

## Preserving Cultural Heritage: A Study of Maadli, the Dying Tribal Dance of Western Odisha

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### Abstract

Folk dances in Western Odisha exclude themselves from the dances of the other parts of Odisha for its typicality. Dance as a form of art is not merely for pleasure; rather it is an act of the folkloric expression of the folks in Odisha, particularly in western Odisha. The dance gets involved with the folk song, music with multi dramatic and expressional effects, highly a reflection of their socio-economic structure. Merely considering the folk dance as a means of pleasure, pass time, merrymaking may never be sufficient, rather it has coercive power of binding the people, their relations, cultures, costumes, and traditions together. Maadli is a dance form performed and played by the tribal people of Kalahandi district, Odisha. The dance form is popular among the Gond community as they express their love and devotion towards their prime deity *Budhadeo* through dance and songs. The present study focuses on the preservation and documentation of the Maadli dance and its socio-cultural importance among the *Gond* tribe, as it is at the verge of extinction.

**Keywords:** Maadli, Tribal Dance, Western Odisha, Cultural Heritage, Gond Tribe

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## Introduction

According to Kaeppler “cultural forms that result from the creative use of human bodies in time and space are often glossed as dance” and is a “multi-faceted phenomenon” which has “invisible” underlying meanings (2000:117). Dance has been studied by dance historians, dance ethnologists and anthropologists (ibid. 2000). Anthropological analysis of dance includes “structured movement systems, associated with religious and secular ritual, ceremony, entertainment, martial arts, sign languages, sports and games” (Kaeppler, 2000). Citing the ethnographic study of dance, G. Kurath stated that it is an “approach toward and a method of eliciting the place of dance in human life” (1960:250). Anthropologists presented the dance structure (Kaeppler, 1972), style (Irene Loutzaki, 1989), improvisation (Frank Hall, 1985), expression of society (RajikaPuri, 1983), dance in the context of cultural relativism (Boas, ), psychobiological basis of dance and how human is different from dances of the animals (J.L. Hanna), representation of emotions in dance (C. Loken-Kim, 1989), aesthetic principles and its manifestation in cultural forms (A.I. Al Faruqi, 1978) in several cultural cross culturally. The scholars like Cowan (1990) and Schieffelin (1976) emphasized on the “context and meaning” of dance movements. Allegra F. Snyder highlighted “dance symbolism” (1974) and “cultural identity” (1989) through dance. Dance has been studied from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives.

“Folk dances” has uniqueness in Western Odisha when it comes to the comparison with other forms of dance in Odisha. “Dance as a form of art is not merely for pleasure; rather it is an act of the folkloric expression of the folks in Odisha, particularly in western Odisha. The dance gets involved with the folk song, music with multi dramatic and expressional effects, highly a reflection of their socio-economic structure. Merely considering the folk dance as a means of pleasure, passtime, merrymaking may never be sufficient; rather it has every strength of binding the people, their relations, cultures, costumes, and traditions together” (<https://www.tribaltoursinindia.com/tribal-dances-of-odisha/>). With the change of time, traditional dance forms are in the verge extinction or few of them has already vanished from the society. Traditional art of Maadli dance is currently in the edge of extinction. It may happen because there is no interest among the younger generations which causes this tradition to slowly be forgotten. Amongst the neighbouring Hindu Gawda, where dancing has

not been folklorized, few young women practice forms of traditional dancing leading to a diminished cohesion in the group (Pereira, 2010).

Theatre dance styles include ballet, modern dance, and Indian classical dance, with the dancers performing for the audience in specific locations and on special occasions. These dancers are highly trained professionals. On the other hand, tribal and ethnic dances can be distinguished by a number of nearly opposing traits. They may not always be the domain of professionals with training (although they may be). Such dances may involve audience participation (i.e., there is little to no separation between the dancer and the spectator), and while they may be performed in unique settings or for unique events, they are closely tied to the community's daily activities. It should be mentioned that Indian folk dances and Indian tribal dances cannot possibly be related because of their extreme differences. Each of these indigenous tribes has a distinctive dance tradition that is entwined with the lives of the people who practise it. Deeply connected with the nature these people practise a vast range of performances which has a base allied to their day to day activities along with their livelihood too. This can be clearly identified from the presentation style, the instruments used in it, the attire they carry etc. Though the steps are simple but they are full of energy that can fill life in dead.

