को यथार्थ के थरातल पर स्थापित करने के लिए बड़ी भूमिका निभाती है।

संगीत, नृत्य और अभिनय की त्रिवेणी कला जगत की अग्रगामी है जिसके द्वारा संस्कृति को समयानुकूल और परिस्थिति विशेष का परिचय ही नहीं, अपितु समाज को सुचारु रूप से संचालित करने में अहम् कार्य संभालता है।

नाटक एक ऐसी कला है जिसमें संगीत, नृत्य और अभिनय का सुन्दर संगम है जो व्यक्ति और समूह को दिशा निर्देश देते हैं तथा उस रास्ते पर चलने के लिए प्रेरित और प्रोत्साहित करते हैं। चुनौतियों से भरी वर्तमान परिस्थिति को सामना करने के लिए रंग-मंच कार्यक्रम सार्थक प्रयास है। अनहोनी को होनी करने में कला की अपनी छाप प्रख्यात है। उदाहरण के तौर पर समाज की कुरीतियों और रूढ़ियों की तीखी आलोचना करने और उसे सही रास्ते पर ले चलने में कला – साहित्य और नाटक का अपना महत्त्व है।

संवाद के माध्यम से समाज में पाये जाने वाले अन्याय और अवमानता पर प्रहार करने और धर्ममार्ग पर समाज और संस्कृति को ले चलने में नाटक एक अद्भुत स्तंभ है। संवाद के सिवाय समाज में परिवर्तन लाना नामुमकिन है। प्रत्यक्ष और परोक्ष रूप से समाज के आदर्शों के आधार पर कला की संरचना होती और उसे प्रसंगवश प्रस्तुत किया जाता है। परिवर्तन का प्रारंभ किसी भी व्यक्ति विशेष से हो सकता है, फिर भी समाज-सुधार और संस्कृति का उत्थान और विस्तार गिने-चुने साहित्यकारों, कलाकारों, समाजसेवकों, राजनीतिज्ञों, धार्मिक पुरुषों से हुआ करता है। बदलाव की नींव महानुभावों से रखी जाती हैं। लेकिन उन गहन और महान विचारों का प्रचार और प्रसार कला के विविध विधाओं से

होती है। इन विभिन्न धाराओं में नाटक का अपना गण्यमान्य स्थान है।

### यथा विचार तथा आचार

संस्कृति विचारों तथा आचारों का धरोहर है जिसके बलबूते पर लोग अपने जीवन को सुरक्षित, सुन्दर और सुखद बनाने में कामयाब होते हैं। इसलिए विचारों को विवेक से विवेचन करना पड़ता है। अनित्यानित्य वस्तु विवेक: जैसे आदर्श को अपनाना चाहिए। अन्यथा अविवेक से विनाश की फसल हम काटेंगे। संस्कृति को सुस्थिर और प्रगतिशील बनाये रखने में भी विचारों के मन्थन की जरूरत है। स्थाई और संचारी भावों को परख कर सच्ची जीवनी को कला और साहित्य के जरिए पेश किया जाना चाहिए।

मनोरंजन के साथ-साथ मन को विभोर करने वाले विचारों को सरलता और सहजता से नाटक के माध्यम से जनमानस तक पहुँचा सकता है, जो सदियों से प्रभावशाली प्रयोगशाला रही है। हालांकि नाटक की शैली में बदलाव आई है, फिर भी उसका असर कम नहीं हुआ है। चाहे नाटक विभिन्न शाखाओं में विभाजित हुआ क्यों न हो, फिर भी उसका महत्त्व पूर्वोपरि बढ़ा है। यद्यपि मंच बदलता रहता, फिर भी मंशा बरकरार रहती है।

### यथा प्रकृति तथा संस्कृति

लोक या पारंपरिक रंगमंच भारत की सांस्कृतिक विरासत का एक समृद्ध और महत्वपूर्ण तत्व है। समय की पुकार के अनुसार देश में लोकमंच का आयोजन किया जाता है। पारंपरिक रंगमंच उस ताल, लय, और स्वर की त्रिवेणी है जिससे जनता अपनी स्पन्दन को उजागर करती है। साथ-साथ देश के वातावरण और जल-वायु की झलक मिलती है। यह इस बात का प्रमाण है कि लोकमंच में अधिकतर स्थानीय बातों पर जोर दिया जाता है। लोगों की गति, प्रगति, अधोगति का वर्णन लोकमंच पर देखने और चखने वालों को मिलेगा। दिल की धड़कन और लोकमंच का कार्यक्रम उसी ताल-मेल का जीता-जागता उदाहरण है, जिससे उस इलाके में जीने की प्रक्रिया कायम है। कहने का मतलब यह है कि प्रकृति और संस्कृति में बहुत सी समानताएँ देखने को मिलती हैं और वे आपस में एक दूसरे का परिपूरक भी।

इतना ही नहीं प्रकृति के अनुकूल संस्कृति गढ़ जाती, फलती-फूलती, और अभिवृद्धि करती है। मनोवृत्ति, प्रवृत्ति, संस्कृति वहाँ की प्रकृति पर निर्भर करती है और उसे भलीभांति सींचती और संचालित करती है।

जल-वायु मानव की जीवन पर जरूर हावी होती है, साथ-साथ वहाँ की संस्कृति पर भी अपनी निशानी छोड़ जाते हैं। इस लिए संस्कृति की विविधता देखने को मिलती है। लोगों के चाल-चलन से संस्कृति का जन्म होता है। अमुक जनता की अपनी संस्कृति होना मात्र स्वभाविक है। इस लिए विविधता में एकता का आदर्श सर्वमान्य आदर्श बन जाता है, जो हमारे हिंदुस्तान की संस्कृति का प्रतीक है।

### यथा संगम तथा कुटुम्बकम्

हर संस्कृति विभिन्न संस्कृतियों के आदान-प्रदान से बनती है। कोई भी संस्कृति अपने आप में पूर्ण नहीं। प्रत्येक संस्कृति अपनी प्रयाण में अन्य संस्कृतियों और सभ्यताओं से बहुत कुछ ग्रहण करती और जो कुछ उसके विकास के लिए सहायक है उसे अपनाती है और पनपती है। व्यक्ति के विकास में दूसरों के साथ का संबन्ध का जितना महत्त्व है ठीक उसी प्रकार संस्कृति को समृद्ध और सुन्दर बनाने में दूसरी संस्कृतियों से मिलना-जुलना अनिवार्य है। विभिन्न झरने मिलने पर नदी अपना रूप धारण करती है और आखिरकार विभिन्न नदियाँ मिल कर समुद्र के आकार को ग्रहण करती है, उसी भाँति विभिन्न संस्कृतियों के संबन्ध में आने से संस्कृति का आकार विशाल और गहरा हो जाता है और उन्नति की ओर प्रवाहित है।

