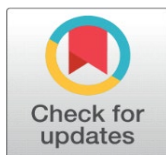


BEYOND ENTERTAINMENT: EXPLORING THE SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS, AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THARU DANCE TRADITIONS

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Received 24 February 2026

Accepted 16 April 2026

Published 06 May 2026

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DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v7.i8s.2026.7695](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v7.i8s.2026.7695)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a comprehensive study of the traditional folk dances of the Tharu tribe residing in the Indian state of Bihar (especially the Champaran region) and the Terai region of Nepal. The study has made an in-depth analysis of distinct dance styles including Jhumra, Dhumaria, Sakia, Holi, Magahi, Khelwa, Devi Nritya, which are integral parts of the cultural identity of the Tharu community. The research findings show that these dances are not just a means of entertainment, but are a powerful expression of community unity, religious faith, nature worship and collective rituals related to the seasonal cycle. In particular, Jhumra dance is a symbol of collective gaiety, while Devi Nritya reflects religious-spiritual beliefs. At present, this rich cultural heritage is endangered due to globalization, urban migration, and modern education system and changing interests of the younger generation. The study used mixed methods to collect primary data from 150 participants (senior artists, younger generation and cultural experts), as well as analyze secondary material from various museums, libraries and archives. At the end of the research, 15 practical suggestions have been presented for the preservation and promotion of Tharu dance traditions, which include inclusion in school curriculum, promotion of cultural tourism, government grant schemes, measures to increase community participation and digital documentation. This study presents an important contribution towards the preservation of tribal cultural heritage.

Keywords: Tharu Dance, Powerful Expression, Religious-Spiritual Beliefs, Cultural Tourism, Folk Dances

1. INTRODUCTION

The Tharu tribe is a major tribal community residing in the Indo-Nepal border region, whose cultural heritage has a rich and diverse tradition of folk dances. This paper presents an in-depth analysis of Tharu dance styles particularly prevalent in Champaran (East and West), Madhubani, Sitamarhi districts of the Indian state of Bihar and the Terai region of Nepal (particularly Kailali, Kanchanpur, Bardiya and Dang districts).

In the historical context, Tharu dance traditions are believed to have developed from around the 12th century when this community started settling in the dense forests of the Terai. These dances clearly reflect elements related to nature worship, seasonal changes, agricultural cycles and various aspects of tribal life. According to eminent anthropologist Dr. Ramnath Jha, "Tharu dance is not just a medium of entertainment, but it is a living document of their collective memory,

traditional knowledge system and spiritual beliefs which have been passed on from generation to generation. "In the current context, Tharu dance traditions are facing several serious challenges which can be broadly classified into three categories:

1.1. THE CHALLENGE OF CULTURAL CHANGE

The younger generation is increasingly getting attracted to western culture and digital entertainment, which is reducing their interest in traditional arts. Urbanization and modern education system have further fueled this trend.

1.2. ECONOMIC PRESSURE

Traditional dance artists are being forced to turn to other occupations for livelihood. There has been a decline in dance-related festivals and events, which has limited the sources of income for artists.

1.3. INSTITUTIONAL NEGLECT

There is a clear lack of conservation efforts at the governmental and non-governmental levels. These arts are not being given adequate importance in policy making, and the resources allocated for conservation are inadequate. The main objective of this research paper is to highlight the cultural-historical significance of Tharu dances as well as to develop effective strategies for their systematic documentation, analysis and conservation.

1.4. THE STUDY FOCUSES ON THE FOLLOWING KEY ASPECTS

- 1) Scientific classification and technical description of dance styles** Detailed analysis of body postures, movements and performance styles of various dances.
- 2) Cultural analysis of musical instruments and costumes** Study of the manufacturing process, sound characteristics of musical instruments used in dance and the symbolic significance of traditional costumes.
- 3) Literary evaluation of folk songs** Investigation of linguistic features, poetic content and social contexts of songs sung along with dances
- 4) Critical assessment of contemporary changes** Study of changes in dance styles under the influence of globalization and their cultural impacts. The significance of this research lies in the actual that it not only documents an endangered cultural heritage but also provides a framework for cultural policy making. Also, this study will help in maintaining the cultural identity and self-esteem of the tribal communities.