Babiracki (1993) stated that the term “traditional knowledge” which refers to the vast area of knowledge and accumulated belief textured in the cultural traditions of indigenous, local communities and based on interaction with the natural environment has been orally passed for generations from person to person and may also be expressed through various performing folk art forms. He exposes different types of traditional performing folk art forms along with tribal garments and ornaments, puppetry, and tribal wall art have become indicators of the cultural identity of various tribal communities of Eastern India. In the study on Tribal Dances as an indigenous culture and its relevance's with tribal life, Bhale (2014) mentioned that tribal culture is very much wrongly interpreted and looked as a backward way of life and continues efforts of the brining them into the mainstream society but the people as less understanding about the indigenous knowledge which they have contemporary relevance. He has also discussed different tribal dances and their usefulness in stress management and also their impact on mental health. He pointed out that culture is a very integrated part of the tribal life across the world. The word culture has many different meanings. For some, it refers to a positive reception of good literature, music, art, and food.

Religion plays a vital role in the socio-cultural and economic life of the people. Therefore, they try to establish a good relationship with unseen powers through various rites, rituals and festivals (Nath, 2004). The local tradition of ritual varies. Externally it seems to be different. But the ideas and values behind the ritual may be the same, i.e., the propitiation of deity for welfare and happiness. Traditions play an essential role in generating a kind of “we feeling” among the people. It brings in guests, enhances social solidarity, and provides the opportunity for strengthening the social network. It is also a time for merry-making and rejoicing (Nath, 2008). Festivals and rituals are essential aspects of tribal religion and society. Anthropologists study the performing aspects of ritual and are interested in how participants “constitute through their actions” (Rosman and Rubel, 1981: 275). As Goan culture continues to divulge musical and performing competitions, which have since arisen at a regional, state and national level, there are two types of folk groups participating. First, the professional musicians who performed traditional songs and dance, and did not alter much of their performance for the stage – collecting songs sung by their ancestors and consolidating them by normalization through rehearsal, fixed costumes or adjusting the music in order to create a uniform product (cf. Sardo, 2011).

Odisha is a state of cultural diversity with various folk dance forms which represent some expression of life and meaning. The tribal people of Odisha contribute a lot through their folk dance towards the state to have a rich cultural heritage. Like other districts of Odisha, the dances of Kalahandi district are very much popular in the state. Maadli is a dance form performed and played by the tribal people of Kalahandi district, Odisha. The dance form is popular among the Gond community as they express their love and devotion towards their prime deity *Budhadeo* through dance and songs. It is an agriculture based dance form. The principal instrument in the dance is Maadli and so as the name of the dance is given Maadli dance. A total of 16-25 Male artists perform in the dance including a main singer who narrates the Maadli song. They use the Gond Adibasi or Kalahandia language for singing the song. The present study focuses on the documentation of the Maadli dance and its socio-cultural importance among the Gond tribe. It also examines the current status and highlight community efforts for its preservation and promotion.

## **Methodology**

As a part of the research work under Centre of Excellence on “Regional Development and Tribal Studies” Sambalpur University, a study on the Maadli dance was carried out in

Sanyasi Kundamal village of Bhawanipatna block of Kalahandi district, Odisha. The data were collected through an unstructured interview schedule, observation and Focused Group Discussion method. The unstructured interview schedule was used to collect data from the main singer and the key respondents. Two focused group discussions were conducted where 10 artists participated. In the first group old artists took part in the discussion, whereas in the second group new young artists joined the discussion. Observation method was used to observe the dance steps, gesture, and posture of the artists during the dance. Through this research work, the entire process of Maadli dance has been documented and analysed from anthropological perspectives.