संस्कृति एक अद्भुत संगम है। समाज के स्त्री-पुरुष, बालिका-बालक, यानि समूह के आबालवृद्धों के आचार-विचार, आदान-प्रदान, भोजन-भजन पद्धति, भाषा-साहित्य, कला-लीला, कामकाज, सपने, इत्यदि का अनवरत प्रवाह का नाम है संस्कृति। संस्कृति को जन्म देने में सबका योगदान है। यहाँ कोई अपना और पराया का भेदभाव नहीं, समभाव, सद्भाव, और सहभाव का बोलबाला है, सब कोई संस्कृति रूपी परिवार का सम्मानित सदस्य है। इसलिए हमारी



संस्कृति एक अद्भुत संगम है। समाज के स्त्री-पुरुष, बालिका-बालक, यानि समूह के आबालवृद्धों के आचार-विचार, आदान-प्रदान, भोजन-भजन पद्धति, भाषा-साहित्य, कला-लीला, कामकाज, सपने, इत्यदि का अनवरत प्रवाह का नाम है संस्कृति।

संस्कृति की पहचान के रूप में निम्नवत श्लोक प्रसिद्ध है।

अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लघुचेतसाम्।  
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ॥

वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् का आदर्श सच्चे नागरिक का पर्याय है। संस्कृति मानव-मानस को विशाल और चरित्र निर्माण में सहायता करती है। चरित्र निर्माण से ही समाज की आधार शिला रखी जा सकती।

### यथा सत्यं तथा नित्यम्

सत्यं वद धर्मं चरः । संस्कृति की बुनियाद सत्य तथा धर्म है। जो समाज सत्य और धर्म पर आधारित है उसकी संस्कृति भी अच्छी होगी। असत्य तथा अधर्म से संस्कृति बिगड़ती और समाज की अवनति होती। सत्य बोलने और धर्ममार्ग पर चलने के निर्णय से ही सभ्य संस्कृति का उदय और विकास संभव है। हमारी संस्कृति कहती है, धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः। जो धर्म की रक्षा करेगा उसकी रक्षा धर्म करेगा। धर्म चक्र सत्य के बलबूते पर चलता है। धर्माराम या ईशधाम की कल्पना तथा स्थापना को साकार कर सकता है। संस्कृति भी सच्चाई पर अटल और अटूट रहती है। इसका मतलब यह है कि संस्कृति का कोई भी कला रूप क्यों न हो, उसे सर्वमान्य, सार्वकालिक और सार्वजनिक होना है तो सत्य और धर्म का सहारा लेना चाहिए।

संस्कृति का परिमार्जन देश-काल के अनुकूल संभव है। अर्थात् संस्कृति को भी संस्कृत किया जाना जरूरी है। संस्कृति के कुछ अंग स्थिर होने के साथ-साथ कालक्रमेण क्षीण हो जाता है। विचार के अनुकूल समाज और संस्कृति में परिवर्तन आता रहता है। विचारधारा की आड़ में विशाल भाव और भावना जागृत हो जाते हैं। चिंतन-मन्थन के आधार पर संस्कृति की नई रूपरेखा खींची जाती है। विचारकों तथा विभूतियों के विवेकपूर्ण तर्क-वितर्क से विवेचन की राह पर संस्कृति संवार होती है, जो समाज की नई दिशा निर्देश करने में सक्षम है।

### सर्व जीवार्थ जीवः सर्वेषाम्

धर्म की स्थापना और विस्तार करने में ही संस्कृति अपनी पहचान कराती है। जीव और जीवन के मार्ग को जो प्रस्तुत और प्रशस्त करने वाली संस्कृति शाश्वत और वैश्विक रूप ग्रहण करती है। सर्व जीवार्थ, जीवः सर्वेषाम् संस्कृति की आधारशिला है। क्योंकि सबकुछ जीवन पर निर्भर करता है, साथ-साथ सबकुछ जीव के लिए होना चाहिए।

सिवाय जीव और जीवन का क्या बचा है। अनन्त और आनन्दमय जीवन के लिए अथक परिश्रम किया जाता है। यह संस्कृति का ध्येय है। सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः भारतीय संस्कृति की आत्मा और आदर्श है। सर्व जीवजाल के कल्याण में ही संस्कृति चरितार्थ हो जाती है।

प्रभु ईसा मसीह की शिक्षा का सारसंग्रह अपने वचनों में इस प्रकार है। "मैंने तुम से यह इसलिए कहा है कि मेरा आनन्द तुम में हो और तुम्हारा आनन्द परिपूर्ण हो जाए" (पवित्र बाइबल, योहन 15:11)। प्रभु ईसा अपने शिष्यों से कहते हैं, मेरे आनन्द के सहभागी बनो। जीवन के बारे में आप सिखाते हैं। "इसलिए आया हूँ कि वे जीवन प्राप्त करें—बल्कि प्रचुरता से जीवन प्राप्त करें" (पवित्र बाइबल, योहन 10:10)। धर्मग्रन्थों में अनन्त जीवन और आनन्दमय जीवन का विवरण बराबर मिलता है, जो संस्कृति के मूल में निहित है।

### यथा संबंध तथा संस्कृति

संस्कृति के अन्तर्गत मानव के सामाजिक जीवन के सभी पहलुओं का समावेश है। इसलिए संस्कृति के किसी एक स्तर पर जो बदलाव आता है, वह अन्य स्तरों पर भी हावी होने लगता है। कला जीवन का अभिन्न अंग है। कला की जगत में जो कुछ होती रहती है उसका असर सर्वव्यापि है। समाज और संस्कृति के समुचित विकास लिए मानव के त्रिमुखी संबंधों — प्रभु, प्रकृति, और पड़ोसी — पर जोर देना जरूरी है। इन संबंधों के अलावा समग्र और सर्वांगीण विकास की कल्पना असंभव है। इस लिए हमारे विचार और आचार संहिताओं में इन तीन रिश्तों को सही सलामती से कायम रखते हैं तो दुनिया में मानव जीवन प्रफुल्लित और आनन्दित हो जायेगा। इसलिए तीन पंक्तियों को रेखांकित करना उचित समझता हूँ।

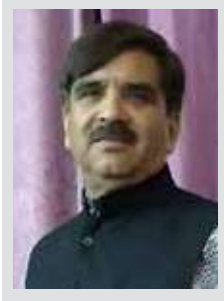
परमधाम्नि परमेश्वरस्य स्तुति महिमा  
पृथ्वी मंडले सर्वेषां शान्तिर्भवतु  
मानवाय च मंगलं शुभाशा सर्वदा ॥

समाज की संस्कृति जब प्रभु की स्तुति करने में और प्रकृति में सब के साथ शांति एवं मानव को मंगल और शुभाशा प्रदान करने की दिशा पर कार्य करती है तो सदभाव, समभाव, और सहभाव से लोग आपस में मिल कर हर्षोल्लास के साथ जीयेंगे, जिसमें संस्कृति और समाज पल्लवित और पुष्पित होंगे। ■

