

The Mystery And Reality Of “Dhemsas”: An Anthropological Observation

Sristi Swarupa Mishra¹, Jagannath Dash²

(Ph.D. Research Scholar, Dept. Of Anthropology And Tribal Studies, Siksha ‘O’ Anusandhan
(Deemed To Be University), Bhubaneswar, India)

(Professor Emeritus, Dept. Of Anthropology And Tribal Studies, Siksha ‘O’ Anusandhan
(Deemed To Be University), Bhubaneswar, India)

Abstract:

Dance, as a culturally rooted expressive form, represents not just aesthetics but operates as a complex social institution encoding history, identity, belief systems, and collective memory. In India, tribal dances play a central role as mechanisms of social control, ritual communication, health practices, and community functioning. This paper argues that Dhemsas, the principal tribal folk dance of Southern Odisha’s undivided Koraput region, stands as a living cultural institution—shaped by Desia culture, sustained by inter-tribal exchanges, and integral to tribal identity. Employing methods such as fieldwork, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and audio-visual documentation, this study examines Dhemsas’s origins, stylistic variations, structural patterns, musical traditions, adornments, and the dance’s practical roles. Findings show Dhemsas manifests in localized forms, each closely tied to ritual, agricultural, social, and ecological contexts among tribes influenced by Desia culture. The dance is central to ritual practice, mate selection, community cohesion, and physical health—especially for women. However, its authenticity and sustainability face threats from commercialization, modernization, religious conversion, declining traditional costumes, and the influence of DJ culture. This study contends that safeguarding Dhemsas as intangible cultural heritage requires context-sensitive preservation strategies rooted in indigenous knowledge systems.

Keyword: Dhemsas dance, Desia culture, Koraput tribal dance, Odisha folk dance, Adivasi, Paraja, Gadaba, Commercialization of indigenous dance, Southern Odisha tribes, Ethnographic study

Date of Submission: 17-01-2026

Date of Acceptance: 27-01-2026

I. Introduction

Dance, as both creative expression and social practice, is central to displaying culture in societies worldwide. It sustains traditions and values across generations, encapsulating history, society, and identity. Indian dance can generally be classified into three streams: Tribal, Folk, and Classical. Folk and tribal dances are communal, reflecting specific regional and community identities, while Classical forms have developed structured grammars believed to originate from "NATRAJ" (Lord Shiva).

While focusing on Tribal dances, it can’t be solely understood within the perspective of ritualistic or amusement. Rather, it acts as an important mechanism for controlling social functions in a regulated manner. Since time immemorial, dance has played a pivotal role in cultural and social practices. More than 705 Scheduled Tribes are situated in India. Out of them, the highest number of STs (above 62) have been identified in Odisha. Each tribe possesses its unique culture, dance forms, attire, and specific accompanying instruments, which act as an identity for them. The tribal dance is linked with nature, having different complex movements in a chain-like structure, which ranges from simple and steady movements to faster and more complex movements.

“Dhemsas”, as an established tribal folk tradition, a product of evolved Desia culture, plays a vital role in celebrating and honouring such various tribal identities. Various types of Dhemsas have been identified, which are performed by various tribes, i.e., *Paraja, Gadaba, Desia- Kandha, Bhumia, Pentia, Bhotra, Durua*, etc., but each type has a unique combination of instruments, footwork, movements, structural pattern and music and each type is performed on specific occasions celebrated by various tribal groups, though the variations are precise to observe. Both men and women participate by forming a circle, semi-circle, line or a spiral structure, often holding hands or placing arms around each other’s shoulders, and move rhythmically to the beat of indigenous instruments like *dhola, mohuri, dhumsa, tudubudi, and tamak*. The dancers, adorned in colourful traditional attire, move in unison, symbolizing the unity and collective spirit of the concerned tribe.

