

Blueprint for “Chhau Dance ( Purulia): Workshops and Training programmes” under the Scheme Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India, sanctioned under Sanction Letter No: **28-6/ICH-Scheme/73/2013-14/13657**, Dated: **31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014**.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **“Chhau Dance (Purulia): Workshops and Training programmes”**

The major folk dance performed in the state of West Bengal is the Purulia Chhau Dance. It is one of the famous tribal martial dances in India. Initiated in the Chhau Dance is performed in Bengal to celebrate the sun festival. Themes of Chhau Dance are based on two historical Indian epics—Ramayana & Mahabharata.

The mask is an integral part of Bengal Chhau Dance. It liberates the dancer from the limiting influence of the face and puts a greater burden on the movements of the body. The body moves it bring the mask alive. Purulia masks are rustic; their wide-open eyes give a sense of speed and gusto. In both cases a headdress complements the mask. The masks are made of pulp and indigenous colours and decorated with peacock feathers, jaris and hairs. The masks are fascinating products of superb craftsmanship.

While the faces of the Chhau Dancers are covered with masks of various mythical characters, the expressions of the form are shown through movements of the hands and feet. Vigorous jumps, hops and other similar energetic moves of the Dancers set the mood of Chhau.

The general structure of Chhau Dance in Bengal comprises of a group of men some of whom enact the divine characters while some others play the role of demonic figures. The Dance primarily depicts the dynamic victory of the good spirits over the evil ones.

Performed during the night hours, Chhau Dance of Bengal demands an open area, generally village grounds, where the Dancers can freely make movements with their limbs. Chhau Dancers generally wear bright shades of clothes like that of green, red, yellow and black. Men who play the role of Gods use red, green and yellow colors, while those who enact the devils' part wear black costumes.

The music that accompanies Chhau is played on three instruments: A Shenai – wind instrument, the Dhamsa kettle drum and the Dholak or Dhol, a drum carried on a shoulder strap that is beaten by a thin stick at one end and by the hand at the other end. The dholak player acts as a kind of picador or ring master to the dancers, running forward and shouting as if to goads them into dancing.

From a very early age, Chhau Dance is occupying a significant position in the Dance tradition of Bengal and today it is seen as one of the most popular artistic excellence of Bengal.

## **2. OBJECTIVE**

The Chhau artistes of West Bengal are mostly small farmers and daily labours but many of them are engaged in some other occupations like carpentry, weaving, hunting, fishing etc. Rice is the staple food of the people of Bengal. Some of the tribes are adept in art and culture and their creation give evidence to the exclusive tribal culture. They are truly skilled in creating splendour to its outstanding works on Chhau dance. Lack of financial assistance they are unable to perform their skill on culture. So that any financial support from government help them and also help the intangible heritage culture like Chhau dance to strengthening, protecting, preserving and promoting the rich intangible cultural heritage of India.

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 rare Tribal dances are at the verge of extinction. There is a national urge to save these customary folk-dances like Chhau Dance of Tribes to control rock-culture.

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION**

We have already selected 20 numbers (Chhau Dancer- 15 Nos, Chhau Singer- 2 Nos. & Chhau Musician- 3 Nos) of Chhau trainees/ artistes among the tribal groups and 2 numbers trainers (Gurus) one for Chhau dance and one for Chhau music and song from the area of Jangalmahal. The training period will be continue four months from date of commencement of the project.

The following activities may be made in order to sustain the survival of Chhau dance 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) performance of dance timing may be made from 6 P.M. to 10 P.M. (vii) health care be provided at regular intervals and use of liquor and intoxicants be forbidden (viii) 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 Chhau 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.

#### **4. TIME FRAME OF THE PROJECT**

The workshop will be commenced from June 2014 to September 2014.

#### **5. SPECIFIC AREA OF THE PROJECT**

In the districts of West Midnapur, Purulia, Bankura under West Bengal state are termed as 'Jangalmahal' area. Where the aboriginal *Santals*, *Mundas*, *Lodhas*, *Kharias* and *Sabars* tribe reside among the jungle bided areas. The captioned area of *Jangalmahal* is the 'Golden Treasury' of folk dances. 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.

**Address of the Project** : Village- Chhenrabono, Post Office- Dahijuri, Police Station- Jhargram, District- Paschim Medinipur, State- West Bengal.