# MESSMORE'S LEGACY

An Outstanding Chapter in the  
Educational History of Uttarakhand





**Dr. Yogesh Dhasmana**

*Dr. Yogesh Dhasmana, a historian and author hails from Pauri Garhwal. As a distinguished member of the Indian History Congress, he has made substantial contributions to the field of history, particularly focusing on the history of Uttarakhand. With several noteworthy publications to his name, this article is a translation from his collected writings.*

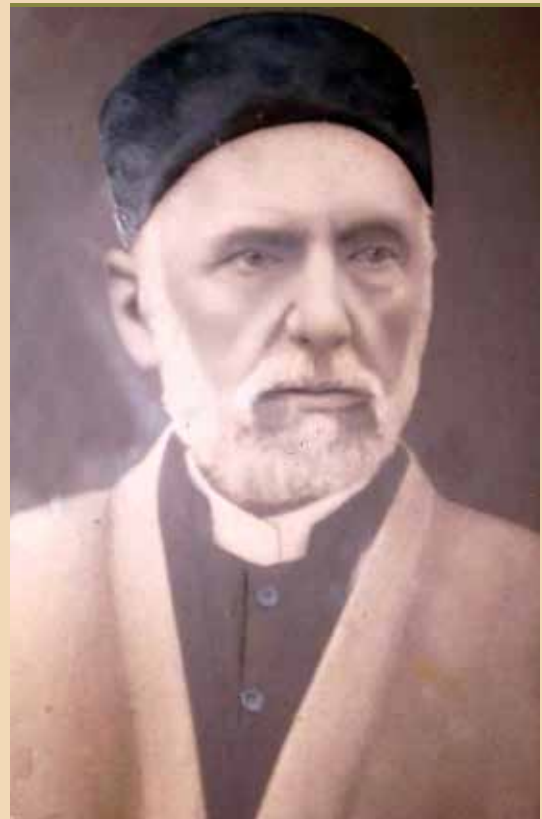
Messmore School in Pauri, a missionary institution, stands as a beacon of education in Uttarakhand, continuing to captivate with its enduring glory. The school's establishment in 1902 marked a revolutionary moment, opening doors of progress for the region's youth, permeating their influence across various societal sectors.

Graduates from Messmore have excelled in diverse fields, ranging from politics, administrative services, judiciary, police services, to positions as vice chancellors, educators, scientists, doctors, engineers, writers, poets, advocates, journalists, social workers, and skilled athletes at regional, state, and national levels. Despite their exceptional contributions, few now recall the visionary missionary who aspired to elevate this institution to high school status. However, the significant contributions of Messmore Saheb, the great person who established the educational institution, which

served as an educational nucleus in Garhwal for over seven decades, have regrettably faded from collective memory.

The influx of missionaries in the area occurred after the Company Government's arrival. Faced with severe deficiencies in education and healthcare facilities, the missionaries expanded their activities. In 1850, following the establishment of a school in Almora, Kumaon, they shifted their focus to Garhwal.

Garhwal, designated as a tehsil in 1839, became the second district of the Kumaon Commissionerate in 1839, with its headquarters situated amidst the picturesque landscape of Pauri in 1840. Back then, not only were roads scarce, but schools were virtually non-existent. At the behest of Kumaon Commissioner Henry Ramsey, the American Episcopal Methodist Mission extended



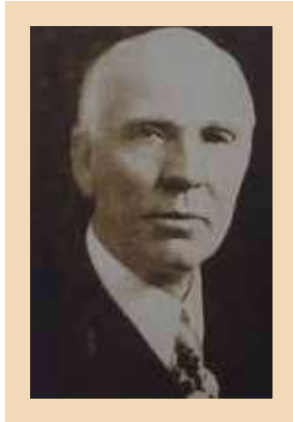
*J H Messmore*



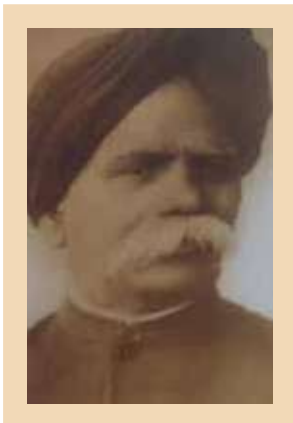
its educational outreach to Garhwal. Pastor Thovarna of the Nainital Church was appointed as a missionary in Pauri. Upon his arrival, Thovarna found a school run by his assistant, Henry Mansell, with only three children in attendance. To address the language barrier hindering education, Thovarna undertook a campaign to raise awareness about the importance of education. A local teacher was engaged to circumvent language constraints, which led to an increase in student enrollment. Thovarna's efforts led to a gradual rise in the number of children receiving an education.

Following Thovarna's tenure, Henry Mansell continued his work for four years. When missionary teacher J.H. Messmore

arrived for his second missionary stint in Garhwal in 1901, he settled in the region for 11 years. Despite not being a regular teacher, Messmore taught with dedication, aiming to uplift education and society. Through his exemplary commitment and sacrifice, he connected with the locals, which positively impacted student enrollment. As the students met the required standards, the middle school was upgraded to a high school. At that time, it was the sole high school in the approximately 14,000 square kilometer expanse of British Garhwal. Messmore



**A A Parker**  
**Founder Mission School, Pauri (1865)**



**Kesavanand Mangai**  
**First Graduate (1876)**

passed away in Pauri on October 8, 1911, after living in the region for 11 years. His demise affected the continuation of missionary education in Garhwal. The neglect following Messmore's death led to

the deterioration of the old high school building, causing its roof to collapse and rendering the science equipment unusable. A shortage of skilled teachers led to the closure of two classes in 1917, resulting in the loss of its high school status. Consequently, the student population dwindled, and for 12 years post-Messmore's passing, the mission school struggled.

This is the same Messmore who initiated a school in Lucknow in 1862, known today as the Christian Degree College. Coincidentally, it marks both



**C E Parker**  
**Founder Mission School, Pauri (1865)**



**Chandramukhi Mangai**  
**First Woman Graduate (1878)**

of Messmore's death and the 150th year of the establishment of the Christian Degree College.

The resurgence of Messmore's dream began with Norwegian resident H.H. Weeks, who assumed the responsibility of the mission in Pauri in 1918. The dilapidated state of the old mission school and declining student numbers prompted Weeks, known for his unwavering determination, to establish the Messmore High School in Pauri, earning him the label of an eccentric by some.



Though Weeks remains less remembered due to the school's association with Masmore, it was under his guidance that the Messmore High School was erected. Despite lacking engineering expertise, Weeks displayed remarkable engineering skills. He not only arranged finances but also contributed physically, even constructing a bullock cart to transport wooden sleepers from a 15-kilometer distance. In the absence of a permanent road, he employed laborers to transport iron girders from a distance of 75 kilometers. The impressive building, constructed with intricately carved stones, stands as a testament to his efforts but currently faces deterioration due to lack of maintenance. Upon its completion, the building's grandeur left onlookers in awe, with a total cost of Rs 1.80 lakh. Other buildings and hostels were constructed under the scheme, with half the expenses supported by the British Government. The complex was inaugurated in April 1925 in the presence of numerous

dignitaries, including the District Magistrate, Bishop Robinson, and Mrs. Robinson. Weeks served in Garhwal for 15 years and was involved in various projects, including the construction of a bridge in Banghat, for which he was honored with the title of 'Kesar-e-Hind' by the British Government.