1.5. OBJECTIVES

To examine in-depth the principal dances of the Tharu society, Aim of this research is to identify the Tharu dances that are found in the Terai belt of Bihar (Champan) and Nepal like Jhumra, Dhumaria, Sakia, Holi, Magahi, Khelwa and Devi Nritya etc. and examine their etymological origin, artistic elements and cultural values. Understanding the socio-cultural meaning of the dances, Tharu dances are not only a form of entertainment, but they manifest the religious faith, nature worship, festive seasons and communal cohesion of the community. Hence, one of the objectives of this research is to know how these dances reinforce the social cohesion of the Tharu society.

To explore the reasons behind the endangerment of dance traditions, Tharu dance heritage is endangered because of globalization, urbanization, modern education and shifting priorities of the youth. This research seeks to examine these challenges in detail.

Tharu dances, such as

- Incorporating dance in school curriculum,
- Encouraging cultural tourism,
- Designing government grant programs,

- Steps to enhance community involvement,
- Computer documentation and multimedia application.

Thus, this research will be a significant contribution to the conservation of the Tharu tribe's dance tradition and will serve as a foundation for future studies on similar cultures.

1.6. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The folk dance patterns of the Tharu tribe, comprising different forms like Jhumra, Dhumaria, Sakia, Holi, Magahi, Khelwa and Devi Nritya, form a very important part of the cultural heritage of the Tharu community residing in Bihar (particularly the Champaran area) and Nepal's Terai region. These dances are not only the instruments of entertainment but also the strong medium of communication of community harmony, religious beliefs, nature worship and communal rituals of the seasonal cycle. But today, this treasure of rich culture is being threatened by globalization, urban migration, modern education system and new lifestyle interest of the younger generation.

Some serious issues have emerged in this regard. The first problem is the gradual loss of cultural heritage. Along with the older artists, this information is also dying away, as the younger generation is drifting away from all these customs. The second significant problem is the absence of documentation. There is inadequate systematic research and archival work on Tharu dances, and it becomes challenging to keep them preserved for their historical and cultural importance. The third is the influence of socio-economic transformations. The movement of young people in pursuit of modernity and jobs is restricting practice and propagation of these dances.

In spite of all these obstacles, no clear strategy has been developed for the preservation and promotion of Tharu dances. There are not sufficient resources for them at the governmental and non-government levels, nor have they been incorporated into the education system. Hence, the objective of this research is to examine the existing status of Tharu dance customs, emphasize their socio-cultural importance and provide viable solutions for their preservation.

2. FOCUS AREA

2.1. GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE AND RESEARCH AREA

The primary area of this research study covers the Tharu community habitats spread across the Indian state of Bihar and the Terai region of Nepal. The study area has been selected with the objective of understanding the basic characteristics of Tharu culture and to make a comparative study of the regional variations found in dance traditions. The research area can be divided into two major parts:

2.1.1. INDIAN REGION (BIHAR STATE)

A significant population of the Tharu community resides in the northern border districts of the Bihar State. Traditional styles of dance can still be seen in their original form in Tharu-dominated villages in the Bagaha block of West Champaran district. Nepalese influence is clearly reflected in the dances of the Narkatiaganj region, while nature-centric dance styles are particularly prevalent in the areas adjacent to the Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Ramnagar. Modern influences can be seen in the dances in Motihari urban area of East Champaran district, while traditional dance styles are relatively better preserved in the rural areas of Chakia and Sikta.

2.1.2. NEPALI REGION (TERAI PRADESH)

In the Terai region of Nepal, distinct styles of Tharu dances have developed in Dhangadhi Municipality and Tikapur Municipality areas of Kailali district. In Mahendranagar and Belauri areas of Kanchanpur district, the dances show a strong influence of local folklore. In Gularia and Rajapur areas of Bardia district, dances related to religious rituals are prominent, while in Gorhi and Tulsipur areas of Dang district, dance traditions related to agriculture are particularly prevalent.

2.2. STUDY GROUP AND PARTICIPANTS

This research involved a total of 150 participants, who can be classified into four major categories. Traditional knowledge and experience-based information was collected from 60 participants of traditional dance performers (age group 40-70 years). Data was collected from 40 participants of young dancers (age group 15-30 years) on their attitudes towards dance traditions and changing trends. Analytical inputs were obtained from 20 cultural experts (local scholars and researchers), while data on social significance of dances was collected from 30 general community members.