Objective:

This study is guided by the following comprehensive objectives:

To document the etymological foundations of *Dhemsā* and analyse the historical evolution:

To investigate the oral stories and myths of origin related to *Dhemsā* and how the term has evolved through time, the impact of colonial rules and how the dance form became the product of *desia* culture in association with inter-tribal interaction.

To map and classify the variations in *Dhemsā*:

To document the distinctive styles of *Dhemsā* practiced by different tribal communities (e.g., *Paraja*, *Gadaba*, *Durua*, *Desia-kondha*, *Bhotra*) across southern region of Odisha stated by different researchers and systematically examine the socio-geographic conditions that give rise to the differences in the dance form, pointing out the common factors and the particular features of each community at the same time.

To Explore the Multifunctional Roles of *Dhemsā* as a Socio-Cultural Institution:

- Ritual & Cosmological Function: Take a closer look at the divine aspect of the dance in relation with (*Chait Parab*, *Pus Parab*), worshipping of deities and ancestor spirits' worship.
- Biosocial & Health Function: Delve into the traditional understanding of its roles in the promotion of community physical fitness, its specific mention on gynaecological health and fertility, and the social interaction taking place under its supervision.
- Identity & Cultural Memory Function: Consider its central part in the formation and continuation of both tribal and "Desia" identity, being the main archive for myths, history, and moral codes.

To assess contemporary transformations and challenges:

- To provide a critical assessment of the modernization, commercialization, and tourism influences on *Dhemsā* performances with respect to their authenticity and context.
- Analyse the changes in the value systems and religious conversion milieu on the community participation.
- Report on the transition from community-based ritual spots to performing places (tribal festivals, contests, digital media) its consequences and impact on their development.

To throw light on the challenges and threats faced by the raw and sacred forms of *Dhemsā* and emphasize the need for culturally sensitive preservation efforts by enhancing the governmental support.

II. Methodology:

This research has been conducted through the combination of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included first-hand research by visiting the field and interviewing participants to obtain their perspective on *Dhemsā*. Data were gathered through participant observation, semi-structured interviews with tribal elders, dance performers and youngsters, and a focus group discussion. As a research tool, it has been used for obtaining precise insights into this tribal folkdance form, and audio-visual documentation of the dance form has also been conducted. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, were followed. Data were thematically analysed to explore this tribal folkdance, which stimulates their communal identity and heritage preservation.

III. Results & Discussion

***Dhemsā*: An Overview**

In the southern part of Odisha, especially in the undivided Koraput belt, *dhemsā* is a common tribal dance style. According to field observations, a number of tribes who are influenced through *desia* culture, including the Gadaba, Paraja, Bhumia, Bhotra, Pentia etc. perform it. *Dhemsā* is not a single, uniform form; rather, it appears in a variety of localized forms influenced by social occasion, tribal identification, and ceremonial setting.

Origin of *Dhemsā*, as narrated by the tribal elders, is associated with collective movement where individuals walked together by holding hands and moving in linear, semi-linear or circular formations. Over time, this collective bodily movement evolved into an organized dance form and became institutionalized within the socio-cultural life of the communities.

Empirical evidence also shows that *Dhemsā* consists of many forms carried out for particular objectives. Certain forms have considerable ritual importance, while others serve as community dances during celebratory events. For example, “*Sirra Dhemsā*” is only performed by the village shaman (locally named as Sirra) and is limited to ceremonial settings, demonstrating the dance's symbolic and cosmic aspects and on the other side, “*Mandia Moda Dhemsā*” is performed by the dancers to crush the raggie after harvesting.

Overall, *Dhemsā* emerges as a living cultural institution influenced by ritual practice, geographical migration, intertribal connections & interaction, and ecological surroundings rather than just as a dance form. It's ongoing performance highlights how important it is for maintaining cultural memory, enforcing social cohesiveness, and expressing the sociocultural aspects of tribal life in southern Odisha.