Pauri has since transformed from a small town to a bustling city, surrounded by numerous educational institutions. The area, which once hosted only one high school, now boasts a university campus and a government engineering college. The missionaries, sans religious or economic biases, established their institutions here, igniting a lamp of knowledge that government schools would struggle to replicate.

As Messmore's centenary coincides with the 150th year of the Christian Degree College's establishment, the pioneering efforts of these missionaries continue to resonate, shedding light on a remarkable chapter in the educational history of Uttarakhand. ■

### *An Ariel View of Messmore College*





**Avinash John**

# A Journey at Messmore Inter-College

Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am Avinash, has been serving as a teacher for the last 23 years in historical Messmore Inter College, Pauri Garhwal Uttarakhand. The golden days as a teacher is a time that will always hold a special in my heart. It was a time of growth, learning, serving and unforgettable memories that I will cherish for the rest of my life. The experience and relationship formed during this period have shaped me into the person I am today.

The history of Messmore Inter College, Pauri has been a glorious history in itself. The foundation of this college was laid in 1865 as a primary school. By the untiring effort of missionary Rev. J.H. Messmore upgraded this school to High School in 1902 and in 1920 this school got the recognition of High school and in 1950 of Intermediate College.

I gained many experiences while working this blessed institution. Many people of all categories were richly blessed through this institution and many students who studied here held high positions in the country and abroad. It has been my good fortune that I have also been a student of this school. I feel exalted to have received education from this school.

This school is still moving ahead with the same vision, despite the difficult circumstances at present. Teaching has been an incredibly rewarding experience for

me. As a teacher serving in this historical college, I have had the privilege of being part of a rich and long-lasting educational tradition. The historic setting has provided a unique backup for my teaching experience, allowing me to imbue my lessons with a sense of legacy and tradition. It has also offered me the chance to engage with a diverse student body, each with their own connection to college's history.

I have had the opportunity to impart knowledge, inspire critical thinking and foster a love for learning in my students. Witnessing their growth and development has been truly gratifying. I have also learned so much from my students, gaining valuable insights and perspective that have enriched my own understanding of the subject I teach. This constant exchange of ideas and knowledge has made my experience as a teacher fulfilling and continuously engaging.

Overall, my time as a teacher in a historical college has been incredibly fulfilling and has allowed me to contribute to a legacy of excellence in education. Serving as a teacher has been a rewarding experience, and I am grateful for the opportunity to shape the minds of the next generation.

I am so thankful to Almighty God for giving me this precious opportunity to serve in this blessed institution. I request to you all to remember this college in your prayer.

*With Best Compliments from...*



# VIDYARTHI KENDRA

PUBLISHER & DISTRIBUTOR PVT. LTD.

**Deals in :**

ICSE, CBSE, NCERT and State Board Books & Stationery

**RETAILER • WHOLESALER • DISTRIBUTOR**

**Ghaziabad Office :** D 493, HIG Lajpat Nagar, Sector-4, Sahibabad  
Ghaziabad, Delhi (NCR)-201005 • Mob. : +91-8130194613

**Aditya (Executive Director) +91-8130595619**

 [vidyarthikendragzb@gmail.com](mailto:vidyarthikendragzb@gmail.com)

 [www.vidyarthikendra.com](http://www.vidyarthikendra.com)

**DELHI (NCR) • BENGALURU • PATNA • LUCKNOW • ALLAHABAD • GORAKHPUR • VARANASI**

# BACK TO THE SOURCE



*Credit: YV*



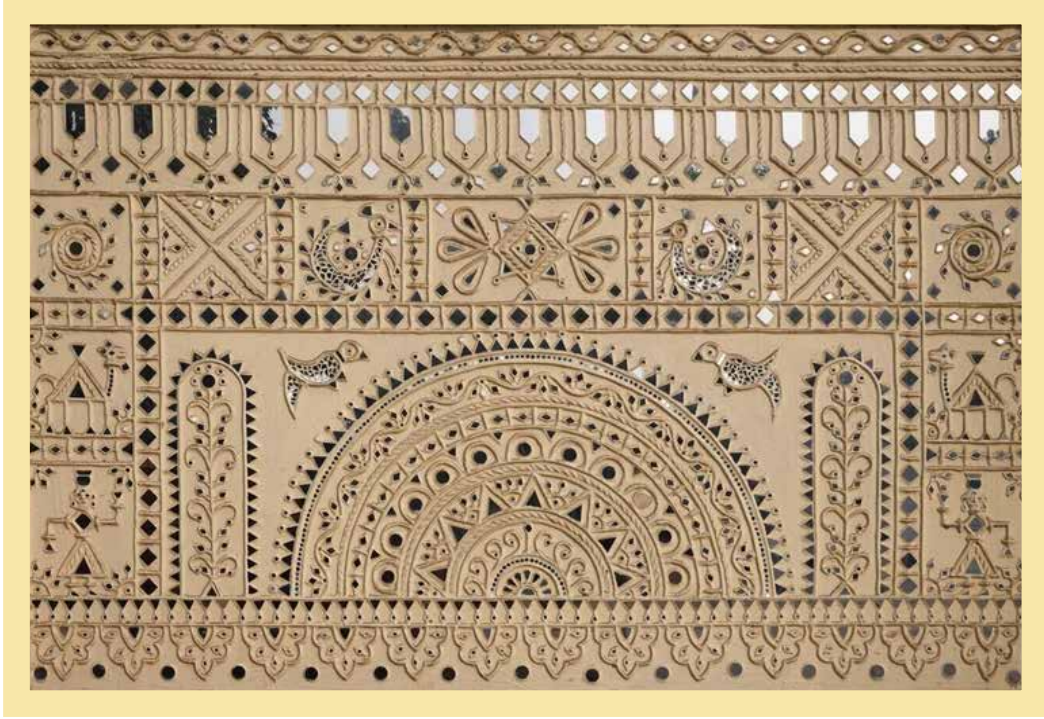
**Yann Vagneux**

*Yann Vagneux, is a catholic priest from Paris. He lives in the multi-religious holy city of Varanasi, where he is engaged in the inter-religious dialogue for many years. He has authored many books. "Indian Portraits" is the recent published work by him.*

A famous verse of the poet Kalidasa (5<sup>th</sup> century) reminds us that the mystical roots of India lie in the formidable barrier of the mountains where, since the dawn of time, the silent hermits engendered a civilisation to the depth of their inner visions: "The mystery of the gods resides in the North in the supreme abode of the Himalayas of unsurpassable grandeur". In these heights, the sources of the Ganges are found. To them, innumerable crowds of Hindu believers ascend every year, in the beginning of May to reach the destination. In the past, several months on foot were needed; today, ten days by car are enough. The pilgrimage (yatra) starts in Haridwar – the gateway to the gods. Then, from stage to stage, it follows the course of the sacred river, passes by the ashrams of Rishikesh and of Uttarkashi – the Benares of the North – before reaching the temple of Gangotri where the faithful bow before the goddess Ganga whom the Brahmin priests serve as the only sovereign of the place. After the ritual prayers, everyone fills in the stream some bottles which will be precious gifts for the relatives and friends who could not join the group.

