

## **FINAL REPORT**

of “**Promotion of Tribal & Culture in Jangal Mahal**” under the Scheme Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India, sanctioned under Sanction Letter No: **28-6/ICH-Scheme/135/2014-15/11390**, Dated: **5th February, 2015**.

India has a rich tribal cultural tradition. The existence of the tribal is interwoven with music and dance, rituals and ceremonies. There are dances and songs for every occasion- religious dances, agricultural dances, hunting dances, marriages dances, festival dances. There are ceremonies from birth to death and no ceremony is complete without dance and music.

Tribes have occupied a large section of the total population of West Bengal. The state is the abode of numerous tribes who reside in the rural parts of the state. Their culture, religion, costumes, tradition have enriched the culture and tradition of West Bengal. Most of the people of the tribal groups of West Bengal speak in Bengali with their own localized accent. In fact these tribes are quite proud of their enriched culture and language. Variant dialects are also equally popular amongst these tribes of West Bengal. They are, in general, confined to the rural part of the state. However, a small portion of this population has now moved to the urban part, in search for employment and a better lifestyle.

Tribal communities in Jangal Mahal area have variety and complexity in the belief systems as well as practices and culture also tradition of the state that are documented through their oral epics and songs. Tribal communities too have their legends about the birth and meaning of the universe. In general, the tribes that remain geographically isolated are able to retain their traditional cultures and religions longer. As far as the languages are concerned, the tribes of West Bengal state converse with each other in different languages. These tribes of the area too possess their distinct tradition and ethnicity, they communicate in their local dialect and they also maintain their own tradition. They are either nomadic or live in the periphery of civilized life are prone for drastic changes. Most of the tribal beliefs and rituals are highly localized and they are not influenced by the other part of the world. A number of tribal communities have resided and built their settlements in several hilly and mountain areas of West Bengal. And majority of the population of tribes are inhabitants of the forests or bordering localities of the forest area. A blend of culture, religion and ethnicity is represented by the tribes of West Bengal. They are also known for their costumes, cultural habits, folk dance and songs, food

and their own way of celebrating different festivals and occasion. There is uniqueness in their cultural habits and folks. Each and every tribe community has their own style and methods of folk. Dance drama form enacted with several famous stories of the great epics and executed at religious festivals and various social and family occasions.

Governments of India have spent large sums on different facets of development, the investment in heritage revitalisation has not been commensurate with the broad social needs and its intrinsic value. There needs to be more emphasis on the fact that economic and technical development should go hand in hand with the safeguarding of heritage. The cultural dimension of development needs to be brought into a sharper focus. The concept of development has to be redefined in these terms. In particular, it is also necessary to emphasise the linkage of the development elements to the cultural elements, including local relevance to geographical and environmental factors, historical traditions, traditional knowledge and skill, etc. The importance of the aesthetic and artistic dimensions of life should also be fully recognized.

However, We tried to bridge the gap by charting their own policies on the protection of the culture and heritage of the respective regions. To cite an example, The policy outlines conditions conducive to more satisfactory self-expression and participation in cultural life by the people without distinction of race, caste, creed and language. It recognises the need to develop strategies to sensitise people, particularly the young, to creative expression in a framework of values which are generally accepted as those which enrich the quality of life.

India has a long tradition of service and transformation of its heritage through voluntary agencies. A good deal of public support is essential for the enhancement of heritage management and revival. There are thousands of institutions in the voluntary NGO sector in the country which play a crucial role in fostering activities relating to several aspects of intangible cultural heritage. The motivation of the people who are participants in the process of revitalisation of aspects of heritage is of utmost importance to the successful design and implementation of such programmes.

