

TOWARDS A SAFEGUARDING CONCEPT OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN MAURITIUS

Mr Jayganesh DAWOSING

Lecturer, Department of Bhojpuri, Folklore and Oral Traditions
Mahatma Gandhi Institute (Mauritius)

<http://dx.doi.org/10.37500/IJESSR.2020.302263>

ABSTRACT

Recently, the word ‘Heritage’ has become a scholarship field with multiple issues. An integral part of human cultures, heritage interests today both the decision maker, the researcher, the public but also the international organizations. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) inscribed the Bhojpuri folk songs from Mauritius known as “Geet Gawai” to the representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in December 2016. Within these two years, this Intangible Heritage, deemed worthy of preservation, is often regarded as traditional culture that reflects the identity of a particular nation or group. This paper is aimed at defining the concept of intangible cultural heritage in the context of safeguarding of Bhojpuri folk songs and its evolution after the inscription in the list of the world Intangible Cultural Heritage. Through documentary research on the various ways to preserve heritage and empirical data collected in ethnographic research, both related to the context of the preservation of intangible heritage in Mauritius, we came to findings that reveal certain problems involving the transformation of the performance of the Mauritian Geet Gawai as an alternative to the preservation of local cultural traditions. Furthermore, idealization of certain forms and periods of heritage conflicts with the spirit and principles of the Convention.

KEYWORDS: Safeguarding, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Bhojpuri, Geet-Gawai, Evolution, Traditions.

INTRODUCTION

In Mauritius, there are two Tangible and three Intangible Cultural Heritage listed under UNESCO as ‘world heritage’. There is the Apravasi Ghat in Port Louis and Le Morne Cultural Landscape as tangible and for intangible, we have the traditional Mauritian sega, Bhojpuri folk songs-Geet Gawai and the sega tambour of Rodrigues Island as per the table below:

Representative List of the Tangible/Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity

Country	Tangible/Intangible Heritage	Year of Inscription
Mauritius	Apravasi Ghat	2006
	Le Morne Cultural Landscape	2008

	Traditional Mauritian Sega	2014
	Bhojpuri folk songs in Mauritius, Geet-Gawai	2016
	Sega tambour of Rodrigues Island	2017

Table: Representative List of the Tangible/Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity contains intangible cultural heritage elements that "help demonstrate the diversity of [cultural] heritage and raise awareness about its importance".

What is Cultural Heritage?

The term 'cultural heritage' has changed content considerably in recent decades, partially owing to the instruments developed by UNESCO. Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

While fragile, intangible cultural heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization. An understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue, and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life. The importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next. The social and economic value of this transmission of knowledge is relevant for minority groups and for mainstream social groups within a State, and is as important for developing States as for developed ones.

1.1 A brief on the Mauritian Geet-Gawai

The Bhojpuri Folk Songs Geet Gawai have been listed on the Intangible Cultural Heritage Representative List of World Patrimony of UNESCO on Thursday 1st December 2016, at the 11th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO at the seat of the Conference Centre of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Inter-Governmental Committee is composed of 24 States and elected by the General Assembly of the States Parties to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is to be remembered that Mauritius forms part of the Intergovernmental Committee for four years since April 2016. Mauritius was one of the first countries that signed the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

With the inscription of Geet Gawai, Bhojpuri gets not only a national but international dignity and recognition. In fact, there are many elements in Mauritius both tangible and intangible that are worthy of consideration and preservation.

In 2016, 37 countries submitted their Nomination Dossiers for inscription on the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage, among which that of Geet Gawai figured prominently on the Agenda. The 11th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee also reviewed such intangible cultural heritage that are threatened by modernity and need to be safeguarded urgently. In September 5, Suriname became the 175th State to join the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage bringing the convention close to attaining universal ratification.

1.2 Bhojpuri folk songs of Mauritius- Geet Gawai

Geet-Gawai is a pre-wedding performance including rituals, songs, dance and dance-drama in its complete form.

It consists primarily of the Bhojpuri-speaking community and originally confined to women. Today male and non-Bhojpuri speakers are participants and performers, especially in the singing and dancing part, the Jhumar.

