



View the film -A Journey of Jhumur for a glimpse into the world of Jhumur singers of Bengal. Living heritages of Darbari Jhumur recollect how it was patronized by the local Kings. Younger artists tell us how Jhumur strives to survive in the contemporary world of entertainment. Jhumur Katha documents songs passed down orally through generations as well as lyrics by current Jhumurias.

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# Jhumur

Colour of popular entertainment



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“Praner majhete biroho royeche...  
Tabu keno prem kare go...  
Niguro morom ke jane er  
Jane ki samanyo nar-e go..”

Jhumur is a popular form of folk song and dance amongst the rural and tribal communities of Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa. Jhumur celebrates rural ways of life. The folk form is known as Jhumeer in Kurmali, in Orissa it is popular as Jhumar. Themes of Jhumr songs are varied. There are songs on eternal love of Radha and Krishna. Some tell stories from our epics and mythologies. Some songs pay tribute to Mother Nature. Bhaduria Jhumur, for example, pertains to the monsoons. There are songs about the rustic charm of quaint rivulets. Some depict the lifestyle of simple village folks.

Dnar Naach or Jhumoerr Naach are colourful and rhythmic folk dances where women dance together with their arms entwined. Darbari Jhumur songs bear reminiscence of the courts of Rajas and Zamindars. It is enriched through incorporation of elements of classical music, Raga-Ragini and complex tunes.

Bhabapritanda Ojha was a legendary Jhumur exponent. He was the court poet of the King of Kasipur. The Royal family of Baghmundi also contributed to the growth of Jhumur. Naachni Jhumur evolved as Naachnis or dancers sang Jhumur and danced. Late Sindhubala Devi was known as the Nightingale of Jhumur. Folk art forms are imbibed in ways of life of rural and tribal people, in their rituals and practices. As our life style gets increasingly urbanised, folk songs and dances are getting obliterated.

To preserve this rich intangible cultural heritage, the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, has taken up a unique and ambitious initiative of reviving and revitalizing performing folk art forms as means of sustainable livelihood. The project is supported by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. The Departments of Panchayat and Rural Development and Information and Cultural Affairs of the Government of West Bengal are also partners in this initiative.

31 SHGs have been formed with 468 Jhumur artists in Joypur, Bishnupur, Barjora, Khatra, Barabazar, Simlapal, Sarenga, Hirbandh and Ranibandh blocks of Bankura while in Purulia, 48 SHGs have been formed with 634 Jhumur artists from Balarampore, Joypur, Jhalda and Purulia. The Naachnis who are traditionally treated as outcasts by the villagers are being encouraged and empowered to seek their rights.

Jhumur was so popular in the middle ages that there are many myths and legends about Jhumur songs and singers (Jhumuriyas). It is said, for example, that songs of Jhumur singer Jagat Kaviraj provided palliative care to a woman with cancer. A band of dacoits who came to rob singer Ramkrishna Ganguly were mesmerized by his songs. Hearing Chamu Karmakar's song 'Hobe sabe Naachni' (everyone will be danseuse) women got so interested that worried community leaders got Chamu arrested on the grounds of threatening social norms.