Debate on etymological derivation of *Dhemsā*:

The origin of the term *Dhemsā* remains contested, with varying regional and linguistic interpretations. Some scholars trace it to the Odia term *Dayansha* (“come let's dance”), while others relate it to *Demsa Degni* (“jumping in rhythm”), suggesting that phonetic evolution and colonial influence may have shaped its modern form. In the Koraput region, the term is also believed to derive from the *Dhumsa drum*, whose resonant “*dhum dhum*” sound defines the dance's musical identity. **Dr Rajendra Padhi, Dr Satya Narayan Rath, and Saiman Bidika (2022)** propose that *Dhemsā* originates from the *Bhumia* term *daensaasha*—a combination of *daensa* (jump) and *asaa* (come)—underscoring the participatory and rhythmic nature of the performance. Western ethnographer **Walter Compman**, meanwhile, posits that *Dhemsā* predates recorded history, highlighting its ancient roots within indigenous cultural expressions (Bidika, 2022, pp. 231–232). Linguistically, *Dhemsā* appears to represent a dynamic cultural lexeme shaped by inter-tribal contact, phonetic adaptation, and rhythmic symbolism, reflecting the evolving identity of *Desia* cultural traditions in the undivided Koraput region. Linguistically, *Dhemsā* appears to represent a dynamic cultural lexeme shaped by inter-tribal contact, phonetic adaptation, and rhythmic symbolism, reflecting the evolving identity of *Desia* cultural traditions in the undivided Koraput region.

Types of *Dhemsā*:

Some *Dhemsā* variations are gradually disappearing or going extinct due to changing socioeconomic conditions, migration, religious conversion, and modernization, while others continue to flourish in contemporary society.

The various types according to different scholars could be illustrated in following ways:

According to **Dr Rajendra Padhy**, *Dhemsā* dance could be categorised into nine types, such as:

1. Hindani Dhemsā (Walk like)
2. Antaa jhulani (Bending the waist in a particular direction)
3. Kundaa Dhemsā (Bending down and facial direction is downward)
4. Rinjhodi Dhemsā (Paraja tribe's Young girl's dance)
5. Sira dhemsā (possession dance of Shaman)
6. Bonda Dhemsā (Bonda tribal Dance)
7. Goddibetani Dhemsā (collection of stones from surface)
8. Doudani Dhemsā (running like)
9. Lahuramara Dhemsā (beating hammer like)

According to Researcher **Udaya Mishra**, seventeen types of *Dhemsā* has been identified such as:

1. Bali dhemsā
2. Daalkhola dhemsā
3. Mandi ladhani dhemsā
4. Khudaa dhemsā
5. Karapani dhemsā
6. Bhandani dhemsā
7. Sira dhemsā
8. Gaddijatta dhemsā
9. Banda dhemsā
10. Lahuramara dhemsā
11. Antaajhula dhemsā
12. Rigidi dhemsā
13. Bhajiphula dhemsā
14. Chooti dhemsā
15. Jhadamalli dhemsā
16. Eksegundari dhemsā
17. Saainlodi dhemsā

According to, Researcher **Shri Saimana Bidika**, Dhemsas possess 13 varieties in the region of "Baiparigudda" of Koraput.

1. Hindani dhemsas
2. Khedani dhemsas
3. Antajhulani dhemsas
4. Khundamarani dhemsas
5. Madiaparadhemsas
6. Dhanakutaani dhemsas
7. Gottibetani dhemsas
8. Pattartollani dhemsas
9. Goddaghasani dhemsas
10. Saainlodi dhemsas
11. Jhaliana dhemsas
12. Rinjhodi dhemsas
13. Sirra dhemsas

According to **Guru Kanhucharana Pradhan**, Dhemsas has been identified as 17 types such as:

1. Saainlodi dhemsas (Saain meaning friends , Lodi (Lodiba) – Missing)
2. Jindiri dhemsas
3. Khunda dhemsas
4. Bagh dhemsas
5. Mandichechakani dhemsas
6. Khamunia dhemsas
7. Antajhulani dhemsas
8. Godibetani dhemsas
9. Mandilachakani dhemsas
10. Kattimarani dhemsas
11. Guhuda dhemsas
12. Sarbabali dhemsas
13. Jhadamali dhemsas
14. Lahuramara dhemsas
15. Amunitaa dhemsas
16. Palani dhemsas
17. Mandiamoda dhemsas