Mauritian Geet-Gawai can be found in all Districts of Mauritius which are: Black River, Flacq, Grand Port, Moka, Pamplemousses, Plaines Wilhems, Port Louis, Rivière du Rempart and Savanne with high concentration in numerous villages of Pamplemousses, Moka, Riviere du Rempart, Savanne, and Grand Port. At least one Geet-Gawai specialised group is found in each village and town of Mauritius.

•1.2.1 Sumiran also known as Dēbi-Debtā ke Geet (songs of divinities)

Sumiran is a collective devotional singing and natural human expression of love and joy for God or the Divinity. One of the hallmarks of Bhojpuri Sumiran is the singing with passion and devotion, irrespective of the quality of the singers' voice but singing putting their heart into it and carrying with them the listeners to the height of devotion and spirituality. The more one feels the Sumiran, the better. Bhojpuri Sumiran generally includes: i. Ganesh Jike Geet (Bhojpuri songs of Lord Ganesha) ii. Suruj Debtā/Babake Geet (Bhojpuri songs invoking the Sun-god) iii. Ram-Sitake Geet (Bhojpuri songs of Rama and Sita) iv. Siw-Parbatike Geet (Bhojpuri songs of Lord Shiv and Parvati) v. Radha-

Krisnake Geet (Bhojpuri songs of Lord Krishna and Radha) vi. Debi Māyi ke Geet (Bhojpuri songs of Mother goddess) vii. Mahābir Swāmike Geet (Bhojpuri/Avadhi songs in praise of Lord Hanuman) viii. Dharti Māyike Geet (Bhojpuri songs of Mother Earth) ix. Tulsi Māyike Geet (Bhojpuri songs invoking the sacred plant of Tulsi) x. Lacchmi Māyike Geet (Bhojpuri songs invoking the blessings of Goddess Lakshmi Sandhya 105 Sandhya songs to invoke gods and goddesses, are not accompanied by musical instruments. Their presence is solicited till the completion of the wedding ceremony. e.g i. Sanjhā Debi ke Geet (Bhojpuri songs invoking the blessings of the Goddess of Dusk (Lakshmi) who brings in prosperity to the homes). Dharti-bandhai During the dharti-bandhai deities are invoked and they are requested to stay in this place, purify it and fill it with good vibes so that invited guests will take pleasure in assisting all the wedding rituals and will leave the place only after blessing the married couple. The Mother Earth is also asked permission to perform on it as the performance afterwards will be accompanied by dance. Examples of 'dharti –bandhai' songs are below: Dholak-puja.

The dholok-puja is symbolical and it pays respect to the instrument which will be resonating on this auspicious occasion till the end to create a joyful atmosphere. It is a ritual between the mother of the bride/ groom and the Geetharine playing the dholak/ lead drummer assisted by other women. (Rice grains and money is offered to lead drummer). The mother plays the instrument symbolically to start it. Examples of dholak puja songs: Suhag -Geet Suhag is sung for gods and goddesses, acknowledging their presence and calling them by their names.

Jhoomar / Jhumar Bhojpuri Jhoomar or Jhumar is a lively form of music, song and dance. The word 'Jhoomar' comes from Jhoom, which means swaying, with the music. Though the content of these songs varies, they are usually based on love and emotional themes making Jhumar Geet music, dance and songs of ecstasy. The jhoomar has highly influenced the Gamat, originally only performed by male but today including women. The Jhumar, performed on festive occasions including wedding ceremonies, is a living demonstration of happiness and merry-making. The Jhoomar Geet recreates everyday activities including ploughing of the field, sowing of seeds, harvesting and household scenes reflecting the past and the present. Dressed in colourful traditional costumes, the women dance happily, singing and clapping their hands with the beats of the dholak and the lota, as they gracefully move in circular motion. Many themes are covered in performing the Jhoomar songs, music and dance, each with its own distinctive rhythm. The performance may last for several hours. As many Indo-Mauritians are fans and amateur performers of Bollywood music, the Jhoomar has recently been exhibiting some adaptation and incorporation.