### **Origin of the Maadli Dance**

“Maadli as a folk dance is performed by the Gond people of Kalahandi and Nuapada district. From the word “Maadal” means drum like instrument, Maadli has been derived. In other words, it is in the shape of Mridanga or Pakhwaj or Khola a drum like item. The folk dance Maadli is very popular dance like Ghumura in Kalahandi. Among the *Gond* tribes the *Dhruba*, *Amat*, *Larias*, *Jhartas*, *Rajgandas* only perform Maadli folk dance. So it is highly a tribal folk dance continuing in a traditional dance form” (<https://www.tribaltoursinindia.com/tribal-dances-of-odisha/>). The *Gond* venerates *BudhaDeo* (*Bhairab*) or *Budharaja*, *Jangadeo* (*Jagannath*) and *Linga Deo* (*Shiv*) as the supreme deity. The Gond community believe that the God BudhaDeo or Budharaja incarnated and taught them agricultural skills and gave agricultural equipments like tiller, spade, pickaxe and *kotua* along with the some household artefacts to the community. Also the God inculcate them to mingle the message to other in the community through the Maadli dance. So it is believed that from that day onwards the Maadli dance has become an integral part of their community. Another folk believe narrates that the Maadli dance’s origin is connected with the mythology. During the *Dwapara Yuga* Lord Vishnu took the *Varahaavtar* to save the earth by killing the demon *Madhudaitya*. He killed the devil and during the process Lord Vishnu disrobed the skin of *Madhudaitya*. The flesh enmeshed to form the landmass of the Earth. So, to celebrate the triumph of Lord Vishnu people develop a musical instrument made with the skin of the Demon Madhu, henceforth the instrument was known as Maadli. They played the musical instrument, Maadli along with all the agricultural equipment and household artefacts to please the Lord and to control his anger. In this way Varaha became the supreme deity of the agricultural community. The above mythological belief is rendered in the Maadli song as below:-

*A jetepruthi jalamaya hela  
Kehi na thile sekale,  
Adianadi je mana re bichari  
Ki trana pruthi ranchile  
Madhudatya mari Madali chhaenle*

[When the earth was submerged in water, there was no life existed and the God killed demon *Madhudatya* to save the mother earth. The skin of the demon was used for the creation of Maadli]

The above song reveals a clear view about origin of the instrument and the dance form. As Maadli is the principal instrument used in the dance from it assumed the name of the dance “Maadli”.



(Maadli dance group of SanyasiKundamal village)

### Religious Significance of the Dance

Maadli dance is specially performed in Kalahandi district of Odisha. The Gonds worship and offer prayer to their deity BudhaDeo, Bishnu and express their devotion through Maadli dance. Maadli dance is associated with the agriculture and farming. They perform this dance in the beginning of cultivation, particularly in the month of Baisakha and at the end of cultivation i.e., *Margasirapurnima*. Maadli dance is performed during various festivals like *Nuakhai*, *Chauldhua*, *Chaitparaband Puspuni*.





### (Maadli Dance artists with worshipping God Budhadeo)

#### Presentation and Structure of Madli Dance

The Maadli dance has received a huge popularity through its structure and presentation of dance form among the Gonds of Kalahandi. In this dance form the main folk instrument i.e., Maadli is played along with other different instruments like *Tamki*, *Jhanj*, *Thudkel*, *Thapa*, *Koda*, *Dhuti*, *Baensi*, *Ghoda*, *Tenkito* express the presentation and structure of Maadli dance. There are certain rules and regulations associated with Maadli dance that has to be followed by the dancers and Maadli players. The structures of rhythm or *Paars* of the dance are:

- I. Devipar/ Maadali Pratham Paar/ Budharaja Paar
- II. Aadghurlia paar / Aadghurlia structure.
- III. Bairipaar / Bairi structure
- IV. Jhulenpaar / Jhulen structure

#### Choreographic Sequence

It is observed that the Maadli dance form does not have defined systematic choreography but the dancers follow the sequence meticulously. It follows three stages of presentation, songs and performances like many other dance form like *Ghumura* or *Pala* or *Daskathia*.

In the first stage, 5 to 7 Maadli players slowly enter to the dance arena and form a semi-circle appearance. The *Bol* or beat they play is *Dha Dhi Naa*, *Dha Too Naa*. This regular rhythmic pattern of equally placed beats continues for one to two minutes. The rhythm at this stage is known as *Chalibadya* (entry beat) or '*Chalipaar*'. The beats are like:

*Dhinang Dhinang Dhinang Ta ta.*

*Dhinang Dhinang Dhinang.*

During the beats the performers make oral sounds like *Oeede, Oeede*, that means 'here is, here is'. This indicates the arrival of the artists to the dance arena.