Through field observation, more than sixty types of unique forms of *Dhemsas* has been identified in the undivided Koraput region. However, the specific types practiced by different tribal communities still need proper documentation. These variation shows different structural forms, including linear, semi-linear, snake-like, and semi-circular patterns. Photography can effectively capture the details of these formations.

Structure and Performance Dynamics:

Formation & Movements:

In *Dhemsas*, two expert dancers traditionally position themselves at the front and back of the line formation. When the leading dancer at the front gets tired, the dancer at the rear smoothly takes over and guides the line forward. While leading, she changes the dance steps based on the changing rhythms of the accompanying music, which the other dancers then follow. Locally, she is called "*Battkadhani*." The *Battkadhani* carries a bunch of peacock feathers, known as "*Majurmutta*" which she (the lead dancer) use to direct the line's movement. Among the *Gadaba* tribe, the male dancer who leads the line is called "*Dhangaramajhi*." His rhythmic movements influence the instrumentalists, who adjust their beats to ensure harmony between the music and the rhythm. This synchronization helps the dancers showcase their creativity by altering their footwork.

Here, the positions during *Dhemsas* performance, in accordance with expertise has been highlighted:

| In English | In local terms (Desia) | Paraja's term |
|---|------------------------|------------------|
| The lead dancer (at first position of the line) | Battkadhani, Jhalaau | Nakishha \ Aagdi |
| Middle dancers | Daauni | Naddmi / Maajei |
| Last one dancer in the line | Jhalimarani | Wenka |

Accompanying Music & Instrument:

The *Dhemsas* dance form represents a cultural expression of the Desia traditional culture and has been influenced by the continuous cultural interactions between tribes in ancient Undivided Koraput region. Initially,

the *Dhemsas* dance was accompanied by traditional instruments that were indigenous to the region, including the *dhumsa*, *dhap*, *tamak*, *tudubudi*, and *dungdunga*, but over time, melodic instruments like the *bainshi* (flute) and *mahuri* were added to the musical accompaniment of the *Dhemsas* dance. The *mahuri* gradually became a very prominent accompanying instrument of the dance form, with historical accounts indicating that the introduction of the *mahuri* to the Desia traditional culture occurred through royal patronage. The reasons that the Desia people did not typically perform with the *mahuri* included the practices of the local government associated with taxation; in other words, the king brought a group of *mahurias* from the Harijan community in a nearby district to perform at ancient Koraput, these musicians used the *mahuri* during gatherings where the king could collect taxes from the congregated populations at once. Over time, these *mahurias* learned different *paars* (tribal melodic tunes) and began to accompany in *Dhemsas*.

The *Mahuri* has subsequently been established as the primary instrument to regulate the *laya* or tempo of the dance that follows the *Baatkadhani*'s dance movements. Whenever there are any changes in *laya*, it will therefore be done through the *Mahuri*. The *Mahuria* however, despite their historically significant role are in a socially marginalised position in many tribal societies due to their association with the Harijan community typically seen as 'brothers'. The *Mahuria* do not function within the Kinship system as far as marrying and choosing mates are concerned, and remain outside of this system as a result of the existing hierarchical social structures prevalent in the tribal communities.