Certain tangible elements are also attached to the Geet Gawai like unhusked rice, turmeric pieces, grass, betel leaves, oil, 'sindur'(a vermilion or red powder applied on the forehead as sign of being married woman), 'bindi' (the red dot put of the forehead as a sign of marriage by hindu women) for the rituals Ginger powder to serve, so as to soften the voice of the women 'Paan' (betel leaves) to serve to make one joyous The musical instruments: Dholak, the two headed drums has been and

remains the main instrument in Geet-Gawai. Further, Bhojpuri folk music in Mauritius has used a number of musical instruments derived from the household appliances and utensils. Tools like hoes are improvised to produce music. Other musical instruments used include: Thāli (copper plates) Lotā (copper or brass container) Chamach or kuyer (a pair of spoons) hit against the rim of the lota to produce scintillating sounds Jhanjh, ghungroo, ghanta, manjira, daf, dafli (metal instruments which accompany Bhojpuri songs, rituals, devotional renditions and other type of songs). Jhaal (brass cymbals) Dhol (double-sided barrel drum played exclusively by male musicians) Nāl (double-sided barrel drum played exclusively by male musicians) Chimta (tong-like musical instrument with small brass jingles played as a traditional percussion instrument is popular) Harmonium and tabla are often used by male performers especially for 'Gamat' public performance. These instruments and tools mostly manufactured in India and imported to Mauritius, are commonly available.

The associated intangible elements of the Geet Gawai are: The knowledge of the rituals, the Songs, the knowhow of using the instruments, knowledge of the dances, knowledge of the stories, myths and past experiences. (S.Boodhoo 1989)

Bhojpuri language is mainly used with the inter-cultural exchanges Creole, French and English words have also entered the Jhumar performances.

The perceived origin of the Geet Gawai in Mauritius can be traced in the Northern parts of India as far back as the early 19th century by the migrating indentured Indians from the northern parts of India.

Geet-Gawai bearers/ practitioners are generally the women of the Bhojpuri speaking community among whom are found singers, musicians, dancers and related performing artists. They have been and still are of different age groups from young performing artists to senior citizens (above 60 years of age) senior citizens to young performing artists. There are amateur, semi-professional and professional Geet-Gawai artists. They come from all social status.

Other participants (e.g., holders/ custodians) Non-Bhojpuri speaking artists, common participants attending weddings and festive occasions, Bhojpuri Speaking Union, Geet-Gawai schools, Geet-Gawai groups

Customary practices governing access to the element or to aspects of it Geet-Gawai is associated with wedding ceremonies which in turn have their own rituals. Access to the rituals is controlled by families who continue to fulfill that role.

1.3 Modes of transmission

From the elderly to the youth, through wedding functions and public performances has been passed on from generation to generation by memorization, repetition, observation and imitation. Since 2013, Geet-Gawai Schools have been set up for formal transmission of the element.

1.4 Concerned organizations

The Government of Mauritius through its Ministry of Arts and Culture, National Heritage Fund, Bhojpuri Speaking Union, Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, Mahatma Gandhi Institute and several educational and sociocultural organisations.

Threats to the enactment of Geet-Gawai in its traditional form continues to evolve while retaining its roots in the practices of weddings particularly. Standing at cross roads, is the Bhojpuri Language as vehicle of communication, which has undergone some transformation since the youth continue to adapt other languages of communication such as English, French and Creole. However, with the setting up of the BSU, the introduction of a dedicated TV Bhojpuri Channel, its introduction in 108 schools and institutions of higher learning, the promotion of the Bhojpuri language is in place. Immigration to other parts of the world, where the same customs are not practiced, may lead to loss of the same in those particular areas. However, in Mauritius the adoption of the practice beyond the Bhojpuri community is a positive sign of continuity of transmission and practice.