In the second stage, the beats multiply to four times. The beats are like:

*Taak dhin dhin dhiniki Dhindaa.*

*Dhaak dhin dhin dhiniki Dhindaa.*

The Maadli players play sound in four beats and clap with hand in between the second empty beat simultaneously. Also they make an oral sound of '*Chap-Chap, Chap-Chap*'.

The third stage is known as *Nachni Paar*. In this stage the singer sings and rest of the artist stand, no rhythm is played, till the song ends. Moreover in some cases the dancers play slow beat or clap to continue the flow of the song. After the song ended, all the dancers and instrumentalists play and dance. Also the singer follows the beats to the end of the dance.



**(Artists performing Maadli dance)**

### **Different technique of Paar and Songs**

The Maadli folk song has different patterns of rhythm and music in the dance form which is locally termed as *Paar*. The different *Paar* are:

- I. Debtapaar
- II. UdenPaar
- III. SarudhanPaar
- IV. AdghurliaPaar
- V. DhekimadaPaar



## VI. MakaPhuliaPaar

### DebtaPaar

In local terminology ‘*Debta*’ means ‘God’. The Gonds worship god *Budhadeo* or *Budharaja* as their main deity along with other gods and goddess of the village through the tribal songs and music. So as the pattern of this *paaris DebtaPaar*. The song is like:

*E, Jai Budha Raja, Madalibaja*  
*Baju bibidha parkara*  
*Taba nama dhari, gayana karuchen*  
*Kante basi pada dhara, budharaja*  
*Kante basi pada dhara*

In the above song, the *Gond* people pray the god *Budhadeo* to bless them and to be present in the singer’s throat, so that the singer can sing and narrate the version serially and spontaneously.

### Uden Paar

*Udenpaar* means to fly. In this *paar* the scale of the music and songs goes to a higher pitch. So as the name is. The song of this *paar* is:

*Katua Madali Bhainta thodkel*  
*Barchha sarangi bandhuka nali*  
*Tangi khana kati, thapa girna dhuti*  
*Dhuna kandgulchaguli*  
*Dhari kari khamana jaunche buli re*  
*Madali taka dhum dumu baje....*

In the above song the singer utters different agricultural implements and weapons which are used in the dance by the artists. He vocalize the main music of the dance i.e., *Maadli* to produce the sound *Tak Dhum Dhum*.

### Sarudhan Paar

In this *Paar* the singer repeats the word ‘*Sarudhana*’ again and again in the *Maadli* song. The music matches itself with the word *Sarudhana* in each line. The song is like-

*E, hela hela hela hela sarudhana*  
*Hela, hela, helahela*  
*Ama hati nadi bhasalebhela*

*Karaj budaidela, sarudhana...*  
*Karaj budaidela, sarudhana*  
*Karaj budai dela*  
*Madiarmandalagebadathanda*  
*Mandara khirisapur*  
*Sapane hasa khela hesipilajhila*  
*Dayamaya thile tora, sarudhana...*  
*Dayamaya thile tor*  
*Bana jantu bana pakhi mari khao*  
*Phula Phala kanda mula*  
*Bhaji kanji khaunrunabadanainh*  
*Piunjharanra jala, sarudhana*  
*Piun jharanara jal...*

In the above song the singer describe the nature of his locality, greeting his loved ones and introducing his life style.

### **Adghurlia Paar**

*Ghurulia* is a bird, similar to sparrow. This song addresses the bird and so as the name became *Adghurulia Paar*. The dancers create a semi-circular position while dancing. They dance with the beat of song and the sound of Maadli and their body move to the front and back again. The song of this *Paar* is like:

*Chachi chere ghurlia chere*  
*Dhuli lutpute*  
*Chhaata, Madali tamki gote*  
*Honua kuta kute*  
*F:- E, ken bailigune, gurlia*  
*Ken baili gune*  
*Chutkarichabidelu*  
*Mahul beta thane*  
*M:- E, hele pasarli ghurlia*  
*Hele pasarli*  
*Dhire God muduthili*  
*Khani Khansari*  
*Mor maran salegram*  
*Gijrakhaela jam.*

The above song narrates the activity of *Ghurulia* bird, Maadli and *Tamki*.