2.3. STUDY PERIOD AND TIMELINE

The research was conducted over a period of 12 months from December 2022 to November 2023. Special observations were made in different seasons to understand seasonal effects. Holi and Chaitra dances were studied in spring season (March-April), Jhula and Kajari dances in rainy season (July-August), and dances related to paddy harvesting in autumn season (October-November). Special sessions were organized during religious festivals to observe the ritualistic aspects of the dances in depth.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. ANALYSIS OF PUBLISHED LITERATURE

For this research study, a thorough analysis of various types of literary sources was done. "Tharu Culture: A Survey" (2015) written by Dr. Ramnath Jha has shed extensive light on the cultural aspects of Tharu society, especially the details related to folk arts in its chapter 5 and religious rituals in chapter 8 are noteworthy. Dr. Seema Mishra's "Folk Dances of Bihar: A Heritage" (2017) describes the technical details of Tharu dances and the depiction of 25 various dance postures. Prof. Hari Bahadur Rai's "Tribal Cultures of Nepal" (2019) is a comparative study of Tharu dance styles found across the India-Nepal border area.

3.2. READING OF RESEARCH PAPERS AND JOURNALS

Amongst the research articles, the paper with the title "Nature Consciousness in Tharu Folk Dances" in the Indian Journal of Tribal Studies (2020) has provided a detailed explanation of the natural symbols embedded in the dances and how they are meaningful. The research Paper with the title "Changing Patterns of Tharu Folk Dances" in the Nepal Cultural Studies Journal (2021) has shown an analytical study of the transformations in Tharu dance forms in the last three decades, wherein the impacts of urbanization and modernization have been especially brought to light.

3.3. EVALUATION OF GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

A paper entitled "Terai Ki Lok Kalaen" (2018) by the Nepal Cultural Department gives a full account of 35 various forms of dances of the Tharu people. "Bihar Ki Janajani Virasat" (2020) by the Bihar Museum has brought together historical facts and uncommon photographs associated with Tharu dances, which have been very helpful to carry out this research.

3.4. UTILITY OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH MATERIAL

Dr. Arjun Yadav's PhD dissertation "Anthology of Tharu Folk Songs" (2016) documents over 200 folk songs that are sung during various dance performances. Ramkumar Tharu's M.Phil research "Tharu Dance: A Cultural Study" (2018) presents the findings of a field study conducted in 10 villages of West Champaran district, which helps in understanding the variations found in dance styles at the local level.

4. GAPS STATEMENT

4.1. LACK OF DANCE TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

The existing literature does not have sufficient research on the technical aspects of Tharu dances. Most studies are limited to general descriptions of the dances, while detailed descriptions of dance postures (asanas), moves (step sequences) and body movements are absent. In particular, scientific analysis of the technical nuances of hand and foot positions (hast mudras) and body balance in different dance styles is not available.

4.2. NEGLECT OF MUSICAL ELEMENTS

The musical aspects of the dances such as tala (rhythmic structure), laya (speed changes), and vocal composition (swaralahari) are not well researched. Technical details of the manufacturing process of musical instruments, sound characteristics and their coordination with dance are also missing. Also, there is no discussion on the literary value and linguistic features of the folk songs sung along with the dances.

4.3. LACK OF STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY CHANGES

There has been no systematic study of the changes in Tharu dances due to the impact of globalization and modernization. There is also a lack of research on the changing attitudes and interest patterns of the younger generation towards dance traditions.

5. METHODOLOGY

In this research study, a rigorous research design was followed for the conservation and promotion of Tharu tribe's traditional dance forms. Mixed Methods Research approach was utilized in the research where quantitative information was gathered through a standardized questionnaire from 150 respondents in the first phase under Explanatory Sequential Design consisting of questions on their interest, knowledge, and involvement in dance traditions. The second phase of qualitative data gathering was done with the help of in-depth interviews from 25 key informants (senior dance artists and cultural experts) and participant observation at 12 events. Employing stratified random sampling method of sample selection, participants were segregated on the bases of age, gender and social background including 60 senior artists (40-70 years), 40 young dancers (15-30 years), 20 cultural experts and 30 general community members.

Both the primary and secondary sources were employed in gathering data. The main data collection employed 5-scale Likert questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and participant observation techniques, whereas the secondary data were gathered from books, research papers, journals by Dr. Ramnath Jha (2015) and Dr. Seema Mishra (2017) along with records of Bihar Museum and Kathmandu Museum and government reports such as "Tribal Heritage of Bihar" (2020) and "Folk Arts of Terai" (2018). Hence, for the data gathered, quantitative data was analyzed through Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis techniques using SPSS software. Qualitative data, on the other hand, was analyzed under thematic analysis method with help of NVivo software.