#### **6. PHOTOS OF THE CHHAU DANCE**



## **7. CONCLUSION OF THE PROJECT**

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 belt, in search for employment and a better lifestyle. 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”.

After completion four months of the project period, one group meeting will be held in between all trainees/ artists/ students & trainers. A Historical gathering will also be arranged. A Discussion and demonstrations about Chhau Dance amongst Artists, Gurus, Researcher and Govt. officials will also be programmed. An honorarium will be provided to the artistes and gurus on the event to encourage them. The gala programme will be documented and sent to the concern department.

*(Nirmalendu Pahari)*

Secretary

**LOKAYATA SANSKRITI PARISHAT**



## **Scheme for “Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India”**

### **Form for National Inventory Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage of India**

- A. Name of the State : West Bengal
- B. Name of the Element/Cultural Tradition (in English) : Chhau Dance
- B.1. Name of the element in the language and script of the community Concerned, if applicable : Bengali
- C. Name of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned (Identify clearly either of these concerned with the practice of the said element/cultural tradition) : Among the various tribal groups of West Bengal, most significant tribes are the Santal, Bhumij, Mahali, Lodha/ Kheria, Munda Tribe etc are situated at the area of Jangal Mahal. The festivals and occasions of Bengal reflect in the fasts and festivals of the tribal groups of this region. Most of the people of the tribal groups have adopted the religious culture of Bengal. Some of the gods and goddesses era worshipped by the tribal groups of this region.
- D. Geographical location and range of the element/cultural tradition (Please write about the other states in which the said element/tradition is present : Jhargram, District- Paschim Medinipur, State- West Bengal, PIN- 721507.  
Other State : Jharkhand, Odissa.
- E. Identification and definition of the element/cultural tradition of the India  
(Write “Yes” in one or more boxes to identify the domain(s) of intangible cultural heritage manifested by the element. If you tick ‘others’, specify the domain(s) in brackets.)
- (Yes) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage
  - (Yes) performing arts
  - (Yes) social practices, rituals and festive events
  - (Yes) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
  - ( ) traditional craftsmanship
  - other(s) ( )

- F. Provide a brief summary description of the element that can introduce it to readers who have never seen or experienced it

The major folk dance performed in the state of West Bengal is the Chhau Dance. It is one of the famous tribal martial dances in India. Initiated in the Chhau Dance is performed in Bengal to celebrate the sun festival. Themes of Chhau Dance are based on two historical Indian epics—Ramayana & Mahabharata. Masks are an integral part of the dances of Seraikella and Purulia. Chhau dance has a significant role in the celebration of the spring festival Chaitra Parva, being intimately connected to its rituals. It is a people's art as it involves the entire community. Performed by male dancers of families of traditional artists, or those trained under Gurus or Ustads (masters). It traces its origin to indigenous forms of dance and martial practices. Khel (mock combat techniques), chalis and topkas (stylized gaits of birds and animals) and uflis (movements modeled on the daily chores of a village housewife) constitute the fundamental vocabulary of Chhau dance. The knowledge of dance, music and mask-making is transmitted orally. It is performed in an open space called akhada or asar and lasts through the night. The dancers perform a repertoire that explores a variety of subjects: local legends, folklore and episodes from the epics Ramayana/Mahabharata and abstract themes. The vibrant music is characterized by the rhythm of indigenous drums like the dhol, dhumsa and kharka and the melody of the mohuri and shehnai.

Performed during the night hours, Chhau Dance of Bengal demands an open area, generally village grounds, where the Dancers can freely make movements with their limbs. Chhau Dancers generally wear bright shades of clothes like that of green, red, yellow and black. Men who play the role of Gods use red, green and yellow colors, while those who enact the devils' part wear black costumes.

The music that accompanies Chhau is played on three instruments: A Shenai – wind instrument, the Dhamsa kettle drum and the Dholak or Dhol, a drum carried on a shoulder strap that is beaten by a thin stick at one end and by the hand at the other end. The dholak player acts as a kind of picador or ring master to the dancers, running forward and shouting as if to goads them into dancing.

From a very early age, Chhau Dance is occupying a significant position in the Dance tradition of Bengal and today it is seen as one of the most popular artistic excellence of Bengal.