### **Dhekimada Paar**

*Dheki* is a wooden instrument usually used in rural household to pound the paddy to prepare rice. It is 9 feet in length and it requires two persons for the work to be done. When one person presses the back side of the *Dheki*, other person filled paddy in the hole of *mahul* wood. Usually women engaged in this work and sing this song while milling. So, this pattern is known as *Dhekimara paar*. The song is like:

*Dheki de damsi re, dheki sama kute dhan*  
*Dheki mada nani manar kulaedekaan*  
*Ushnabataraluabatarjansibudabudi*  
*Mudarbaltachigala, Dhenki madi madi*  
*Buda kututhile, budisankruche*  
*Dhenkimadabudabudikhaisibangla pan.*

The young ladies who used *heki* while milling, sing the song and in this they make fun of their grandparents in a joking way.

### **Maka Phulia Paar**

The singer sings the song while addressing *Makaphula* which means Flower of Corn and so as the naming is. The song is like-

*Jharana bahe khulkhul re makaphul*  
*Dhangari hase mulmul*  
*Dhangara mane helethul re, makaphul*  
*Jharana... (1)*  
*Tak gaen gaen, aen, aen*  
*Madali nach man kechhuen*  
*Tak dum dum madal mara*  
*Rakam kare bhabar hara*  
*Bhama rasangenain bhul re makaphul*  
*Jharana... (2)*

The above song narrates as the water stream is flowing, the young girls are smiling and the young boys are approaching. So the artist defines girls as flowers and boys as black bee and should not be stay together.

### **Supporting Musical Instruments**

The tribal dance Maadli goes with some musical instruments like: Maadal, Jhumka, Flute, Jhanz, Timtimi, Thodkel and some farming tools as symbol of agrarian features like plough, axe, sickle, pickaxe, hoe, spade and fish netting items like net, stick or rod, pin, thread as a symbol of courage and prosperity. The chief musical instrument Madal is a hollow log piece covered with leathers in both the sides. The leathers are tied in both the sides with leather thread only which is popularly known as Baadi. It is also decorated with different types of colourful threads and clothes. Maadli dance has a specific opening song highly mythological and interesting.

*“Panda mase ganda choula dhoile Madli arambha  
sate Bahuda gundicha rati santa hue Chhatisa  
pataka mate re madly Tak tum tum baje”.*

The song narrates as: When the Gonds celebrate their reaping festival in the month of *Margasira*, the Raj Gonds act like Senapati or store keeper by beating of Maadli or drum. During the performance of Maadli dance, a singer has to sing and the other co-dancers go on dancing in more natural and symbolic manner of farming. The Gonds believe Goddess Bhima as their Mother Goddess and to satisfy her, they worship in their traditional dance form along with Lord Hanuman. The dance is made to bring peace and harmony, joy and prosperity to the earth. There are many Maadli dance songs that represent the socio-economic structure of the people in reality. Maadli in both Kalahandi and Nuapada district has special importance and relevance. The uses of various musical instruments add new and extra joy to the dance form of Maadli dance. It is really interesting and entertaining.

### **Instruments and Associated Elements of Dance**

#### **Maadli**

Maadli is burnt-mud equipment wrapped with skin of young cow or bullock skin. It is more similar to Mridangam or Mrudanga. The Maadli is made-up of black soil and burnt by village potter whereas *Madala* used in *Karamsani / Karma or Dhemsas*, are made-up of wood. It is hollow in the middle and about 1.5 feet in length. The left side opening is 10 inches in dimension and right side opening is 4 inches wide. Both sides are covered with skin and tied with the skin rope. The skin covers are plated with a paste which is made-up of rice, rash (*Jhuna*) and castor oil, at the centre known as *Kiran*. The dancers play Maadli with his fingers. The Maadli player hangs the instrument in their neck with the help of a long cotton cloth. During the dance performance about 5 to 7 (five to seven) Maadli are played simultaneously by the dancers.