However the tribal artists and cultural practitioners themselves should also upgrade their skill and acclimatize with the current socio-economic and socio-cultural trend of the broader society. While formulating the creative compositions like folklores community song & dance

etc. the tribal artists should modify the content of composition or pattern of expression in order to gratify the need and demand of the common people of the community as well as broader society. The performers of the Tribal/Folk Arts and Culture should continually upgrade their creative flair and operational skill so that they themselves can play a proactive role in bolstering the foundation and ensuring the sustainability of Tribal Arts and Culture. They should adopt a proactive stance in carrying the rich cultural legacy of India and proceed forward in pursuit of functional excellence.

It is clearly evident that tribal art & culture is of immense importance in ensuring national integrity, communal harmony, diversified socio-cultural identity of the various corners of our country and our adherence to the traditional value-system of our nation. The project is of immense importance because it has made an attempt to promotion the current status of Tribal Arts & Culture. It has tried to explore the utility of Govt. Schemes in the Preservation, Promotion and Dissemination of Tribal/ folk Arts & Culture. The direct interaction with the Tribal people and the cultural groups involved in promoting the Tribal Arts & Culture is expected to throw light upon the significant issues, critical problems and daunting challenges relevant to the subject of study. Utilizing such instrumental informative input can more effectively review the schemes for enshrining and promoting Tribal Arts & Culture in West Bengal. The project will definitely help the formulation of prudent programs to safeguard, propagate promote and preserve of Tribal/ Folk Arts & Culture in West Bengal.

Religion has a very important role in the formation of identity of each society. It is the shell of cultural formation. The individuals in a society are born into them. It is through these customs and practices that social solidarity remains. Pre-existing cultural rules determine our ideas and behaviour through socialization. Societies are made up of structures of cultural rules, established beliefs and practices to which their members are expected to conform. Each social structure has unique customs and practices as well as systems of beliefs. Folk arts and beliefs play an important role in the timely reforms and establishing of these customs and practices.

Religion and ethnic culture take an important role in the formation of the social structure. Our society consists of structural units based on structural pluralism. Folk arts and folk songs play an important role in their survival. They stand in relation to the power system in every society. Power system is related to caste, gender and economic status. Folklore opposes the power structure and compromise with it. They preserve ethnic identity also.

Apart from creating cultural identity, tribal-art forms have other great social missions. The most important is the collective conscience they produce. The integrity of individuals and equipping them to meet social challenges are a part of this. If the influence exerted by this collective representation is lost, that loss leads an individual to the loss of his self. This is the most important among the complex crises faced by modern society. In the tribal-arts there is no distinction between the actor and the spectator. As the spectator himself becomes a part of the art the artist becomes a part of social integrity

The implementation of the said Project at Village- Muraboni, Post Office- Kharbandhi, Police Station- Beliaberah, Sub Division- Jhargram, District- Paschim Medinipur, State- West Bengal. It started on March 2015 and it was completed on August 2015.

The traditional media viz., folk/tribal art and culture have played a very important role in solving several emotional problems and channelizing the destructive forces into constructive ones. In India, too, music, dance and drama have always played an important role in combating destructive elements and in harmonizing emotional outburst relating to caste, creed, religion and language issues. Several folk forms of entertainment, prevalent in different parts of India, were powerful media of public instruction and a unifying force for emotional integrity. They brought the poor and rich together. Thousands of people, suffering from domestic and psychological problems, used to witness them as a relief to their perplexed life. Such healthy entertainment did dissuade the human beings from destructive activities.

Among the various tribal groups of West Bengal, most significant tribes are the Santal, Bhumij, Mahali, Lodha/ Kheria, Munda Tribe, Oraon Tribe, Bhutia etc. These tribes comprises of less than one-tenth of the total population of the state. Each of these tribes has their own history of origin and some of them are said to be in connection with Bengal before the independence. Fair and festivals are enjoyed with great merriment among the tribal groups of West Bengal.