1.5 Threats to the transmission

The Media Industry, television, radio, internet and the commercial Bollywood music has both negative and positive impact on the transmission of Geet-Gawai. If negatively adapted, it may replace the current Mauritian Geet-Gawai practices in public performances. However, the media may impact positively as they provide an interesting and dynamic medium and intersection of growth and appreciation of the element by a larger and youthful segment of the society. Hand in hand, the involvement of grass-root modern communicators working with communities will ensure transmission of the element, appreciating and adapting concurrently traditional modes of transmission and enabling the forthcoming generations to continue to relate to local communities.

1.6 Availability of associated tangible elements and resources

The musical instruments including utensils, appliances and tools adapted for making music are commonly available and in use. Examples are the thāli (brass eating plates), the lotā (brass water containers), etc. Most of them are made in India and imported to Mauritius.

Viability of associated tangible and intangible elements Geet-Gawai and its associated tangible elements have existed in Mauritius through the centuries and continue to exist today. As part of wedding human social function and obligation Geet-Gawai existence is assured along with its tangible and intangible elements. Through its rituals, music and community gathering, it provides a social platform for community networking and bringing communities together. It has emerged like a living force, embedding its social and psychological functions, refreshing and reenergizing

communities. Geet-Gawai is sung with vibrancy and grace, spontaneously articulating thoughts, feelings and the universal messages of joy, happiness and togetherness.

Safeguarding measures in place Geet-Gawai spontaneously is a gracious vibrant performing art that is rooted in the lives of the bearers and performers. The bearers and practitioners have continued to practice and transmit the element since its inception in the 19th Century. The social and cultural shifts that have occurred in Mauritius over time also led to emergence of new formal and informal groups to ensure its continuity and safeguard. At family level, Geet-Gawai remains the central element in any Hindu wedding, thus ensuring viability. The element including the Jhumar has been brought out to the general public for a larger audience to enjoy, appreciate and participate in.

Today there are numerous formal and informal groups that have emerged within the 9 districts of Mauritius as hired performers of the element in several occasions and events, including but not limited to weddings. There is at least one Geet-Gawai group in every Mauritian village and or town, who practices this as a trade. Several performing groups are involved in the teaching of the youth including the Geet-Gawai School at Petit Raffray and the Des Premi Group at Mahebourg that specialises in moulding the youth by using the knowledge of the elderly and experienced bearers and practitioners. The dissemination of Geet-Gawai including Bhojpuri songs is also done through popular websites such as the BSU website, ensuring adoption, revitalisation and practice by younger generation. The Bhojpuri language through Geet Gawai is being promoted by BSU, in schools since 2012 and through a dedicated Bhojpuri television channel (Bhojpuri Channel) which broadcast Bhojpuri music including Geet-Gawai and Jhumar since 2013. Today courses on Bhojpuri Language and Culture are taught at the MGI, UoM, primary and secondary schools such as Professor Basdeo Bissoondoyal Flacq. With the setting up of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) in 1976, government created a Department of Bhojpuri Folklore and oral traditions, further enhancing the appreciation of the element. BSU has set up numerous schools of Geet- Gawai (more than 20) across the Island starting with the school of Geet Gawai in Petit Raffray that has been in operation since 2014 with students' numbers rising from 15 to 300 within 3 months, demonstrating the elements appeal and viability. AGTF, dedicated to the researching of indentured labourer history in Mauritius, also has the responsibility to carry out research, protect, promote and disseminate the ICH including the Bhojpuri language and culture. AGTF is continuously collecting information on Indentured labour and updating its inventory including documentation of Geet Gawai looking at its evolution and any changes that take place. 110 Other means of safeguarding the elements have included the production and promotion of cultural shows, national festivals, audio visual materials, drama festivals, CDs, national competitions by Bhojpuri Speaking Union, National Heritage Fund, Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, University of Mauritius, Mahatma Gandhi Institute/Rabindranath Tagore Institute and Mauritius Bhojpuri Institute. Ministry of Arts and Culture has compiled a database of artists and groups including those of Geet-Gawai who are called upon to present and perform the element at national events and are remunerated for their work. The state has officially recognised Bhojpuri artists such as the Late Sona Noyan (Son Ticoson or Little pig), Basant Soopaul, Mr P.