From Gangotri, the most valiant continue to walk 18 kilometres in the company of the wandering monks who are numerous on the path. The azure sky is immaculate and makes even more dazzling the appearance of the first peaks: the Sudarshan (6507 m.), the Bhagirathi (6856 m.) and finally the Shivling (6543 m.), a perfect pillar which rises in a single line from its base to the summit. It is at the foot of these breath-taking mountains that the Ganges emerges from the glacial cave of Gaumukh. The place is sumptuous and fills with emotion whoever discovers it. Here, no stone temple is necessary to manifest the presence of the divine. It is the pure beauty of the beginnings: a cave that speaks so powerfully of an even more hidden mystery. Indeed, this cave – *guha* in Sanskrit – is not only a geographical place at the origin of the sacred waters: it is above all the cave of the heart where, in silence, the Absolute calls us. The external approach becomes a true inner journey: "Pilgrim to the source of the Ganges, it is within myself that I climb up to the ineffable attainment of the Source of Being," wrote Marc Chaduc, the disciple of the Benedictine monk Henri Le Saux, as he undertook a three-month yatra to the Himalayan sanctuaries in 1976.

In Gaumukh, after having plunged into the icy torrent, we remain motionless, carried away in an infinite contemplation. Then comes the time to return. We must once again follow the Ganges as it descends to the plains where it fertilises the fields, crosses the holy cities and bathes the bodies of the dead, before losing itself in the ocean at Ganga Sagar, south of Calcutta. At the end of the pilgrimage, we feel renewed to resume daily life. After the solitude of the summits, human company appears in a new light, as Henri Le Saux wrote after having celebrated a mass in Gangotri in 1964: "It is only at the sources that the encounter takes place. For there is only one Encounter. People can meet one another if they first meet God." ■



# LIPPAN KAAM

Craft Form Blending Art and Utility



**Sebeesh Vettiyadan**

*Sebeesh Vettiyadan is a Catholic priest. He is a renowned artist especially known for his theological artistic fusions. He is currently researching on Iconography at Leuven in Belgium.*

In the sun-kissed landscapes of Gujarat and Rajasthan, Lippan kaam craft shows itself as a captivating visual treat that goes beyond being a mere craft—it is a living testament to a heritage that spans generations. Originating in the rural villages, particularly in the tranquil outskirts of Kutch, this intricate form of mud and mirror work transcends its humble origins to become a cultural phenomenon that not only celebrates tradition but also empowers lives and weaves profound symbolism into every piece. Lippan kaam, meaning ‘applying work,’ finds its roots in the Rabari community, where women adorned their homes with intricate mud designs. Inspired by nature and daily life, these designs served both practical and decorative purposes. They regulated indoor temperatures, keeping the interiors cool in scorching summers and warm in chilly winters. Beyond functionality, these mud designs celebrated the artistic expressions of the women

who crafted them. The evolution of Lippan Art is deeply entwined with the nomadic traditions of the Kutch region, specifically the Rabari and Ahir communities. Known for their nomadic lifestyles, these communities introduced mirrors into the mud designs. Mirrors, considered sacred, were believed to fend off evil spirits and bring light into homes. This infusion of mirrors marked a transformative phase in the evolution of Lippan Art, adding an exquisite reflective quality to the designs.

## Symbols and Symbolism in Lippan Art

Lippan Art goes beyond mere aesthetics, becoming a narrative woven with symbols deeply rooted in the cultural and spiritual essence of the region. The craft is a rich visual treat where each design, motif, and pattern tells a profound story.

At its core lies the Sacred Circle. More than a visually appealing element, this circular design encapsulates the cycle of life and the eternal nature of the universe. Symbolizing unity, completeness, and interconnectedness, artisans meticulously craft these circles, infusing their art with a sense of harmony and wholeness. The mud and mirrors converge to form these circles, reflecting the fundamental aspects of existence.

Mirrors, both literally and symbolically, play a multifaceted role in Lippan Art. Traditionally considered sacred, mirrors capture and reflect divine light, adding a spiritual dimension to their practical purpose of enhancing visual allure. Beyond aesthetics, mirrors are believed to dispel evil spirits and negative energy, transforming Lippan Art into a protective force, filling homes with positivity and radiance.

The resplendent peacock emerges as a powerful motif symbolizing prosperity, wealth, and good





fortune in Indian culture. Meticulously crafted peacocks in Lippan Art serve as guardians of abundance and success, their vibrant plumage spreading across mud canvases, bringing blessings to households.

Geometric patterns, including triangles, squares, and circles, are not arbitrary choices but representations of life's intricate rhythms and cycles. Triangles symbolize fire and energy, embodying life's dynamic forces. Squares signify stability and balance, visually representing life's equilibrium. Through these patterns, artisans celebrate the harmonious balance and energy flowing through the lives of people.

Taking inspiration from nature and daily life, Lippan Art becomes a living testament to the symbiotic relationship between humanity and the environment. Trees, animals, and human figures are not mere representations but celebrations of this close connection, symbolizing growth, coexistence, and the importance of community and relationships.

Mandalas, intricate geometric designs at the center of Lippan Art pieces, symbolize the universe. Acting as visual aids for meditation and spiritual reflection, they invite viewers on a journey inward, fostering a connection with one's inner self and the cosmos.

Modern Lippan Art incorporates reflections of various forms, known as 'aabhla.' These mirrors, coming in diverse shapes, symbolize life's complexity and beauty. With the incorporation of modern materials like MDF timber sheets, Lippan Art adapts to contemporary tastes while preserving its cultural roots.

## Influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement

The 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed Lippan Art transcending its domestic origins, thanks to the Arts and

Crafts Movement. This movement aimed to revive traditional craftsmanship and played a pivotal role in elevating Lippan Art beyond rural homes. Artisans began creating larger, more intricate pieces that transcended the boundaries of domestic decor, finding their way into homes, shops, and even art galleries, earning recognition for their aesthetic and cultural significance.