- G. Who are the bearers and practitioners of the element/Cultural Traditions? Are there any specific roles or categories of persons with special responsibilities for the practice and transmission of it? If yes, who are they and what are their responsibilities?

Chhau seems to be a generic name of a group of stylistically varying dances. It ranges from simple folk to highly evolved styles. All these styles of dances are called Chhau. To distinguish one from the other the use of an epithet has now become inevitable. The three most representative styles of chhau have as their epithets the names of the places where they developed under the patronage of the respective feudal nobility. They are known as Seraikelaa Chhau, Mayurbhanj Chhau, and Purulia Chhau, and the degree of sophistication which they acquired in the feudal courts is

in that descending order. Although they differ stylistically from one another, they have many similarities. The most important and significant similarity is that they are called simply by the generic name: Chhau. We have given the epithets for our convenience.

Since all the chhau dances, ranging from the simple folk to highly evolved, belong to the same family, each should have love and appreciation for the other styles and not a feeling of superiority over others. Each style has its own charm and aesthetic appeal. They are all fascinating in their own way and together they amply enrich the performing art heritage of this country.

H. How are the knowledge and skills related to the element transmitted today?

I. What social functions and cultural meanings do the element/cultural tradition have today for its community?

India is marked by its rich traditional heritage of Tribal/Folk Arts and Culture like Chhau Dance. Since the days of remote past, the diversified art & cultural forms generated by the tribal and rural people of India, have continued to evince their creative magnificence. Apart from their outstanding brilliance from the perspective of aesthetics, the folk art and culture forms have played an instrumental role in reinforcing national integrity, crystallizing social solidarity, fortifying communal harmony, intensifying value-system and promoting the elements of humanism among the people of the country. Thus the stupendous socio-cultural exclusivity of the multifarious communities at the different nooks and corners of our country are getting endangered. 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.

J. Is there any part of the element that is not compatible with existing international human rights instruments or with the requirement of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, or with sustainable development? I.e. describe any aspect of the element/cultural tradition that may be unacceptable to Law of the country or may be in opposition to practicing community's harmony with others.

K. Your Project's contribution to ensuring visibility, awareness and encouraging dialogue related to the element/cultural tradition



India has many strands to its cultural heritage, which require to survive, grow and evolve as living cultures. Factors such as the pace of socio-economic and environmental changes and the advent of new technologies are posing unprecedented threats to the continuity of these cultural heritages. Increasing awareness of these threats have brought about demands from communities not only to preserve and renew their languages, traditions and culture, but also to reinvigorate their cultural identity and creativity. In view of the increasing concern of the community to preserve and promote our heritage and to enable them to participate and contribute to its promotion, it was considered necessary to set up an organization which would facilitate and support institutions and individuals in this endeavour.

L. Information about the safeguarding measures that may protect or promote the element/cultural tradition.

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 belt, in search for employment and a better lifestyle. 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 rehearsal, 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".

- a. (Write "Yes" in one or more boxes to identify the safeguarding measures that have been and are currently being taken by the communities, groups or individuals concerned)
- i. ( ) transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education
  - ii. ( ) identification, documentation, research
  - iii. (Yes) preservation, protection
  - iv. (Yes) promotion, enhancement
  - v. (Yes) revitalization

- b. Write about the measures taken at local, state and national level by the Authorities to safeguard the element/cultural tradition?

It taken in local level under Jhargram Sub-division in West Medinipur District of West Bengal. Three months of training period already started on Purulia Chhau Dance under the scheme.

The following activities may be made in order to sustain the survival of Chhau dance 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) performance of dance timing may be made from 6 P.M. to 10 P.M. (vii) health care be provided at regular intervals and use of liquor and intoxicants be forbidden (viii) 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 Chhau 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. The act of copyright is also necessary from protecting it from plagiarists, so that Chhau could survive as a traditional martial art in the eastern part of India.

- M. Write about the threats, if any, to the element/cultural tradition related to its practice, visibility and future longevity. Give facts and relevant reasons based on the current scenario.