Mohiputlall and Ravita Sallick Peetambur with state commendations, further encouraging the youth to emulate their elders. Other eminent Bhojpuri artists include Dhanajee Naojee, Kunal Heeralall among others.

2. Aims and Objectives of my paper

My paper aims at defining the concept of intangible cultural heritage in the context of safeguarding of Bhojpuri folk songs and its evolution after the inscription in the list of the world Intangible Cultural Heritage.

To better understand the evolution of Bhojpuri Geet Gawai and how it is been preserved, let's first of all see what is being done by the National Heritage Fund.

The National Heritage Fund (NHF) is mandated to identify, protect, manage and promote our National heritage and so to develop a sense of belongingness in all Mauritians by caring for the past and bequeathing it to the future.

Before the setting up of the NHF, the heritage of Mauritius was managed under the Ancient Monuments Act in 1944, which was updated in 1985 through the National Monuments Acts. In an attempt to develop the concept of management of National Heritage, the National Heritage Trust Fund Act was passed in year 1998 which finally became the NHF Act, 2003.

2.1 What are the benefits for Geet Gawai with this International Recognition?

1. Geet Gawai will be integrated in the cultural tourism policy of the Government and consequently promote greater exchanges worldwide.	The Geet Gawai troop has been to India by the Ministry in 2018...
2. The recognition will create awareness in the citizens of the world about the different symbolical traditional rites and rituals and associated songs of Geet Gawai.	This is observed in weddings where women ensure to has an 'expert' to guide them through all the wedding rites and rituals
3. Geet Gawai can contribute in the socio-economic development of the country through the promotion of artistic events and	Many troops have mushroomed and they charge quite high rate for a performance. Many artists are gaining a livelihood in it and

extravaganzas, give livelihood and recognition to artists.	have become famous through social media as well.
4. It will cement further the relationship with countries of similar cultural background, therefore the links between Indian Diasporic countries will only strengthen.	Surinam, Trinad and Tobaggo
5. Empowerment of women and artists and encouraging cinematic industry as the people of Bhojpuri origin constitute a wide diaspora in such countries as in Fiji, South Africa, the Caribbean countries of Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Surinam in Latin America. It will encourage a great cultural and cinematic industry with a potential global market. The Bhojpuri Diaspora including India and the Diasporic countries constitute about two hundred million people worldwide.	There are a few films in the making as per MFDC-Mauritius Film Development Corporation
6. It will encourage the youth to take cognizance of this rich intangible cultural heritage of the country.	The youth are very much interested in the Geet Gawai and do not hesitate to join the dance during a performance.
7. Progress towards sustainable development of the communities concerned and their social and natural environment is also ensured.	Groups performing for Geet Gawai are well-remunerated, thus encouraging the artistes to get involved.

3. DISCUSSION

With this inscription, Government of Mauritius is bound to safeguard the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills associated with Bhojpuri and Bhojpuri Folk Songs, i.e. Geet

Gawai. There are periodic reportings carried on by States Parties and submitted to UNESCO to evaluate what the Government has done to promote, preserve and transmit the listed elements. With reference to Article 11 of the 2003 Convention, from now onwards the Government of Mauritius has the obligation to take the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of Geet Gawai as well as other cultural heritage on its territory.

In Mauritius, this task has been allocated mainly to the Bhojpuri Speaking Union who has the main task of preserving and promoting the Bhojpuri language and Culture in Mauritius.

Activities undertaken by Bhojpuri Speaking Union and Geet Gawai Schools to promote Geet Gawai since the inscription of the Bhojpuri Folk Songs Geet Gawai as tangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity at UNESCO on 1st December 2016.