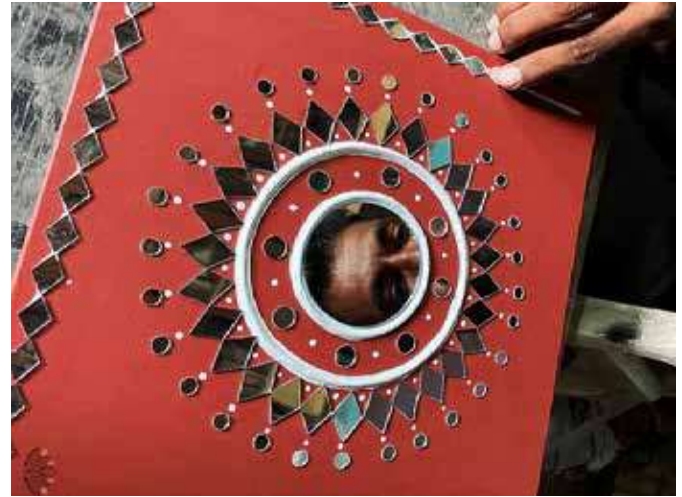
In recent decades, Lippan Art has experienced a resurgence, both within Gujarat and on the global stage. Artisans, recognizing the timeless appeal of this craft, have adapted traditional designs to suit contemporary tastes. Additionally, the craft has gained recognition through exhibitions, fairs, and collaborative efforts between artisans and designers. Today, Lippan Art stands as a shining example of how tradition and innovation can coexist harmoniously.





## Empowerment Through Lippan Art Transforming Lives in Gujarat

Lippan Art, known for its intricate mud and mirror work, isn't just a craft for aesthetic pleasure; it's a lifeline for many rural artisans in Gujarat, India. This chapter spotlights the remarkable stories of empowerment that have emerged from the world of Lippan Art, showcasing how it has transformed from a traditional craft into a source of income, dignity, and hope for countless individuals and communities. Traditionally, Lippan designs adorned the interiors of homes, reflecting both practicality and aesthetics. However, as the demand for Lippan Art grew, artisans recognized its potential to support their families. A striking aspect of Lippan Art's empowerment narrative is the prominent role played by women. In many instances, women artisans are at the forefront of this craft, serving as breadwinners for their families. This shift in gender roles, from homemakers to skilled artisans and entrepreneurs, is a testament to the transformative power of Lippan Art.



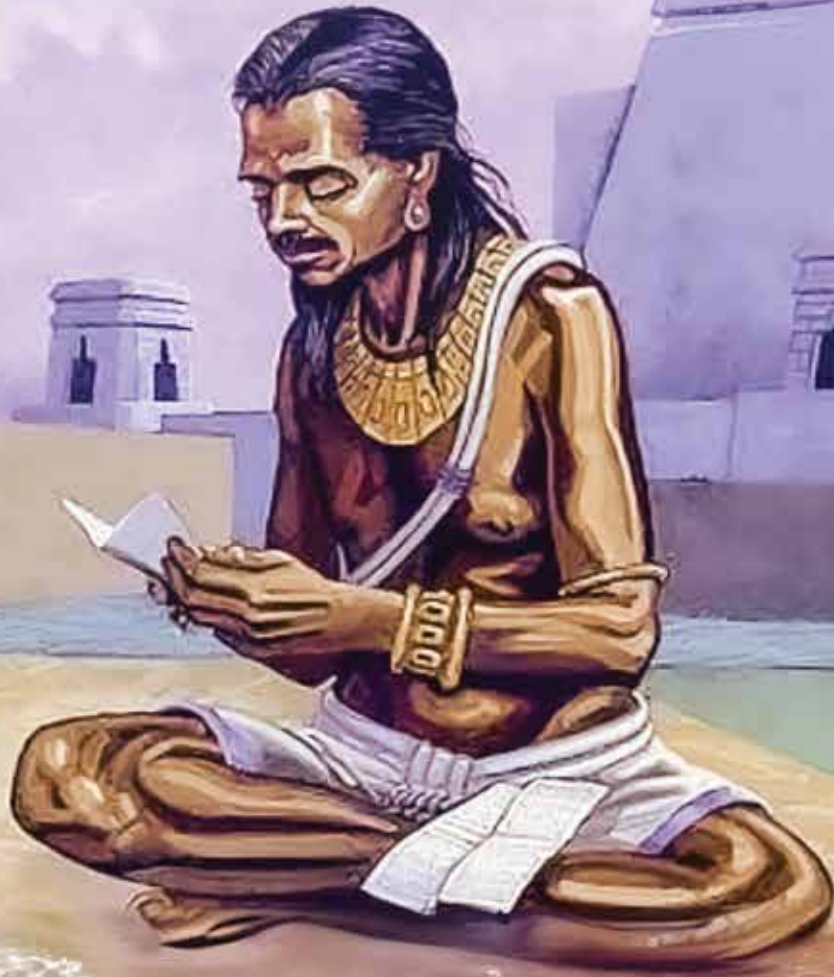
## Preservation of Cultural Identity

Lippan Art also serves as a vehicle for preserving cultural identity. Artisans take pride in creating pieces that reflect the rich cultural heritage of Gujarat. They infuse their creations with traditional motifs and designs, passing down cultural narratives to the next generation. In this way, Lippan Art becomes a powerful tool for cultural preservation and continuity. Beyond personal empowerment, Lippan Art fosters a sense of community. Artisans often work in groups or collectives, where they share knowledge, collaborate on projects, and offer each other support. This sense of belonging strengthens social bonds and provides a safety net in times of need.

Lippan Art, with its origins in ancient mud designs and its evolution into intricate mirror-adorned artworks, stands as a bridge connecting traditions, empowering lives, and narrating stories of resilience, pride, and hope. From the sacred circles representing the cycle of life to mirrors dispelling negativity, each element in Lippan Art tells a story. Each mirror, symbol, and pattern is a thread telling stories of unity, protection, prosperity, and the rhythms of life. Appreciating Lippan Art goes beyond its beauty; it offers a glimpse into the profound beliefs and values shaping this remarkable craft, enriching our understanding of India's cultural heritage. ■

# BRAHMAGUPTA

Breakthroughs in Mathematics  
and Astronomy





**Prof. Francis Arackal**

*Prof. Francis Arackal is a Catholic priest and retired professor of Vedanta. He has received recognition from UGC for his post-doctoral work.*

Brahmagupta, a luminary in the realms of mathematics and astronomy, left an indelible mark on the intellectual landscape of ancient India. This revered scholar's legacy would endure through the ages, influencing generations to come. His multifaceted genius manifested in his seminal works, where he meticulously unraveled the mysteries of numbers and celestial bodies.