- N. Safeguarding measures proposed

(This section should identify and describe safeguarding measures to protect and promote the element/cultural tradition. Such measures should be concrete and can be implemented to formulate future cultural policy for safeguarding and promoting the element/cultural tradition in the state)

The tradition of Chhau dance reflects a composite culture of the contiguous regions of eastern part India. The legacy of Chhau has been passed down orally from one generation to another and the communities remain the sole custodians of the knowledge of its dance, music, instrument/ mask-making, costume design etc. Chhau Dance in its practice and performance is a symbolic representation of the lives of the communities within which it was nurtured. Their social customs, religious beliefs, folklore, mythologies, natural environment and even their routine occupations are essayed through its movement, vocabulary, the thematic content of its repertoire, its

melodies and rhythms as well as the masks and costumes. It takes from many diverse traditions and needs the collective participation of different sections of the community for both its practice and performance. Because of its deep connection to the lives of the people of this region Chhau dance is given immense importance in the rituals of Chaitra-Parva a significant festival celebrated in the month of April. Its history and evolution as a performing art is enmeshed with the history and growth of communities in this region. In present times, increase in industrialization, economic pressures, and the large presence of television entertainment are driving people and communities at large to lead isolated lives, often disconnected from their roots. Collective participation that strengthens communities is also being diminished. Traditional folklore and its teaching methodologies are in danger of being lost.

O. Community Participation

(Write about the participation of communities, groups and individuals related to the element/cultural tradition in formulation of your project)

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. Fair and festivals are enjoyed with great merriment among the tribal groups of West Bengal. The major folk dance performed in the state of West Bengal is the Chhau Dance. It is one of the famous tribal martial dances in India. Initiated in the Chhau Dance is performed in Bengal to celebrate the sun festival. Themes of Chhau Dance are based on two historical Indian epics– Ramayana & Mahabharata. First we appointed one numbers of surveyor for selecting 20 Nos. Chhau artist/ participant under the age of 18 years to 30 years under tribal groups and Chhau dance Directors/ Gurus from the target area. The training period will continue for full project period. During the project period, one group meeting will be held in every three months between all artists & directors. Training, discussion and demonstrations about to Chhau Dance amongst Artists, Gurus, Researcher and Government officials will also be programmed.

P. Concerned community organization(s) or representative(s)

(Provide detailed contact information for each community organization or representative or other non-governmental organization that is concerned with the element such as associations, organizations, clubs, guilds, steering committees, etc.)

- i. Name of the entity : Lokayata Sanskriti Parishat
- ii. Name and title of the contact person : Nirmalendu Pahari
- iii. Address : Bachhurdoaba, P.O.- Jhargram, Dist.- Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal. PIN- 721507.
- iv. Telephone number : 9932825816
- v. E-mail : lokayata\_jhargram@rediffmail.com
- vi. Other relevant information

- Q. Give information of any Inventory, database or data creation centre (local/state/national) that you may be aware of or of any office, agency, organisation or body involved in the maintenance of the said inventory etc.
- R. Principal published references or documentation available on the element/cultural tradition  
(Books, articles, audio-visual materials, names and addresses of reference libraries, museums, private endeavours of artistes/individuals for preservation of the said element, publications or websites)

Signature: .....

Name & Designation: Nirmalendu Pahari

Secretary

Name of Institution : **LOKAYATA SANSKRITI PARIASHTA**

Address: 115/5, Bachhurdoaba, P.O.- Jhargram,

Dist.- Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal.

# **FIRST REPORT**

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The implementation of the said Project going at Village- Chhenraboni, Post Office- Dahijuri, Police Station- Jhargram, District- Paschim Medinipur, State- West Bengal. It started on June 2014 and it will completed on September 2014.

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 halt of the state. However, a small portion of this population has now moved to the urban bait, in search for employment and s better lifestyle.

The mask is an integral part of Bengal Chhau Dance. It liberates the dancer from the limiting influence of the face and puts a greater burden on the movements of the body. The body moves it bring the mask alive. Purulia masks are rustic; their wide-open eyes give a sense of speed and gusto. In both cases a headdress complements the mask. The masks are made of pulp and indigenious colours and decorated with peacock feathers, jaris and hairs. The masks are fascinating products of superb craftsmanship.

While the faces of the Chhau Dancers are covered with masks of various mythical characters, the expressions of the form are shown through movements of the hands and feet. Vigorous jumps, hops and other similar energetic moves of the Dancers set the mood of Chhau.

The general structure of Chhau Dance in Bengal comprises of a group of men some of whom enact the divine characters while some others play the role of demonic figures. The Dance primarily depicts the dynamic victory of the good spirits over the evil ones.