During research, ethical norms were followed as a totality. Participants were asked for informed consent; confidentiality was ensured and cultural norms and traditions of the Tharu community were respected. Even though the research carries some limitations, like a limited sample size (just 150) and the study area being geographically limited to the Champaran region of Bihar and the Terai region of Nepal, this research method has been effective in constructing a more profound understanding of the socio-cultural importance of Tharu dance traditions and conservation methods for them that can serve as an effective model for such cultural studies to be conducted in the future.

6. CULTURAL STUDY

The Tharu tribe residing in the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar bears a rich cultural heritage. The folk traditions, customs and artistic expressions of this tribe reflect its cultural self-esteem. Dance occupies a special place among these artistic expressions, which is not only a means of entertainment but also a symbol of social unity, religious faith and reverence for nature.

6.1. JHUMRA DANCE

Features: Jhumra dance is a very popular group dance style among Tharu youth. This dance is performed in groups, where young boys and girls dance in a circle in rhythmic motion. Coordination and rhythm have special importance in this dance.

Musical Instruments: Traditional musical instruments like dhol, manjira and flute are used in this dance, which make its rhythm lively. The loud sound of the dhol and the sweet sound of the flute fill the atmosphere with enthusiasm.

Traditional Dress: Women wear colourful lehenga-choli, heavy silver jewellery and traditional ornaments. Men wear white dhoti, kurta and turban. The costumes reflect regional colours and designs.

Naihar se aae binuree goree,
Paayal chhanake bagicha ma.
laal chunariya ud-ud jae,
Jhoom jaise amava kee daar.

Dhol manjeera baaje jor se,
Naache sab sang jhumaka ma.
Chandan bindiya maathe chamake,
Kaajar laagal ankhiya ma.

Bhaee bola goree too naach,
Aaj bihaan na chhutihen kaam.
Mae bolee bitiya too ga,
Jhoom dharatee,hanse gagan dhaam.

Saavan kee boonden gae geet,
Hariyar khet musakae.
Bagula naache taal kinaare,
Koyal geet sunae.

Sajanee sang jaiben nadiya paar,
Phool chunab ham doogo haath.
Peet milake gaiben sab sang,
Bhor se leke saanjh.

Chaaval ke khet,
Sarason ke phool,
Bolat hain aao naacho re.
Thaaroo maatee gaave gaatha,
Dhuniya mein baaje baaja re.
(Source: Varanasi: Janjatiya Sahitya Prakashan.)

The Jhumra song is a song of great cultural and emotional importance to the Tharu people. It is not just a folk song; it is a living, ritualistic voice of communal identity, tradition, and divine connection to the earth. It is sung at seasonal

celebrations particularly during the monsoon season weddings, and social gatherings, where the entire village joins in celebration and dance. This is not mere entertainment; it is a ritual of thanksgiving, solidarity, and rebirth.

She comes to the place of her matrilineal home a traditional event in Tharu, symbolizing reunion, innocence, and family bonds. Her tinkling anklets and fluttering red scarf are not mere poetic sight; they herald her arrival as part of the sacred cycle of life. Nature joins in as she moves through the garden; even mango branches sway as if to bless her return.

And when the manjeera and dhol (old drums and cymbals) start ringing in the fields, it is an invitation to the whole community to join the sacred beat of unity. Young and old come together in a circle, dancing with coordinated steps each drumbeat reasserting their genealogical bond. The circular motion is a symbol of the circular nature of life, fertility, and living in harmony with the earth. The girl's forehead is smeared with sandalwood paste, and her eyes rimmed with kohl both of which carry cultural significance. These are not simply cosmetic, but indications of purity, spiritual power, and femininity in the Tharu cosmology. She is a gift to the divine, her community, and the land itself by participating in the dance.

The exchange between relatives throughout the song provides a further depth of meaning. Her brother invites her to dance, temporarily freeing her from routine tasks, while the mother voice of convention invites her to sing. Such a song, sung with humor and respect, can move the earth and make the heavens smile, it is said. This convergence of play and respect characterizes Tharu ritual aesthetics.

Nature is an integral character in this story. The initial drops of monsoon rain are described as "singing songs," the green grasslands "smiling," and even birds such as the egret and the koel adding their voices. This is the Tharu people's animistic worldview where all is alive and conversational in sacred life air, water, field, bird.