Here, local terms of the accompanying instruments has been highlighted in following table:

| INSTRUMENT NAME | DESIA LANGUAGE |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Small drum | Tudubuddi |
| Bass drum | Dhamp |
| Kettle drum | Tamak |
| one-string fiddle | Dungudunga |
| Indian Oboe (wind instrument) | Mahuri |
| Flute (wind instrument) | Bainshi |

Dhemsas Adornments:

The traditional attire of the tribes during *Dhemsas* performances is characterized by its aesthetic resonance and distinctiveness. This uniqueness not only enhances the visual appeal of the performance but also serves as a testament to the rich cultural diversity embedded within the *Dhemsas* tradition, reflecting each tribe's unique identity. For example, The *Durua* tribe during their *dhemsas* performances wear their unique white saree, whereas the *Gadaba* females wear their traditional *kerang* saree, *Paraja* for reflecting their uniqueness started wearing yellow red saree during their specific *Rinjhodi dhemsas*.

Here, local terms of the adornments and ornaments worn by the *dhangiri* (Female) has been highlighted in the following table:

| Adornments | Local terms |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Hair clip | <i>Sipnna</i> |
| Bindi (Forehead dot) | <i>Baatu</i> |
| Eye kajal | <i>Kattiga</i> |
| Ear ring | <i>Nangul (Desia), Paggda</i> |
| Upper ear rings | <i>Baweli</i> |
| Nose ring (Middle) | <i>Kami</i> |
| Neck ring (Silver) | <i>Gaggda</i> |
| Necklace (Gold) | <i>Bangarang puushe</i> |
| Long neck lace | <i>Dabbumalli, damiki</i> |
| Bangles | <i>Gassku</i> |
| Anklet | <i>Paating</i> |
| Toe ring | <i>Bathku</i> |
| Ring | <i>Wetori</i> |
| Hair bun (Khosas) | <i>Muulla</i> |

Functional aspect of Dhemsas

Ritualistic role:

Dhemsas is recognized by most as a ritualistic representation of local deities' worship and as a ceremonial communication channel between the spiritual realm of the community. Every tribe has its own local deities in their pantheon whose presence and influence are paramount to the rituals. The shaman of the community (called *Sirra* in the local language) participates in the ritualistic possession of the deity where the god is thought to appear through the possessed healer's unique movements and patterns of dance. These movements thereby allow the tribes to recognize the very god that is addressing them, since every god has its own rhythmical tune (*paar*) and a certain unique dance steps which represents that particular deity. The movements of the possessed shaman will

be consequently appropriated, codified, and passed down as parts of the local dancers' skills until they finally become inseparable from the *Dhemsā's* repertoire. As a result, it's believed that, the steps of *Dhemsā* are viewed by the locals are not created by humans but rather as forms that were revealed by the gods and originate from entities themselves.

Selection of mates:

In the past, societies composed of different tribes had a dormitory system (*Dhangra Dhangri basa*) that was the principal socializing and enculturating institution, where elders would transfer cultural knowledge to the young ones. It was within this institution that the young people learned handicraft, music, dance, and other customs related to the tribe's activities. Music and dance were the main activities through which people interacted socially and got to court each other. They were accepted by the culture as ways of communicating and expressing feelings. In the case of collective dance performances, especially *Dhemsā*, young men and women could dance and move their bodies to the rhythm, which made it easier for them to interact closely and choose their partners. Knowing how to dance was a social asset and a skilled dancer among women was regarded as the most desirable women. The dance named *Dhangra–Dhangri Dhemsā* where male and female dancers hold hands and master their movements together was very important in mating rituals as it allowed the participants to show their attraction and social acceptance through musical negotiation.

Dance contributing to fitness of Physical body:

The tribal communities usually have strenuous occupations, and among them the obesity rate is naturally low. Dance is a universal and even cultural way of physical activity that is not really recognized because people are so busy with work that they even do dance after a hard day's work as earlier it was the only source of entertainment for the people. Hence, the *Dhemsā* is developed in a very natural way to bring into play the whole body with the specifics of women's physiology getting the most benefit from it. Anthropological observation reveals that, some of the dance moves are associated with gynaecological health, fertility, and menstrual regulation. Although in the case of menstruation and pregnancy restrictions are there in the society. The practice of *Dhemsā* that goes on daily still strengthens the pelvic and the core areas. The example of the *Bassigatnika* movement (mentioned in figure 1.2) shows how this is done as it is performed in the Odisha–Andhra border villages and it almost looks like the *Malasana* yogic posture and also the traditional *Puchhi Khela*, both of which are acknowledged for strengthening pelvic muscles and thus, enhancing women's reproductive health. In addition, the waist-centric movements like *Antajhulaani* and *Gottibetni* focus on continuous pelvic movement which results in pelvic flexibility and muscular endurance. From a medical and kinesiology perspective, *Dhemsā* dance is a physically demanding activity that socially, emotionally, and spiritually supports the tribal population, thus, contributing to their health and bodily resilience in a whole manner.