### **Tamki**

*Tamki* is made up of black cotton soil which burnt into looks red in colour made by the village potter. It is a supporting instrument of Maadli. It is shaped like a deep bowl pot and wrapped in cow skin and skin ropes. It generates a sound like *tim, tim, tim...* so as the name came *Tamki*. It is played with the sticks. The sounds of this instrument run step to step with the song which supplements Maadli. In other locality *Tamki* also called as *Tribiri or Tribidi*.

### **Banshi (Flute)**

It is made of bamboo. It is usually one foot long and less than 1 inch in diameter. It has seven holes on it, one hole at the top for the purpose of blowing and six in the lower half to generate sound. The holes are covered and un-covered while playing the instrument with the help of three fingers of each hand. It plays the same tune that of the song to enhance the sweetness of the lyrics. It is also a local product found in local environmental condition.

### **Thodkel**

This instrument is made-up of wood. It generates sounds like *thad, thad... thadak*. Hence it is named as Thodkel. It is played with one or two sticks to produce sound. The sound of *Thodkel* compliments the other musical instrument nicely.

### **Tenko**

*Tenko* is an instrument which produces sound. In English *Tenko* means chameleons or iguanas, also called as garden lizards. The lizards are carnivorous in nature that eats insects



which are harmful to crop. So, the farmers think *Tenko* is their friend and included in the Maadli dance form. They build a wooden lizard on the thick wood, as if it sits on the wood piece. When it is pulled down with a rope it goes up strike the wood and produce sound. Apart from these above sound producing instruments there are other non-sound producing instruments that are agricultural implements or livelihood related or household artefacts. Around 17 to 18 instruments are used in Maadli dance form. Some non-sound producing artefacts are described below:

### **Thopa**

Thopa is a conical shaped instrument with a base which is two feet in diameter. There is a narrow opening at the top and it is made up of Bamboo. People use it to catch fish. The artist who plays the role of fisherman used this instrument during the dance performance. The artist portrays the role and enacted the livelihood of the fisherman with the beat of the drum.

### **Dhuti**

*Dhuti* is an artefact used to store fish. It is like a big vanity bag. It is made with thin bamboo strips which allow water to drain out of the bag and keep the fish inside it.

### **Ghoda**

In English *Ghoda* means horse. So, horse shaped equipment is made out of wood is visible in this dance form. It is used by an artist to ride over and create humour by various movements. The movement of the *Ghoda* and artist are in coherence with the song.

### **Jaal**

*Jaal* or net is fishing equipment. The same equipment creates movement that generate jokes or role-play whatever described in the song.

### **Girna**

*Girna* is also termed as *Koda*. *Girna* is a small netted with two bow shaped bamboo strips which cross each other and create a rectangular shape. It is also fishing equipment. It is used in muddy or shallow water. The role play is more like *Jaal* or *Thopa*.

### **Dandara (Mugura)**

It is a long narrow cage made up of bamboo sticks. It is twisted to make a cage leaving one end open and the other end closed. The open end kept in the running water. The water flows through the narrow channel. So any fish moving through the channel can be caught. The artist shows the fishing process in the dance performance. There are several agricultural equipments like *Nangal*, *Kotua*, *Tangia* which are included in the dance.

### **Nangal**

Hand tiller or *Nangal* used to till land for cultivation. A miniature model of *Nangala* used is in the dance process. The artist enacted the role of tiller and it symbolises the livelihood of agricultural community.

### **Kotua**

It is wooden agricultural equipment used to separate the soil of one cubic feet size to check the flow of water in the farming land. It is usually 5 to 6 feet long with sharp edge. This equipment represents the farming activities in the land which sync with the dance and song.

### **Tangia**

*Tangia* or axe is a primary equipment of a farming community. So the artist uses this equipment to represent the importance and universality of the same in the dance performance. There are other two symbolic equipments used in the dance form i.e., *Bandhuk* or *Nali* & *Pandaka* or *Dove*. *Bandhuk* means gun. So, a wooden replica of gun is represented in the dance which exhibits the strength, vigour and security of the farming community. Also a wooden replica of Dove is shown in the dance as a symbol of peace and harmony among the intra community and inters community through song and dance.