In the districts of West Midnapur, Purulia, Bankura under West Bengal state are termed as 'Jangal Mahal' area. Where the aboriginal Santals, Mundas, Lodhas, Kharias, Kurmis, Bhumij & Sabars tribe reside among the jungle bided areas. The captioned area of Jangal Mahal is the 'Golden Treasury' of Tribal Art & Culture. The aboriginal tribes express their attitude through dances in social function, Religious Rites and Natural Events. There is a cultural

diversification in connection with the tribal dances of Western-Part of West Bengal. It is seen war motive, seasonal motive and religious motives in their dances.

It is clearly evident that tribal art & culture is of immense importance in ensuring national integrity, communal harmony, diversified socio-cultural identity of the various corners of our country and our adherence to the traditional value-system of our nation. The project is of immense importance because it has made an attempt to promotion the current status of Tribal Arts & Culture. It has tried to explore the utility of Govt. Schemes in the Preservation, Promotion and Dissemination of Tribal/ folk Arts & Culture. The direct interaction with the Tribal people and the cultural groups involved in promoting the Tribal Arts & Culture is expected to throw light upon the significant issues, critical problems and daunting challenges relevant to the subject of study. Utilizing such instrumental informative input can more effectively review the schemes for enshrining and promoting Tribal Arts & Culture in West Bengal. The project will definitely help the formulation of prudent programs to safeguard, propagate promot and preserve of Tribal/ Folk Arts & Culture in West Bengal.

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On completion of the project period, one group meeting held in between all trainees/ artists/ trainers. A Historical gathering will also arranged centrally in Jhargram. A discussion and demonstrations on Tribal Art & Culture amongst Artists, Gurus, Researcher and Govt. officials will also programmed. Thereafter a whole day of Cultural Programme on Tribal Art & Culture organized at Jhargram. Many distinguished personalities and Scholars of different Blocks were honor in the Carnival. It consist mainly Tribal Art & Culture by the groups. The gala programme will be documented and sent to the concerned authority.

We have selected 50 numbers of tribal artistes among the tribal groups and 2 numbers trainers (Gurus) for tribal dance and two for tribal song from the area of Jangalmahal. The training

period continued six months from date of commencement of the project. We have trained and already staged many performance on local festival and faire (*Mela*) to promote the tribal art & culture in our area.

The following activities are taken in order to sustain the survival and promotion of Tribal Art & Culture in eastern part of India. (i) the health care, social security of the young artistes and gurus has to be assured. (ii) there should be identification of Akhras, Gurus and artists. Document is to be prepared for ready reference. (iii) their needs be redressed at door step by autonomous organisations. (iv) the artists be given regular diets, health check up and medical treatment and secured means of livelihood. (v) Yoga Mudra are to be taught and practiced by the dancers daily. (vi) health care be provided at regular intervals and use of liquor and intoxicants be forbidden (vii) Like the incentives provided to the sportsmen under the policy decision of the Govt. of India, Department of cultural affairs should give scope and privilege to artists such as reservation in government services and other facilities. Now that national and international attentions have been drawn to this dance, it should get its recognition it deserves. The government, general public and the administration must change their attitude in this regard, so that this valuable art can survive in the age of Information Technology and Audio-Visual Media. These thrust areas are to be thought upon and touched. The approval of University and Government are needed for institutionalising it.

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The promotion of Tribal Art & Culture under the project is commenced from March 2015 and it completed on August 2015.

It is a fact that rapid urbanization, cultural aggression and imitation are always trying to overpower the age-old tribal culture of the area. The traditional Tribal Art & Culture are at the verge of extinction. There is a national urge to save these customary cultures of Tribes to control rock-culture.

Culture is a great enabler. It fosters social inclusion. We use culture both as a product and as a process. Culture is innovatively used for skill empowerment at grass roots level to build micro enterprise. Cultural traditions are revitalized through training, exposure and promotion. New markets are created and new brands are developed to promote traditional performing and visual arts. Culture thus offers new options for livelihood. Our motto is “To preserve art, let the artists survive”.

*(Nirmalendu Pahari)*