

Rajasthani folk dance-Ghoomar and its Costume

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ABSTRACT

Rajasthan is well known for its vibrant colors and diverse art forms, customs and traditions. It was first created by the Bhil tribe and now made its way to various other communities in Rajput and Rajasthan. It is believed that the two communities embraced this folk-dance form to signify peace. It is perhaps mostly popular for its folk attire- an ensemble of a Choli (a blouse), a Ghagra or Chaniya (Swirling skirts of full or knee length) and translucent veils that cover the face. Silver ornaments, Kundan Jewelry and mirror necklaces were used as accessories.

Key Words : Ghoomer, Dance, Costume, Jewelry

INTRODUCTION

The dances of Rajasthan are evidence of royal legends, religious traditions, and myths, while some dances other is performed with the simple idea of celebrating a particular festivity or fair. The popular Ghoomar Dance in Rajasthan India is the distinctive dance of the Bhil tribe. However, it is mainly linked with the royal ladies of Jaipur, who perform it on certain fortunate occasions. The Kachwaha Clan of Rajputs, who ruled Jaipur, defeated the Bhils and later agreed for a quiet coexistence. It is therefore usual that the royalty would accept some of the Bhil customs and practices. The Ghoomar dance is an essentially a women's dance performed by the women for completely ladies' assembly.

Also known as *Jhumar* and meaning to 'turn around' the traditional folk-dance form showcases the origin & culture of Rajasthani people. The ethnic wear Ghagra Choli, enthusiastic spinning dance steps, how they balance pots gracefully while performing the dance, the traditional fabric, gaudy jewelry & colorful bangles. All this showcases the traditions, rituals, dressing, and culture of major communities in Rajasthan.

Historical background:

Rajasthan is the region that encompasses the Great Indian Desert. People bear the brunt of the sun with a soothing smile on their faces. They dance and rejoice to their fullest. In ancient times the cities of Rajasthan were regions ruled by Kings. Jodhpur was earlier known as the Marwar region which is famous for its vibrant rituals, customs and dance forms. The famous community in Rajasthan performs this popular dance form called Ghoomar. Ghoomar is a traditional dance form which has its origin at Marwar in Rajasthan and performed to worship Goddess Saraswat. The basic step of Ghoomar is 'ghoomna' or a twirling movement accompanied by clapping of hands and moving in circular fashion. The graceful dance form is presented usually by newly married young brides at their new home where the vibrant whirling skirts create a kaleidoscope of colors and spreads happiness and jubilation. Colours like red and green are considered auspicious for religious gatherings and denotes prosperity.

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features men singing and dancing together while using graceful gestures such as beating palms, finger snapping, and twirls. It is perhaps mostly popular for its folk attire—an ensemble of a Choli (a blouse), a Ghagra or Chaniya (Swirling skirts of full or knee length) and translucent veils that cover the face. Silver ornaments, Kundan Jewelry and mirror necklaces were used as accessories.

Regions associated with Ghoomar:

Although traditionally Ghoomar is performed throughout the state of Rajasthan, Udaipur, Kota-Bundi and Jodhpur are particularly known to imbibe this dance form. An interesting fact about Ghoomar dance form is that distinct parts of Rajasthan state have left their impression on the movements of this dance form. Owing to its proximity to neighbouring Gujarat, Udaipur gives a distinct Garba touch to Ghoomar. The dance form in Jodhpur is jerkier as limb movement is more intense in Ghoomar in this region. Living upto its name, the dance form in Kota-Bundi region is lively with melodious and catchy dance accompanying the same.

The performance:

Ghoomar is usually done during the Teej festivities. However, it's also performed during other festivals and important occasions. Ghoomar is extremely simple to perform and the dancers have to move around in circular motion with clockwise and anticlockwise steps being taken in tandem. The tempo of Ghoomar reaches its peak as synchronization of steps with music is done.

Considered to be a traditional ritual of Rajasthan, It is also performed in wedding ceremonies or religious events. Ghoomar was started in Rajasthan communities during the Rajput rule. This dance is also performed by the bride after she is welcomed at her husband's home.

Traditional costumes:

The attire in the dance is one of the most important part of the performance. Women are dressed in traditional Ghagra and Chaniya which is the true essence of the folk performance especially when they perform the particular dance step – Ghoomna. This means to rotate and the dancers twirl and spin that showcases the vibrant colors and sequins and lights reflection in the heavy mirror work on the fabric. It looks like a kaleidoscope of colors going around in a whirlwind especially with jewelry such as Kundan and Silver. The women are dressed in beautifully adorned swirling long robes known as

Ghagharas. Translucent or opaque veils are also worn along with the ghagara-cholis. Kundan, mirror or silver jewellery are used as accessories for the dance. The colours and motifs of the outfits make the dance extremely appealing to watch. Interestingly, the zari work and the amount of embroidery on the ensemble also indicate the how prosperous the family is.

Present day scenario:

As a symbol of womanhood, Ghoomar of Marwar is generally performed at weddings and its various ceremonies such as Ladies Sangeet. On the day of performance, women are seen wearing beautiful Chaniya in colors like red, green, orange, pink or blue with heavy embroidery or mirror work along with blouses. A veil covers the head and is adorned with mirror work, 'gota' or lace on a translucent colored piece of cloth. The skirts are wide to ensure that they twirl and flow during the dance. Mostly, cotton Chaniya are selected for the purpose, but depending upon occasion, silk or chiffon may also be used. Zari work is common for Chaniya and veils, while the blouse or Choli is mostly singular colored and plain. Embroidery and silver work is an indicator of family wealth and also corresponds to the occasion.

Colors like red and green with golden embroidered work are widely used because it indicates prosperity and high spiritedness. Ghoomar and the ensemble worn for it are representatives of modernized Indian traditions that signify beauty and grace of a female. Women are originally considered the heart and soul of this dance form. The flowing skirts, made in different bright hues are also applauded by fashion designers who believe that the skirts get their fullest flare when women turn and fill the stage or area with a rainbow of colors. The original outfit highlighted a knee length skirt, but to give it a mass global appeal, the length has been increased till the ankle so that it could be used as a traditional Indian wedding gown. The increased length allows for more elegance, exudes sophistication and provides an opportunity for innovation, such as fish cut at the end, A-style or slits on the side for a more modernized look. Similarly, instead of long blouse, midriff blouses with thick Zari work are used. In certain cases, translucent veils are exchanged with heavily worked opaque veils to meet fashion demand.

Looking into the huge demand of Ghoomer dance costume, diverse contemporary variations having ethnic innovations are available for varied occasions and purposes. It is extremely popular among young generation

specially on festivals and wedding ceremonies.

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