

Committed to the Preservation and Promotion of Folk Art
DILKASH FOLK THEATRE HATMULLA

KUPWARA KASHMIR (J&K)

A Traditional and Classical Theatre of Kashmir

Ref. No. DKFT/F.No-172/04-DFT/2015

Dated 24/04/2015

PROJECT / SYNOPSIS OF BHAND CHOWKE

Bhand Pather is traditional well acclaimed and oldest living folk art of Kashmir. It reflects Kashmir in all of its annals of history in a hilarious and variable format. This tradition is a rich admixture of drama, dance, music, and mime of sorts and of many themes.

Traditionally old Bhands used to perform several; pather plays but due to widely prevalent illiteracy all of them couldn't have been preserved and were not properly transmitted to the successive generations. So, of late we registered at 13 Bhand Pather's to be much authentic and purely traditional in their nature.

With the help and assistance of various institutions and organizations like Ministry of Culture, HRD, Sangeet Natak Academy State Academy, All India Radio Doordarshan Etc. these folk pather's got a renewed attention and now they are available in well documented and well structured forms.

A few folk theatre groups have so far been granted to conduct workshops upon them for their further preservation and promotion. Successfully we are in a position now to have documented, televised and even digitized forms of the plays to us. However the challenge being faced by today's folk artists is of two dimensions.

1. Old folk artists and musicians pass away and some important art skills die with them without being transmitted to the younger generation.
2. Some areas of Bhand Pather remained ignored over the years due to which those art areas are now on the verge of extinction.

So for the second one is concerned, one important rather an integral part of the Bhand Pather has been Bhand Chowke.

Bhand Chowke is a part of every Bhand Pather which was performed in the beginning of every Bhand Pather. It is a mime dance performed by a group of

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dancers led by the "MAAGUN" (the lead role of the pather). This tradition was an attractive one for one and all as the dance was performed in different styles and forms and essentially a salutational dance item was a must in it because the folk traditions is very much linked with all religions festivals being observed in Kashmir. "Bhand Chowke was generally performed in social festivals at sacred places like Reshi- Shrines and Mandirs.

This tradition needs to be rejuvenated and transformed to the new generations.

For this purpose our theatre group wants to organize a two month long workshop in which our sole objective is to utilize the knowledge, art and expertise to blend it with youth art. The project details are given overleaf.


Gulla Bhat

President

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