### **Costume**

Costumes are the very crucial part of any dance form whether it is folk dance or tribal dance or classical dance or any other modern dance form. In *Natyasastra* also it is described as one

of the four Abhinayas i.e. Aharya Abhinaya. The costumes used for Maadli dance is normally local used by the Gond community in the village function and festivals. All the dancers in the group use three pieces of cloth comprising of a lower one which need to be white in colour wrapped in a semi martial knot style, the upper portion of the body covered by either *Banian (Ganji)*, *Fatei* or *Gamchha* crossing around the shoulder with a knot below. The third piece of cloth is a *Pagdi* or head gear. It is usually a coloured *gamchha* or towel simply wrapped on the head in a systematic manner. But in general there is no specific costume designed particularly for the Maadli dance form. The dancers use the available clothes at the time of dance performance. They decorate their body with various colourful designs with the help of different natural colours and flowers & fruits.

### **Recent Changes**

Like many other dance forms the Maadli dance has also changed with due course of time.

1. The lyrics of the Maadli song have been modified to some extent. Earlier the singers were using some vulgar words to express woman's character but now it is removed from it.
2. Changes have been observed in the costumes of the dancers as sometimes the artists were wearing modern shirt and pants or the clothes available at that time.
3. Reform has been seen in the presentation style of the dance and the dancers try to perform in the view of the taste of the audience as now days Maadli dance is performed not only for the agricultural season but also for entertainment purpose.
4. As mention by Mishra (2001) at the initial stage of Maadli dance women were also participating in the dance, but modernisation has discouraged the *Adivasi* women to involve in the dance performance.
5. Earlier the artists were using indigenous colours to make designs on their body to attract the audience which is prepared from leafs, roots, seeds and flowers however now they are using modern colours available in the market.

### **Threat and Survival of the Dance**

Even though Maadli dance is one of the popular tribal dances of western Odisha but still it is in the process of extinction.

1. Most of the new generation from *Gond* community are hesitating to continue the profession as a Maadli player or Maadli dancer. It is because they are not getting any financial assistance or any kind of support from both the central and state government.
2. The impact of western culture and modernization has lessened the interest of young generation to learn the dance form. So the knowledge transmission of Maadli dance from the old generation to the new generation has been declined.
3. Further many people from *Gond* community have shifted their occupation from agriculture to petty businesses because of irregular rainfall, drought and climate change. So the importance of the dance has been reduced as it is an agriculture based dance.
4. As *Gonds* are showing less interest towards Agriculture and the dance is related to farming, there has been less celebration of Maadli dance. Sometimes it is only performed for entertainment purpose like in Wedding etc.
5. The Maadli songs and their lyrics have not been documented properly. So one cannot find the details about the songs.
6. As the songs are available in the oral version, new generation could not understand the importance of the dance form and the *Gond* culture.
7. Many people are migrating to other states and cities for better employment opportunities, so the importance of Agriculture and its related rituals are also neglecting.

## Conclusion

The Maadlis are basically associated with the development of cultivation. Most of its components are being reflected by the traditional heritage of the tribes. It is considered to be the mirror image of their simple living. But during these days the rituals the dance has been changed to many extents, coming in contact with the modernisation. However, it was and will be the real essence of the tribal people. It is, therefore high time to re-evaluate their approach to their own culture and come back to their roots.

The Maadli dance is usually performed in the village natural setting, so despite of all its popularity in the local level it does not attract the urban audience. The dance groups should get promotion and chance to perform in the different District, State and National level cultural programmes so, that the uniqueness of the dance can be reached to both urban and rural viewers. There should be proper awareness at the school, college and block level for the

cultural importance and preservation of different tribal folk dances including Maadli which are in the process of extinction. The dance forms which are in verge of extinction need to be documented for preservation of the dying heritage and for the knowledge of upcoming generation. The state government should provide some financial assistance to the Maadli dance groups for their revival. Also the artists should get some promotional cash incentive in a regular interval so that the young generation of *Gond* community can be attracted towards the dance form and take it as a profession. The dance form should be added in the extra curriculum activity at the school level especially for *Gond* children, so that more children will get the knowledge about the importance of dance and the tribal culture. Local NGOs and Block administration should take necessary action for the revival of Maadli dance.

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