25 Geet Gawai Schools are operational and more Geet Gawai Schools are being opened to transmit the Bhojpuri intangible cultural heritage and value education to the younger generation in line with the Obligations of Mauritius as a State Party to promote, preserve and transmit among younger generations the inscribed Intangible Cultural Heritage – Mauritius Bhojpuri Folk Songs – Geet Gawai at UNESCO. The Geet Gawai Schools are run by the Bhojpuri Speaking Union and the geetharines – guruwaines (teachers) teach the Bhojpuri Geet Gawai on a voluntary basis so far. Upto now, the Bhojpuri Speaking Union has been doing many activities to promote the Geet Gawai among which I will like to mention the following:

(1) 10th February 2017- A reception was hosted in the honour of Prof. George Abungu, Consultant to UNESCO at the Bhojpuri Speaking Union Geet Gawai School of Petit Raffray in regard to his laborious contribution to prepare the Geet Gawai Dossier. Dr. Mrs. Sarita Boodhoo, Chairperson of Bhojpuri Speaking Union, was present and welcomed the guests and gave a brief address on the history of the setting up of the Geet Gawai School at Petit Raffray in October 2013 and the curriculum/syllabus of the school. It was an occasion to raise awareness among people of their duties towards the Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mauritius. The Senior Research Assistant of Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, Mrs. Kiran Jankee Chuttoo and Vanessa who represented the National Heritage Fund were also among the invitees. The Geet Gawai School geetharines under the leadership of Mrs. Reeta Poonuth, Head of Bhojpuri Speaking Union Geet Gawai School gave a performance of Geet Gawai items. This was followed by a lunch prepared by the school.

(2) 20-26 April 2017- A team of Bhojpuri Speaking Union Geet Gawai School participated for the first time in the cultural history of our country, in an International Festival for Drums and Traditional Arts scheduled from 20th to 26th April 2017 in Old Cairo, Egypt and another Festival at “the Luxor Capital of Arab Culture” scheduled from 27th to 30th April 2017.

(3) 14th May 2017- 18.00 hrs. Bhojpuri Utsav featuring Geet Gawai items by the different Geet Gawai Schools was celebrated at I.G.C.I.C and was organized by Bhojpuri Speaking Union under the aegis of Ministry of Arts and Culture and in collaboration with the High Commission of India and I.G.C.I.C. On this occasion the Indian Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Honourable Kalraj Mishra was the guest of honour. The Bhojpuri Utsav 2017 received financial assistance from the Indian High Commission to meet partly the cost of the function.

(4) Workshop in Hindustani Classical Music and the different genres of Bhojpuri Folk Music including Geet Gawai (Bhojpuri Sanskar Geet associated with Marriage, Birth, etc. and Holi) as well as Bhojpuri Folk songs' impact on Bollywood music organized by the Bhojpuri Speaking Union under the aegis of the Ministry of Arts and Culture from 23rd to 28th June 2017 in Mauritius was conducted by Dr. Nishi Gupta Vocalist and Consultant in Hindustani vocal music. She was accompanied by well-known Tabla Player, Professor Lalit Kumar of Mahila Maha Vidyalay of Banaras Hindu University, India. The Opening Ceremony was held at Bon Accueil District Council Hall on Friday 23rd June 2017 from 12 hrs. to 15 hrs. The Closing Ceremony was held at Plaines Des Papayes, Multi-Purpose Complex Hall on Wednesday 28th June 2017 from 10.00 a.m. to 1 p.m.

(5) 1st December 2017 – Commemoration of the First Anniversary of Inscription of Bhojpuri Folk Songs Geet Gawai as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity to celebrate the Bhojpuri Folk Songs of Mauritius – Geet Gawai Jeevan Chakra – Life Cycle through Bhojpuri Traditional songs associated with each rite of passage. Guest of Honour :H.E. Mr. Paramasivum Pillay Vyapoory G.O.S.K, Vice President of the Republic of Mauritius.

(6) National Independence Day Celebrations

Participation of Bhojpuri Speaking Union Geet Gawai Schools in the presentation of a Geet Gawai Item – Jhumar involving 3 generations (Elders, Middle aged and Youngsters) at the National Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Independence of Mauritius at Champ de Mars, Port Louis.

(7) A Grand Gammat Utsav in the context of Bihar Diwas 2018 Celebrations, The 50th Independence Anniversary of Mauritius and 26th Republic Day Celebrations organised by the Bhojpuri Speaking Union under the aegis of the Ministry of Arts and Culture and High Commission Of India on Sunday 1st April 2018 from 14hrs to 16hrs at IGCIC, Phoenix.