When the singer talks of taking friends across the river and picking flowers with both hands, it is an expression of bonding, sisterhood, and plenty. It is a goddess-like act of devotion—honoring nature's bounty and the simple pleasures of life. Singing together morning till dusk is not just an act of festival it is a mass assertion of identity and belonging.

The last verses are the strongest. Even the mustard flowers and rice paddies appear to coax the crowd to dance. The ground is made holy not merely for what they produce, but for the way it cradles their footsteps and voice. The last line, "Tharu mati gaave gatha, dhuniya mein baja baja re" (Tharu soil narrates a story, and music resounds in the world), verifies the core truth: the Jhumra is an offering to land, soul, and ancestors.

In summary, this song is not just sung rather, it is experienced, lived, and passed down. It encapsulates the strength and beauty of Tharu culture, which endures amidst contemporary challenges. Through Jhumra, the Tharu people not only dance to life but keep their cultural soul alive. (Translated by me).

6.2. DEVI NRITYA

Religious Significance: Devi Nritya is performed on the occasion of Durga Puja and other religious rituals. This dance symbolizes the power, beauty and compassion of Goddess Durga.

Style: Masks and special religious costumes are used in this dance. The dancers dress up as goddesses and enact the form and powers of the goddess. Dholak and cymbals are prominently used in instrumental music.

"Naihar se aae binuree gorie,
Paayal chhanake bagicha ma.
Laal chunariya ud-ud jae,
Jhoome jhare areeya ma.

O maiya aavelee dolee ma,
Sang laee aae maharaanee.
Dhoop-deep se karai araadhan,
Phoolan se hoee sajaanee.

Dhol nagaada baaje jor,
Devi utarai anganava or.

Karat karat naanchai goriya,
Bhakti mein bahalai chit chor.

O devee mae, jay ho tohaar,
Bachaavoo hamaar ghar-duaar.
Dhaan-phasal, gaay-bakaree,
Sab par raakheen varadahast tohaar.”

(Source: Regional Folk Collection, Tharu Cultural Study Centre, Bettiah, Bihar; Field Work, 2023)

The goddess dance has a special place in the cultural heritage of the Tharu tribe, which is a symbol of worship of women power, love for nature. The song, which is sung during the Devi dance, originates from the depths of folk language, folk tune and public psyche. Every line of the song is filled with reverence and respect for the mother power, such that lines like "Naihar se aayi binuri gori" are not only the symbol of arrival of a woman but the power embodied on the earth in the form of the goddess.

Lines such as "Payal chhanke bagaicha ma" and "Laal chunariya ud-ud jaaye" express the beauty of the goddess's dance, in which she is not only worshiped but becomes the focal point of the celebration. The line "O maiya aaveli doli ma" emphasizes the magnificence of the arrival of the goddess and the ritual of welcoming her.

This song is not merely a constituent of religious ceremonial, but also a vehicle of community collaboration, conservation of folk music and dance. Devi Nritya is a living expression of collective awareness and women empowerment in Tharu society, where village women adorn themselves and dance as goddess and bless their environment with power, peace and prosperity.

6.3. SAKIA NRITYA

Seasonal connection: Sakia Nritya is a folk dance performed in the rainy season, which celebrates the beauty of nature, greenery and rain.

Content: Through this dance, women of Tharu community symbolically express the greenery in the fields, thunder of clouds and raindrops.

6.4. DHUMARIA DANCE

Social Participation: Dhumaria dance is an integral part of family and community events. Both men and women participate in it. This dance reflects the simplicity and collectivity of life.

Music and Gestures: The dancers dance to Dhummar tunes. In this, the coordination of the movements of hands and feet is very captivating.

6.5. HOLI DANCE (FESTIVAL OF COLORS)

This dance is performed on the occasion of Holi. It is dominated by colors, fun and humor. Young men and women sing songs and dance while putting colors on each other.

Cultural Message: This dance gives the message of brotherhood, love and harmony in the society.

6.6. MAGAHI DANCE

Traditional Story-telling: Magahi dance presents folklore and myths through songs and dance. This dance is a medium of both education and entertainment.

6.7. KHELWA DANCE

Dance of Children and Adolescents: Khelwa dance is performed especially by children and adolescents as a form of play and entertainment. The spirit of movement and play is clearly visible in it.