Figure 1.1 (*Antajhulani movements by the paraja dancers*)



Figure 1.2 (*Basigatnika, movements helps to maintain gynaecological health*)

Dhemsā in contemporary discourse

Preservation Efforts:

The raw tribal culture preservation has become a major issue in the recent times. It has attracted the attention of various governmental agencies and NGOs, who are providing platforms for the tribal communities to showcase their dance forms. These platforms are making it easier for the young ones to dive into the historical background of their culture and comprehend its importance. Indigenization of globally exchangeable dance has also led to a cross-cultural learning experience; thus, different communities can share and appreciate each other's cultural traits. However, some difficulties are inevitable and always come along. For instance, *Koraputia Dhemsā's* case is not that simple; the "commercials," as the lifeblood of the dance, have consequently led to the production of CDs and audio recordings that are now widely used in the performances. Thus, the traditional instrumentalists, who once played a crucial role in the less visible but essential part of the performance, are gradually becoming unemployed. Even the *dhol*, *tamak*, *tudubudi*, and *dhumsa* instruments are gradually becoming extinct as the replacement of live performance with recorded music becomes widespread. This whole process signifies a great challenge to the authenticity and sustainability of *Dhemsā* raw form.

The *Dhemsā* dance, from its very roots, has a distinctive spiritual character. Local people, out of their fear and respect for godly powers and ancestors' spirits, have deliberately kept modern techniques away from the ritualistic manner of performing *Dhemsā* which is known as *Sirra Dhemsā*. This manner is still done in a sacred setting, very strictly sticking to the traditional way of doing it in terms of movements, music, and performance context. Divided into secular and sacred forms, the *Dhemsā* is still practiced in the secular variant but mainly for the sake of entertainment and hence more and more it is being mixing up with Western Odisha dance styles and other local folk forms. The loud DJ culture is one of the major factors that push the process of fusion as it attracts the younger generation in particular. This mixing of styles, while being a sign of current cultural trends, creates a big problem in the way that it is a threat to the very survival of the raw and traditional form of *Dhemsā*, thus raising important questions about the authenticity, continuity, and cultural sustainability within the community.

Threat to tribal attire:

The Gadaba tribes inhabiting in the southern region of Odisha are known for their peculiar dress code called “*Kerang*”, also a notable necklace termed “*Khagla*”. Yet, both of them are almost extinct now. The *Kerang* saree was originally made from the bark of the *kerang* tree. It was the practice among them that, the young girl who can weave at least two *Kerang* sarees is ready for marriage. But, this custom has almost gone with the wind of modernization. Moreover, the tribal identity of Gadaba women is slowly fading as they are now widely adopting modern outfits such as kurtas and sarees. Gadaba young ladies said that the *khaglas* were disappearing with the old women as they died; the *khaglas* were being buried with the dead along with their bodies shows one of the example how the traditional attire of the tribes are under threat.



Figure 2 (Gadaba women weaving kerang saree)

Modern education and Religious conversion:

No matter if it is Hindu absorption or Christian conversion, both drawbacks the tribal identity. The most renowned festivals in the past like *Push parab*, *gotra parab* or *podumara parab chaiti parab*, etc. are now at the verge of extinction. The modern education influence encourages the young people to migrate to urban areas in order to satisfy their educational needs, and slowly some of them develop a feeling of not coming back to their native place, the educated people feel ashamed of displaying their own culture and customs which is a serious issue for the tribal development.