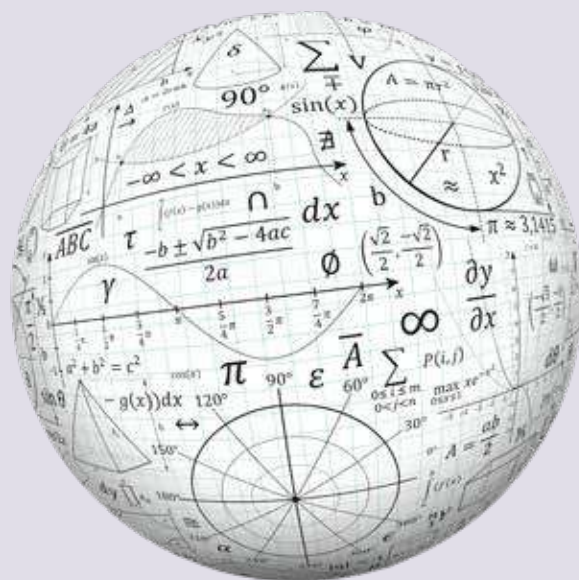
Among Brahmagupta's most distinguished contributions stands the *Brahmasphutasiddhanta*, a magnum opus that saw the light of day in the year AD 628. Aptly translating to the 'correctly established doctrine of Brahma,' this monumental treatise comprised 25 chapters, each a testament to the author's profound understanding of the cosmic order. Composed with intellectual rigor, the *Brahmasphutasiddhanta* delved into the intricate interplay of mathematical principles and astronomical phenomena, showcasing Brahmagupta's virtuosity in both disciplines. He wrote it at Bhillamala which today is the city of

Bhinmal which is the capital of the territory ruled by the Gurjara dynasty.

## Life and Work

Brahmagupta was born in AD 598 in Bhillamal city which is modern Bhinimal in the state of Rajasthan. His life unfolded during the reign of the Harsha empire, where he likely thrived under the patronage of King Vyaghramukha, possibly serving as a royal scholar. In recognition of his deep connection to Bhillamal, Brahmagupta is often referred to as Bhillamalacharya, signifying his role as the esteemed teacher hailing from Bhillamal. He was the head of the astronomical observatory at Ujjain and during his tenure, four books were written on mathematics and astronomy: 1) *Cadamekela* in 624, *Brahmasphutasiddhanta* in 628, *Khandakhadyaka* in 665 and *Durkeamynarda* in 672.

The historian Al Biruni (c.1050) in his book *Tariq-al-Hind* states that the Abbasid Caliph Al- Mamun had an embassy in India and from India a book was brought to Bagdad, which was translated



into Arabic as *Sirhind*. It is generally presumed that *Sirhind* is none other than Brahmagupta's *Brahmasphutasiddhanta*.

## Mathematics

In *Brahmasphutasiddhanta*, he invented many formulas and mathematical properties. It is composed in elliptic verse, as was common practice in Indian mathematics, and as a result it has a poetic ring to it. As no proof is given, it is unknown how Brahmagupta's mathematics was derived.

## Algebra

Brahmagupta gave the solution of the general linear equation in chapter eighteen of *Brahmasphutasiddhanta*. According to the prescribed method outlined in 18:51, the process involves subtracting colors that differ from the first color. The resulting remainder, when divided by the coefficient of the first color, serves as the measure for the initial term. This process is iteratively applied in pairs, considering them as similar divisors. In cases where multiple colors

are involved, the utilization of a pulverisor is recommended to facilitate the solution.

Similar to the algebra of the Diaphanous, Brahmagupta's algebra was concise and syncopated. Addition involved placing numbers side by side, subtraction was denoted by a dot over the subtrahend, and division was indicated by aligning the divisor and dividend, resembling our modern notation but without the use of a horizontal bar.

Multiplication, evolution, and unknown quantities were represented by abbreviations of appropriate terms. The extent of Greek influence on this syncopation, if any, is not known and it is possible that both Greek and Indian Syncopation may be derived from a common Babylonian source.

## Arithmetic

In the opening of Chapter Twelve of *Brahmasphutasiddhanta*, titled "Calculation," Brahmagupta intricately elucidates operations on fractions. While assuming a foundational understanding of basic arithmetic operations, extending to the computation of square roots, he takes the reader through the methodology for determining both cubes and cube roots of integers.



*Brahmagupta made use of an important concept on mathematics, the number Zero. The Brahmasphutasiddhanta is the earliest known text to treat Zero as a number in its own right.*



Subsequently, he expounds upon rules that simplify the calculation of squares and square roots, thereby enhancing the reader's grasp of these mathematical concepts.

## Series

Brahmagupta then goes on to give the sum of the square's cubes of the first  $n$  integers.

In 12:20, he establishes a formula stating that the sum of the squares is the product of that sum and twice the number of steps, increased by one, divided by three. Furthermore, he articulates that the sum of the cubes is derived from the square of the aforementioned sum. Additionally, Brahmagupta notes that computations for piles containing identical balls can be determined using these principles.

It is important to note here Brahmagupta found the result in terms of the sum of the first  $n$  integers, rather than in terms of  $n$  as is the modern practice. He gives the sum of the squares of the first  $n$  natural numbers as  $n(n+1)(2n+1)/6$  and the sum of the cubes of the first  $n$  natural numbers as  $(n(n+1)/2)^2$

## Zero

Brahmagupta's profound contributions to mathematics included the groundbreaking incorporation of the number zero as a fundamental concept. Within the pages of the *Brahmasphutasiddhanta*, he elevated zero from a mere placeholder, as seen in Babylonian numerals, or a symbol denoting a lack of quantity, as employed by Ptolemy and the Romans. This distinction marked Brahmagupta's work as the earliest known text recognizing zero as a legitimate number in its own right.

In Chapter Eighteen of the *Brahmasphutasiddhanta*,

Brahmagupta delves into the realm of negative numbers, providing a comprehensive treatment of their operations. The initial focus lies on addition and subtraction, as elucidated in 18:30. According to his explanations, the sum of two positives is positive, two negatives yield a negative sum, and the sum of a positive and a negative is determined by their difference; equality results in zero. Furthermore, Brahmagupta establishes rules for operations involving negative numbers and zero in 18:32. He clarifies that a negative minus zero is negative, a positive minus zero is positive, and zero minus zero equals zero. Notably, when subtracting a positive from a negative or vice versa, the operation is treated as addition.

## Pythagorean Triples

In Chapter twelve of his *Brahmasphutasiddhanta*, Brahmagupta finds Pythagorean triples. In 12:39, the height of a mountain multiplied by a given multiplier is the distance to a city; it is not erased. When it is divided by the multiplier increased by two, it is the leap of one. Of the two who make the same journey or in another words, for a given length  $m$  and an arbitrary multiplier  $x$ , let  $a = mx$  and  $b = m + mx/(x+2)$ . Then  $m$ ,  $a$ , and  $b$  form a Pythagorean triple.

## Pell's Equation

Brahmagupta went on to give a recurrence relation for generating solutions to certain instances of Diophantine equations of the second degree such as  $Nx^2 + 1 = y^2$  (called Pell's equation) by using the Euclidean algorithm. The Euclidean algorithm was known to him as the "pulveriser" since it breaks number down in ever smaller pieces.