Guest of Honour:H.E Shri Abhay Thakur: The High Commissioner of India ,Honourable Mr Prithvirajsing Roopun,Minister of Arts and Culture

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the nomination of the Geet Gawai by the UNESCO, many local groups have mushroomed with its popularity. Youngsters seem to have taken great interest in it. They are highly appreciated and at times, I will say preferred to traditional ones. In my interview with the elderly from the

BSUGGS, they categorically told me that what most of the youth are performing nowadays is not the traditional Geet Gawai. Ee humni ke nai ha. (It does not belong to us!) They do not really sing as per our traditions! At times, they dress indecently and their performance are vulgar. Boys disguised as girls at times dance very openly making others feel embarrassed.

Here I would like to say that I have been to many Geet Gawai where these young performers act and I must confess that at times it is indeed embarrassing the way they move around and try to innovate by creating their own songs and making the content funny and unfortunately ridiculous at times.

According to Mrs Poonith, they are not to be blamed as they have not attended our classes and have not been trained. They should be advised accordingly and with proper training, I am confident they will excel.

Long ago, there were not so many cultural troops performing the Geet Gawai. During the last three years, the demands have been increasing and in almost all wedding, the Geet Gawai performance is waited for eagerly. According to Aditya, a young performer and group leader of the Saat Saheli GG Group: I am fully booked during wedding seasons. At times, we have to divide our groups and borrow artistes to satisfy our clientele.

Same thing was told to me by a traditional group where they have to divide the group so as to perform at two different places.

Indeed, during wedding season of July and August, all the famous Geet Gawai Groups are fully booked and they have to refuse make requests.

Traditional or modern, the groups are well appreciated and also well remunerated. As mentioned earlier, this system is sustainable and a good way to earn a living, specially youngsters who do not have a proper job or studying, can be part of a group may it be as a drummer, singer or dancer.

The main concern for my paper is whether the Geet Gawai is being preserved as per the tradition. Recently, it has evolved a lot. Youngsters are entering this field, extracting the traditional groups which normally consist of elderly persons and all women. The society seem to have a preference for the young and dynamics. The young dancers with modern instruments which do not belong to the Indian traditions like jambe, ravan are preferred to the elderly. The way this Intangible Cultural Heritage is evolving, it is hard for concerned bodies to force it to be preserved at the level of traditional. It is becoming more a folklore which can never be static. Yet, ways and means have to be devised so as to ensure that in the coming decades, the GeetGawai does not end up to be mere a dancing party.