Changes in performances and platforms:

Tribal dance has its root embedded in nature, where movements were directly inspired by the elements around them. The peacock's walk, the dance of the tiger or even the snake's zigzag movements have been some of the main factors in the evolution of these dances. For the tribes, music and dance were essential parts of life, which mainly served as an outlet for entertainment and emotions after a long day of working hard. These dance forms were naturally developed by the society's needs and performed in their own natural setting. In the contemporary world, however, the growing impact of money eventually leads to changes in lifestyle, even though many tribal communities have slowly cut themselves off from the traditional cultural traits. They now perform at the venues set up by different Governmental organizations in urban cities and on commercial platforms, where the core of their dances is changed with the spreading of their art and getting paid for it. The link to nature, along with ritualistic way of treatment that used to distinguish these performances, is now replaced by artificial environments and external audience expectations. Formerly, the dances were for the communication of feelings, maintenance of community ties, etc. But nowadays, the focus is on earning money and entertaining the audience. The change represents a significant shift in the cultural character of tribal dances and poses a significant question about the retention of their original spirit in modern society.

IV. Conclusion:

Dhemsā, practised in the historical undivided Koraput region of southern Odisha, is a lively and complex cultural institution. It is deeply tied to the social, ritual, agricultural, spiritual, psychological and physical experiences of tribal communities who are exposed to the Desia culture. Dhemsā is not a single, uniform dance form; it includes a variety of local folk styles shaped by tribal identity, ceremonial settings, historical migration, and cultural exchanges among tribes.

The study shows that Dhemsā serves many purposes. It acts as a spiritual medium, regulates social interactions, helps with mate selection, and is a form of culturally meaningful physical activity that benefits overall health, especially for women. The ritual forms, such as Sirra Dhemsā, emphasise the sacred roots of its movements, suggesting that dance steps are divine gifts rather than mere human creations. Meanwhile, secular versions of Dhemsā underline its role in celebrations, farming seasons, and the overall function of the society.

However, the research also finds that Dhemsā is changing significantly due to modern pressures. Commercialisation, recorded music, stage performances, religious conversion, modern education, and the gradual loss of traditional clothing and instruments threaten the authenticity and continuity of its original forms. While state-sponsored events and cultural festivals have made Dhemsā more popular, it has simultaneously distorted its original essence and meaning, which is used to represent its natural raw form, and this is not only for the entertainment of the audience but also for the sake of regulating society.

Though preserving Dhemsā needs more aesthetic care. It requires a combined approach that respects local knowledge, performance contexts, and community involvement. Seeing Dhemsā as an intangible cultural heritage is becoming a disjointed stage show detached from its social roots. A mixed approach is needed to popularise this tribal folk dance and preserve it in its raw form.

