

BRIEF INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE ELEMENT

BHAGORIYA ADIVASI NRITYA, JHABUA



The heart of
Incredible India

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Bhagoriya Adivasi Nritya is an integral part of the Bhagoriya festival of the Bhil community which takes place before seven days of the Holi festival. The festival is an occasion to meet the entire community, relatives and get immersed in the joy by forgetting all the worldly sorrows, worries and problems. The festival also marks the harvest season.

The indigenous tribal communities such as Bhilalas and Patelis also celebrate the festival along with the Bhil community. It is believed that the festival was started as a tradition to worship God Shiva and Goddess Parvati. There also exists a temple dedicated to God and Goddess Shiva and Parvati in village Bhagor (it is believed that the name is derived from Bhav-Gauri- another name for Shiva and Parvati). Folklore suggests that the festival was first initiated to find a missing daughter of the king. Few of the historian believes that the tradition was patronised by the king Kasumar Damor many years ago.

The Bhil indigenous community has a great significance of Mahua which is a local tree. It is considered sacred and using the fruit local liquor named Mahua is created. During the festival the inhabitants from all the villages come by walk wearing their traditional costumes. Men wear Dhoti, Jhuladi and a Safa on their head. They also wear their traditional weapons and a belt of bell around their waist. Women wear Ghaghra and Polki with Dupatta. Men and women of the tribe wear indigenous silver jewellerys from the top to the bottom.

The group from villages starts the procession with traditional musical instruments which comprise of Mandar, Kundi, brass plate and flute. These indigenous musical instruments have melodious rhapsody making the environment festive. The villagers dance around these musicians following the beat and rhythm of the instruments. The tempo of the chorus alters with the synchronisation of the beats. Men and women beautifully dances with grace, enriched with captivating body movements and expression. They also consume the Mahua liquor while dancing to the tunes of the traditional instruments.

The formation of the chorus swiftly changes their moves in between and also creates different dance forms depicting variety of steps and movements. The procession reaches to the place where the fair is organised. The fair is organised on the day of the weekly market of the given village. On this day of the festival the market thrives where shops for jewellerys, clothes, artefacts, utensils, indigenous items as well as food stalls are set up. The fun rides and merry-go-round are also installed here. The inhabitants arrive to the fair in the morning and leaves in the evening to their village. The next day they go to the village where the festival is scheduled next.

Many times the chorus also sing the indigenous folk songs patronising their kings, fun songs and songs celebrating the nature and culture. There is also a custom of eating betel leaf during the festival. This festival also serves as a platform for prospective matrimony candidates to find their desired match. For

expressing this, a man offers the betel leaf to the female of his choice. This has been also signified in one of the tribal song.

The element is well acknowledged by the cultural organisations, NGOs and individuals with research interest on the subject. There are several NGOs who are working for the socio-cultural and economical upliftment of the community. DECU ISRO has previously documented the dance form and the tradition with the local artists from the community.

Over the period of time, along with the traditional attire, new clothing patterns are also becoming visible. Now a day, not entire path is covered by walk, rather all come in a shared vehicle and dances in between some parts of the road leading to the location of the festival.

Even though many individuals from the community have migrated out of the region for the better prospects they make sure to come back to celebrate the most important festival of their culture which has become identity of the indigenous way of life, attracting not only local but international tourists as well.