Performed during the night hours, Chhau Dance of Bengal demands an open area, generally village grounds, where the Dancers can freely make movements with their limbs. Chhau Dancers generally wear bright shades of clothes like that of green, red, yellow and black. Men who play the role of Gods use red, green and yellow colors, while those who enact the devils' part wear black costumes.

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The training and workshop of Purulia Chhau Dance under the project is already commencing from June 2014 and it will complete on September 2014.

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*(Nirmalendu Pahari)*

Secretary

**LOKAYATA SANSKRITI PARISHAT**



## FINAL REPORT

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The general structure of Chhau Dance in Bengal comprises of a group of men some of whom enact the divine characters while some others play the role of demonic figures. The Dance primarily depicts the dynamic victory of the good spirits over the evil ones.

Performed during the night hours, Chhau Dance of Bengal demands an open area, generally village grounds, where the Dancers can freely make movements with their limbs. Chhau Dancers generally wear bright shades of clothes like that of green, red, yellow and black. Men who play the role of Gods use red, green and yellow colors, while those who enact the devils' part wear black costumes.

The music that accompanies Chhau is played on three instruments: A Shenai – wind instrument, the Dhamsa kettle drum and the Dholak or Dhol, a drum carried on a shoulder strap that is beaten by a thin stick at one end and by the hand at the other end. The dholak player acts as a kind of picador or ring master to the dancers, running forward and shouting as if to goads them into dancing.

From a very early age, Chhau Dance is occupying a significant position in the Dance tradition of Bengal and today it is seen as one of the most popular artistic excellence of Bengal.

The Chhau artistes of West Bengal are mostly small farmers and daily labours but many of them are engaged in some other occupations like carpentry, weaving, hunting, fishing etc. Rice is the staple food of the people of Bengal. Some of the tribes are adept in art and culture and their creation give evidence to the exclusive tribal culture. They are truly skilled in creating splendour to its outstanding works on Chhau dance. Lack of financial assistance they are unable to perform their skill on culture. So that any financial support from government help them and also help the intangible heritage

culture like Chhau dance to strengthening, protecting, preserving and promoting the rich intangible cultural heritage of India.

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 rare Tribal dances are at the verge of extinction. There is a national urge to save these customary folk-dances like Chhau Dance of Tribes to control rock-culture.

We had selected 20 numbers (Chhau Dancer- 15 Nos, Chhau Singer- 2 Nos. & Chhau Musician- 3 Nos) of Chhau trainees/ artistes among the tribal groups and 2 numbers trainers (Gurus) one for Chhau dance and one for Chhau music and song from the area of Jangalmahal. The training period continued for four months from date of commencement of the project.

The following activities were taken in order to sustain the survival of Chhau dance 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) performance of dance timing may be made from 6 P.M. to 10 P.M. (vii) health care be provided at regular intervals and use of liquor and intoxicants be forbidden (viii) 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 Chhau 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.

The training and workshop of Purulia Chhau Dance under the project was commencing from June 2014 and completed on September 2014.

On the basis of extensive survey/ research by the Lokayata Sanskriti Parishat in the regions of Chhau Dance, it was observed that the economic backwardness of the area had a direct impact on the artists of Chhau and their art. The survey brought to notice that the society is found to be extremely conscious of its heritage and this made the local people contribute through their personal 'Chanda' or donations and raise funds from the nearby industries, businesses and manage to support and continue the tradition of dance performances. A noticeable fact is the spread of the dance style and its apparent popularity in the nearby villages in the Districts of Paschim Medinipur and Purulia. Several leading gurus and artists have instituted centers for the promotional activities of Chhau Dance in the eastern part of India and are involved in the project of support through Lokayata Sanskriti Parishat.

The tradition of Chhau dance reflects a composite culture of the contiguous regions of Paschim Medinipur and Purulia, in eastern India. The legacy of Chhau has been passed down orally from one generation to another and the communities remain the sole custodians of the knowledge of its dance, music, instrument/mask-making, costume design etc. Chhau Dance in its practice and performance is a symbolic representation of the lives of the communities within which it was nurtured. Their social customs, religious beliefs, folklore, mythologies, natural environment and even their routine occupations are essayed through its movement, vocabulary, the thematic content of its repertoire, its melodies and rhythms as well as the masks and costumes. It takes from many diverse traditions and needs the collective participation of different sections of the community for both its practice and performance. Its history and evolution as a performing art is enmeshed with the history and growth of communities in this region. In present times, increase in industrialization, economic pressures, and the large presence of television entertainment are driving people and communities at large to lead isolated lives, often disconnected from their roots. Collective participation that strengthens communities is also being diminished. Traditional folklore and its teaching methodologies are in danger of being lost.