References

- [1]. Beltrán, R. E., & Fernandez, A. R. (2022). “Wherever I Go, I Have It Inside Of Me”: Indigenous Cultural Dance Narratives As Substance Abuse And HIV Prevention In An Urban Danza Mexica Community. *Frontiers In Public Health*, 9, Article 811898. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.811898>
- [2]. Bidika, S. (2022). Nabarangpur Adivasi Lokasahitya O Sanskritika Parampara (1st Ed., Pp. 231–240). Pakshighar Prakashanee.
- [3]. Choudhury, B. (1966–1967). Chaiti Parba: The Annual Hunting Festival In The District Of Koraput. *SCSTRTI Journal*, 7(4), 52–55.
- [4]. Dash, P. K. (N.D.). Sociocultural And Literary Potential Of The Traditional Odia Oral Narratives: A Critical Review.
- [5]. Douka, S., Zilidou, V. I., Lilou, O., & Manou, V. (2019). Traditional Dance Improves The Physical Fitness And Well-Being Of The Elderly. *Journal Of Aging And Physical Activity*, 27(2), 234–240. <https://doi.org/10.1123/Japa.2018-0044>
- [6]. Fernandez, A. R., Beltrán, R. E., & Alvarez, A. R. G. (2023). Decolonizing Pathways To Sustainability: Indigenous Cultural Dance As Resistance And Resilience. *Genealogy*, 7(3), Article55. <https://doi.org/10.3390/Genealogy7030055>
- [7]. Fong Yan, A., Copley, S., Chan, C., Pappas, E., Nicholson, L. L., Ward, R. E., Murdoch, R. E., & Gu, Y. (2024). The Effectiveness Of Dance Interventions On Psychological And Cognitive Health Outcomes Compared With Other Forms Of Physical Activity: A Systematic Review With Meta-Analysis. *Sports Medicine*, 54(5), 1179–1205. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S40279-024-01992-3>
- [8]. Jain, S., & Brown, D. R. (2001). Cultural Dance And Health: A Review Of The Literature. *American Journal Of Health Education*, 32(6), 340–346.
- [9]. Kumar, A., & Jaiswal, Y. (N.D.). A Critical Review Towards Understanding Nomadic Tribes In India: A Case Study Of Gujjars Of Jammu And Kashmir.
- [10]. Malik, G., & Sethi, S. (2023). Role Of Imbuing Interactions On The Social Fabric Of Gond Tribe: A Comprehensive Review.
- [11]. Mishra, S. C. (2009). Dhemsā Nrutya: Eka Samagrika Drustipata. *Konarka: A Quarterly Literary Journal*, (154), 20–31. Odisha Sahitya Akademi.
- [12]. Olvera, A. E. (2008). Cultural Dance And Health: A Review Of The Literature. *American Journal Of Health Education*, 39(6), 353–359. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19325037.2008.10599059>
- [13]. Padhy, R. (1987). Adivasi Nrutya Dhemsā: Odisha Ra Loka Nrutya. Banaphula Sahitya Parishad.
- [14]. Padhy, R. (2008, December). Tribal Festivals Of Koraput. Adivasi, 2.
- [15]. Padhy, R. (2009). Dhemsā Dance Of Koraput. In *Tribal Dances Of Odisha* (Pp. 93–98). Academy Of Tribal Language And Culture.

- [16]. Padhy, R. (2016). Koraput Ra Adivasi Loka Sanskruti (2nd Ed., Pp. 165–190). Subarnashree Prakasini.
- [17]. Pattanaik, J. (2019). Livelihood And Natural Resources: A Socio-Cultural Study Of The Paraja Tribe Of Koraput District, Odisha, India.
- [18]. Pattnaik, D. N. (1981). Oriya Sahitya O Adivasi Sanskruti. Orissa Sahitya Akademi.
- [19]. Perme, M. N., & Kar, N. (2024). A Socio-Cultural Study Of Meyor Tribe In Arunachal Pradesh: An Overview. International Journal Of Multidisciplinary Research In Arts, Science And Technology, 2(9), 37–54.
- [20]. Pradhan, R. (2007). Paraja Life And Culture. Prajnanan Paramita.
- [21]. Pradhan, R. (2009). Dance And Songs Of Paraja. In Tribal Dances Of Odisha (Pp. 72–78). Academy Of Tribal Language And Culture.
- [22]. Rout, J. P., & Patnaik, K. (2008, December). Chaiti Parab In Maa Majhi Ghariani Temple. Adivasi, 2.
- [23]. Royce, A. P. (2002). The Anthropology Of Dance. Dance Books.
- [24]. Sarkar, M., & Modak, B. (2022). Rituals And Festivals Of Indigenous People Of Chota Nagpur Plateau Of West Bengal: A Positive Correlation With The Environment. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-323-91603-5.00020-8>
- [25]. Satapathy, M. K., & Bisoi, S. S. (2021). Indigenous Knowledge And Practices On Conservation Of Natural Resources By Tribal Communities Of Koraput District, Odisha, India.