REFERENCES

Books

-
- Boodhoo S. 1993. Kanya Dan (Rites and Rituals of Hindu Marriage), Mauritius Bhojpuri Institute
 - Boodhoo S. 1999. Bhojpuri Traditions in Mauritius, Mauritius Bhojpuri Institute
 - Boodhoo S. 1999. La Presence de Bhojpuri à L'Ile Maurice, contribue à la diaspora indienne à Maurice. Rencontre avec l'Inde chap.13 TOME 28, No.1 Indian Centre for Cultural Relations
 - Boodhoo S 2000. Religious and Cultural Traditions of Biharis in Mauritius. The Bihari presence in Mauritius across the Kala Pani. Centre for Research on Indian Ocean 115 Societies (CRIOS)
 - Boodhoo S. 2003. Mauritius ki Bhojpuri Paramparaein, Prabhat Prakashan New Delhi
 - Boodhoo S. 2010. Bhojpuri Bola-Speak Bhojpuri, Mauritius Bhojpuri Institute
 - Boodhoo S. 2010. Sahaj Bhojpuri Vyakaran- An Easy Approach to Bhojpuri Vyakaran, Mauritius Bhojpuri Institute
 - Ramdin, S.D., 1990. Bhojpuri Samskaar Manjari: An annotated, transcribed and translated study and collection of 400 Bhojpuri Sacrament Songs of Mauritius MGI
 - Ramdin, S, D., Literature of Mauritius (Hindi & Bhojpuri) : a bibliography, 1909-1980
 - Ramyeed, L.P 1985. The Establishment and Cultivation of Modern Standard Hindi in Mauritius. MGI Unpublished Materials
 - Ramdin, S.D. 2005. Cultural and Linguistic Aspects of Bhojpuri in Mauritius with Special Reference to Work Songs, , Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Mauritius Discography & Audio Cassettes
 - Boodhoo S. Audio CD comprising 25 recorded Bhojpuri songs to mark the arrival of Indian Immigrants
 - Dawosing, J., 2019. The Psychology of Worship in the Mauritian Bhojpuri Folk Songs. PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences, 4(3), 1113-1127
 - Dawosing, J. 2020. A Sociological Analysis of Bhojpuri Jhoomar in Mauritius. Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal, 7(5)230-239
 - Ramdin, S.D., Swarna Chakra, 33 LP Audio
 - "Intangible Heritage Lists". UNESCO Press. Retrieved 2010-11-16.
 - "Criteria and timetable of inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding". UNESCO Press. Retrieved 2010-11-16.
 - Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa 2009: Intangible Heritage by Routledge ,2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
 - Noriko Aikawa-Faure 2008.: Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage: reflections on history and concepts
 - Skounti A. 2009: The authentic illusion: humanity's intangible cultural heritage, the Moroccan experience, 74-72
 - Valdimar Tr. Hafstein 1993: Intangible heritage as a list: from masterpieces to representation.
 - Seeger A.: Lessons learned from the ICTM (NGO) evaluation of nominations for the UNESCO Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, 2001-5 112
 - Marilena Alivizatou-Barakou, Alexandros Kitsikidis, Filareti Tsalakanidou, Kosmas Dimitropoulos, Chantas Giannis, et al.: Intangible Cultural Heritage and New Technologies:

Challenges and Opportunities for Cultural Preservation and Development. M. Ioannides et al. (eds.). *Mixed Reality and Gamification for Cultural Heritage*, Springer International Publishing, pp.129-158, 2017, 978-3-319-49606-1. [ff10.1007/978-3-319-49607-8_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-49607-8_5). [ff. fahal-02194801f](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-49607-8_5)

- Logan William. 2012. Cultural diversity, cultural heritage and human rights:Toward heritage Management as human-rights based cultural practiced. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*. 18. 1-14. [10.1080/13527258.2011.637573](https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2011.637573)
- Deacon H., Beazley O. 2007, *Safeguarding Intangible Heritage Values under the World Heritage Convention*
- Auschwitz, Hiroshima and Robben Island, in: J. Blake 2007 (ed.), *Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage – Challenges and Approaches*, Institute of Art and Law, Buihlh Wells.
- Douglas M., 2004. *Traditional Culture – Let’s Hear No More About It*, in: V. Rao, M. Walton (eds.), *Culture and Public Action*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Frey B.S., Steiner L.,2011. *World Heritage List: Does It Make Sense?*, “*International Journal of Cultural Policy*” , Vol. 17.
- Jakubowski A.2016 (ed.), *Cultural Rights as Collective Rights – An International Law Perspective*, Brill, Leiden .Webography
- <http://www.ejournals.eu/SAACLR/2017/2-2017/art/12055/>
- *Santander Art and Culture Law Review* » 2017 » 2/2017 (3) » *From Traditional Culture and Folklore to Intangible Cultural Heritage: Evolution of a Treaty*
- <http://www.mauritiustimes.com/mt/dr-mrs-sarita-boodhoo-2/>
- <http://www.mauritiustimes.com/mt/geet-gawai-world-patrimony-of-humanity/>
- <https://bhojpurispeakingunion.com/bhojpuri-geet-gawai-school/activities-of-geet-gawai-schools-in-mauritius/>
- <https://defimedia.info/bhojpuri-folk-songs-exalted>
- <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/bhojpuri-folk-songs-in-mauritius-geet-gawai-01178>
- <http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/document-4367>