In the districts of West Midnapur, Purulia, Bankura under West Bengal state are termed as 'Jangalmahal' area. Where the aboriginal *Santals*, *Mundas*, *Lodhas*, *Kharias* and *Sabars* tribe reside among the jungle bided areas. The captioned area of *Jangalmahal* is the 'Golden Treasury' of folk dances. 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.

### **Workshop**

The workshop conducted on Chhau Dance which with more than 100 participants spontaneously participated in the workshop showcasing their interest and excellence in the related fields. Sri Anil Patra (Chhau Ustad) of Bhulaveada, Belpahari and Sri Bimal Mahata (Chhau Ustad) of Jhargram.

Workshop made attempts to pursue a uniform pattern delivering messages in all the groups in, encourage for the inclusion of various related issues, planning and implementation of folk activity, for planning, implementation and monitoring Chhau Dance campaign with the support of Central Government on chhau performances and activities, and explain the formats and the templates were the key areas of folk media workshop.

It has been the experience of the social workers, activists and others that the present globalization process absorbs communities into a homogenising entity. By this they lose their rich heritage. The tribal communities are vulnerable to this process and begin to lose their rich cultural heritage and their harmonious values. The youth, attracted by the glitter of the city, the availability of consumer articles and by modern fashion, shaped by the media, wrongly conclude that success comes easy and is defined by having rather than being. The youth from the tribal community often are at a loss as they move from their communitarian based rural society to a competitive and individual-oriented society. Hence, a workshop to make young artistes reflect on these elements is appropriate and necessary.

The workshop create dynamics that need to be sustained. How do we enable them to take forward what they have gained ? What we did was to make the participants choose two important lessons so that they can put them into practice and initiate changes both

at the personal and the communitarian level. At the end of the workshop we walked around feeling the youth power; shouted slogans; felt the youth power. It was a revelation for us to discover how quick youth perceives the changes and risk their identity to look for a meaningful future. Tribal youth are ready to move forward, but on their own pace and terms. We do affirm our promise to accompany them.

Rehearsals and Practice, supervised by Trainers: Three Master trainers Sri. Bimal Mahata, Sri Anil Patra & Sri Sunil Mahata rigorously trained the teams during the rehearsals of the teams. They also gave clarifications and made changes in the position of messages, clarification was given on the issue and its importance was also explained. Field testing of performances of the artistes in the evening along with the teams gave the performance. The performances were well received by the villagers. Youth who were watching the performance and appreciate it.

Suggestions and tips for the teams to be followed during the performance given by the Trainers :

- This is a biggest experience you are getting in this workshop. You all are acquiring knowledge and information here.
- Conduct the performance as per the schedule and give all the messages whatever you receive from this workshop.
- You exhibit your traditional art and costumes to attract the public, make it as a interactive theaters and then proceed with the messages.
- Adour the leader of your team and maintain discipline, all the teammates should know the messages so that you all can reach the messages to community.
- Give performance efficiently if the arrangements are not made during the performance, you make arrangements yourself.
- You are all representing the department, maintain dignity.
- Be determined you will not practice any of the bad habits during the shows.
- Give wide publicity before the performance and give performance with the preparation and within the limitation.

- Messages will be given in the form of songs and include and position it in your folk form.
- Don't give the wrong information and people are ten times more intelligent than you.
- Each performance has one hour of program. Begin with the entertainment and allow the people to gather at the venue because immediately one can't give the information.
- Receive and give information properly people will enjoy the show.
- Reduce the dances and utilize the time for chorus.
- During the performance there might be power failure interruptions. Don't pack up immediately, continue give the messages along with the performance.
- Don't give the excuse for anything. Everything is your responsibility once you get into the task. Don't crib for everything if food or tea is not provided by the local hosting officials.
- Distribute handbills before ending the show; there will be a concluding song or dance before ending the performance.

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)*

Secretary

**LOKAYATA SANSKRITI PARISHAT**