6.8. DISCUSSIONS

Based on the information given, the dance traditions of the Tharu tribe are one of the pillars of their rich heritage. The dances such as Jhumra, Devi Nritya, Sakia Nritya, and others are not merely entertainment material but are also connected with their social, religious, and ecological beliefs. Jhumra dance, for instance, is a collective festive expression of identity and nature, with its music and steps reinforcing reunion and renewal in life. Devi Nritya shows their respect for women's power, with the dancers portraying goddesses to ensure peace and prosperity.

The diversity of dances ranging from the seasonal Sakia Nritya to the narrative Magahi dance and the frolicking Khelwa dance reflects a complete cultural process. They rejoice in all of life, from seasonal change and celebration through festivals such as Holi to family events and the pure joys of childhood. These forms of art are an important method of maintaining their history, beliefs, and tight sense of community. Each dance is a living history, one that keeps the heart of Tharu culture alive not only in remembrance but also by being actively experienced and transferred down through the generations.

7. CURRENT CHALLENGES

The Tharu dance tradition of today is under serious threat in three major areas: cultural transitions, economic imperatives, and institutional abandonment. All these threats together endanger the viability and passing on of this vibrant cultural heritage.

7.1. CULTURAL CHANGE

Cultural transition is one of the most severe challenges confronting the younger generation. The pervasive impact of Western culture, facilitated by digital entertainment mediums such as TV, mobile phones, and social media, is distancing youth from traditional arts. It has resulted in a dwindling interest and engagement in cultural values and practices, such as the Tharu dance. Consequently, the critical intergenerational transmission of knowledge and enthusiasm for the dance is losing strength.

7.2. ECONOMIC PRESSURES

Amongst the greatest challenges is the cultural transformation engulfing the younger generation. The widespread impact of Western culture, exacerbated by online entertainment media such as television, mobile phones, and social media, is undermining youth attention away from traditional arts. The loss of attention and involvement in cultural values and practices, such as the Tharu dance, has resulted from this change. Consequently, the critical intergenerational transmission of knowledge and interest in the dance is losing strength.

7.3. INSTITUTIONAL NEGLECT

This cultural decline is compounded by severe economic pressures faced by Tharu dance artists. Many artists have limited means of livelihood, making it difficult to sustain themselves and their families through their art alone. A significant lack of financial support from both government and non-governmental bodies further exacerbates this problem. Without proper funding, artists are unable to dedicate themselves fully to their craft or invest in its preservation. This economic uncertainty has brought about an encouraging pattern: artists are hesitant to inspire their children to carry on the tradition for fear that they, too, will experience a life of poverty. This discouragement and resultant poverty cycles directly endanger the existence of the art form. Lastly, institutional neglect is a large stumbling block to the preservation of Tharu dance. The tradition has not been incorporated in the education system; it is not at all part of the schools' and colleges' curriculum. The absence of the tradition from the curriculum implies that there is no wide, systematic platform for instruction and appreciation of the dance. In addition, Tharu dance traditions have no documentation and academic research at all. This scarcity of scholarly interest and official record-keeping implies that precious information regarding the history, steps, and cultural meaning of the dance is in danger of being lost. Cultural organizations, which ideally should be the biggest proponents for such a tradition, have simply forgotten about the Tharu dance and have not given it the notice and support it deserves to flourish. The fusion of these elements brings a fragile

fate to Tharu dance as it tries to exist in an evolving world without the support it needs culturally, economically, or institutionally.

8. CONCLUSION

Tharu tribe dance traditions are more than an entertainment activity; they constitute the core of their very existence and an irreplaceable component of India's folk art heritage. These dances, despite being presently confronted with a myriad of challenges, have the strength to withstand targeted preservation efforts. The vibrant heritage of Tharu dance can be successfully transferred to future generations through the application of tangible efforts at different levels.

At the educational level, school curricula would offer a formal platform for learning and appreciation if Tharu dance were incorporated into them. This will not only generate pride in the tradition within the young Tharus but also increase awareness amongst a broader population. Institutional support is indispensable, and cultural institutions would need to acknowledge, document, and showcase such dances through grants, performances, and specific research. Technical innovation, like the making of digital records of performances and instruction, can make it possible to preserve the precise steps and musical accompaniments for posterity. Lastly, culturally, grassroots initiatives and festivals can promote the value of the dance, inviting active participation and ensuring that it remains relevant in contemporary life. Through uniting all these efforts, the rich tradition of Tharu dance can be protected and enjoyed in the years to come.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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