## Geometry

### Brahmagupta's formula

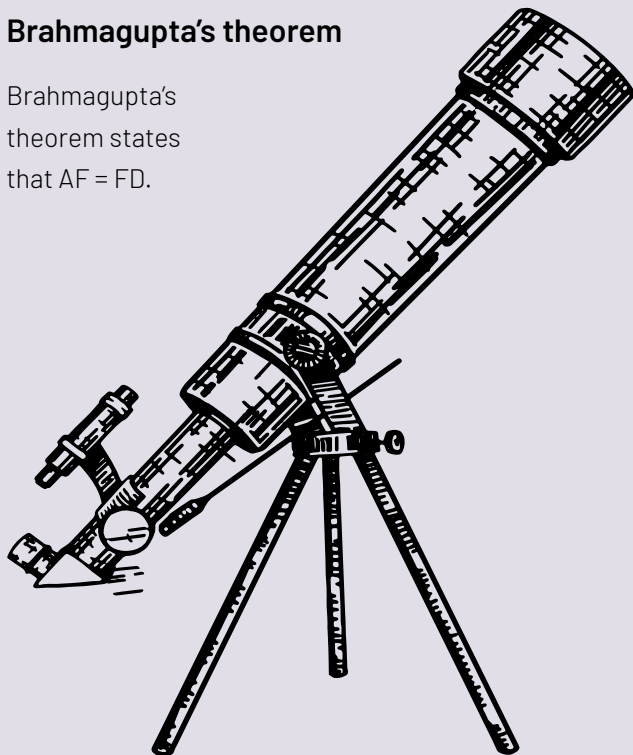
Brahmagupta's most famous result in Geometry is his formula for cyclic quadrilaterals. Given the lengths of the sides of any cyclic quadrilateral, Brahmagupta gave an approximate and an exact formula for the figure's area; the approximate area is the product of the halves of the sums of the sides and the opposite sides of a triangle and a quadrilateral. The accurate [area] is the square root from the product of the halves of the sums of the sides diminished by [each] side of the quadrilateral.

### Triangles

Brahmagupta dedicated a substantial portion of his work to geometry. In 12:22, the base decreased and increased by the difference between the squares of the sides divided by the base; when divided by two they are the true segments. The perpendicular [altitude] is the square-root from the square of a side diminished by the square of its segment.

### Brahmagupta's theorem

Brahmagupta's theorem states that  $AF = FD$ .



Brahmagupta continues, in 12:23 that the square-root of the sum of the two products of the sides and opposite sides of a non-unequal quadrilateral is the diagonal. The square of the diagonal is diminished by the square of half the sum of the base and the top; the square-root of the perpendicular [altitude].

### Measurements and Constructions

In some of the verses before verse 40, Brahmagupta gives construction of various figures with arbitrary sides. He essentially manipulated right triangles to produce isosceles triangles, scalene triangles, rectangles, isosceles trapezoids, isosceles trapezoids with three equal sides, and a scalene cyclic quadrilateral.

After giving the value of pi, he deals with the geometry of playing figures and solids, such as finding volumes and surface areas, (or empty spaces dug out of solids). He finds the volume of rectangular prisms, pyramids, and the frustum of a square pyramid. He further finds the average depths of a series of pits. For the volume of the frustum of a pyramid, he gives the "pragmatic" value as the depth times the square of the mean of the edges of the top and bottom faces, and he gives the "superficial" volume as the depth times their mean area.

### Trigonometry

**Sine table:** In chapter 2 of his *Brahmasphutasiddhanta*, entitled Planetary True Longitudes, Brahmagupta presents a sine table:

The sine's: The progenitors, twins: Ursa Major, twins, the Vedas; the gods, fires, six: flavor's, dice, the gods; the moon, fire, the sky, the moon, arrows, suns [.....]

Here Brahmagupta uses names of objects to represent the digits of place-value numerals, as was common with numerical data in Sanskrit treatises. Progenitors represents the 14 Progenitors ("Manu") in Indian cosmology or 14, "twins" means 2 "Ursa Major" represents the seven stars of Ursa Major or 7, "Vedas" refers to the 4 Vedas or 4, dice represents the number of sides of the tradition dice or 6, and so on.

## Astronomy

It was through the *Brahmasphutasiddhanta* that the Arabs learned of Indian astronomy. The famous Abbasid caliph Al-Mansur (712-775) founded in Baghdad, which is situated on the banks of the river Tigris, and made it a Centre of learning. The caliph invited a scholar of Ujjain by the name of Kankah in 770 A.D. Kankah used the *Brahmasphutasiddhanta*

to explain the Hindu system of arithmetic astronomy. Muhammad Al-Fazari translated Brahmagupta's work into Arabic upon the request of the caliph.

Some of the important contributions made by Brahmagupta in astronomy are: methods for calculating the position of the heavenly bodies over time (ephemerides), their rising and setting, conjunctions, and the calculations of solar and lunar eclipses. Brahmagupta criticized the Puranic view that the earth was flat or hollow. Instead, he observed that the earth and heaven were spherical and that the Earth is moving. In 1030 A.D. the Muslim astronomer Abu Al-Rayhan Al-Biruni, in his *Tarikh Al-Hind*, later translated into Latin as *Indicia*, commented on Brahmagupta's work. ■

**FULLMARKS**

**ORANGE HOUSE PVT LTD**  
Your Knowledge Partner  
Corporate Office: 9, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002

**ORANGE**



With best compliments from :

# MARINA PUBLICATIONS PVT. LTD.

## EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHERS

### OUR UNITS



**Spring Hill**  
EDUCATIONAL LEARNING



**Turtle Books**  
(A Unit of Marina Publications Pvt. Ltd.)



**Edugrow Publications**  
(A Unit of Marina Publications Pvt. Ltd.)



**Amrita Prakashan**  
(A Unit of Marina Publications Pvt. Ltd.)



**Aditi Prakashan**  
(A Unit of Marina Publications Pvt. Ltd.)

**Aditya (Executive Director) +91-8130595619 • Sudhir (Managing Director) +91-9415203826**

**Adm. Off. :** 4/37 Site-2, UPSIDC Industrial Area, Ajanta Compound, Mohan Nagar, Sahibabad  
**Delhi NCR - 201007 • Mob. :** +91-8130194610

**Regd. Off. :** D 54/155-11 Srinagar Colony, Ramkund, Luxa, **Varanasi - 221010 • Mob. :** +91-9452008021, 7753888106



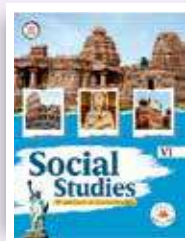
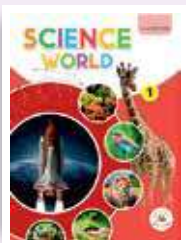
[info@marinapublications.com](mailto:info@marinapublications.com)



[www.marinapublications.com](http://www.marinapublications.com)

**LUCKNOW • BHOPAL • RAIPUR • PATNA • BANGALORE • GUWAHATI • KOLKATA • PRAYAGRAJ • RANCHI • JAIPUR**

Our digital footprints to empower and accelerate progress in school education.



**SCAN**  
FOR  
CATALOGUE



Scan by Google Lens