



Scheme for “Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India”

Form for National Inventory Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage of India

A. Name of the State: Himachal Pradesh

B. Name of the Element/Cultural Tradition (in English): Pathar ka Mela-DHAMI, celebrated post Diwali at village Halog(DHAMI, former Princely State).

C. B.1. Name of the element in the language and script of the community Concerned, if applicable: Dhami, Pathra ra Bhed.

D. Name of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned

(Identify clearly either of these concerned with the practice of the said element/cultural tradition):

1st Party : Royal Family of Dhami, associated with Kathedu, Jathoti, Tunadoo, Dhagoi(revenue villages, communities)

2nd Party : Jamogi, Plainiya, Obru, Kalani, Kothi Kunaal and Dharail(revenue villages, communities).

D Geographical location and range of the element/cultural tradition

(Please write about the other states in which the said element/tradition is present **Shimla District, Village Dhami(26 KMs from Shimla town on Shimla-Mandi road; Dhami- Khel-Ka- Chaura near SATI KA CHAURA and its surrounding hills.**

E Identification and definition of the element/cultural tradition of the India(Write “Yes” in one or more boxes to identify the domain(s) of intangible cultural heritage manifested by the element. If you tick ‘others’, specify the domain(s) in brackets.)

(Yes) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage

() performing arts

(Yes) social practices, rituals and festive events

(Yes) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe

() traditional craftsmanship

Other(s) ()

F. Provide a brief summary description of the element that can introduce it to readers who have never seen or experienced it

A Cultural Social event that has continuously practiced since the princely states existed during pre-independence and formation of Himachal Pradesh as hill State. On padua tithi , immediately next day of Diwali - the major local fair, Pathar Ka Mela is celebrated as social and religious event amongst the residents of Dhama area containing several villages. The local gentry assembles at a particular place, khel-ka chaura, approximately one KM from Halog, the-then kings' Mahal and play the game of throwing pebbles/waste stones amongst two identified groups. This has been practised as substitute to Human sacrifice as a consequence of mutual consent given in royal family to a queen who sacrificed her life for her royal fiance husband who died during her life time. The practice prevalent amongst royal families, known as SATI PRATHA. The venue of Pathar Ka Mela, surrounding SATI Ka Chaura is same where the queen in olden times sacrificed herself life by jumping live into fire. The event, Pathar Ka khel start with throwing of stone high in air by member of royal family and ends when some participant from the two opposite groups, get hurt with stone and bleeds upper neck. As per the tradition a human sacrifice which was later converted to animal sacrifice had been tradition, which had been a terrible brutal act and was felt to be substituted by many amongst community. Later it was accepted mutually and consented by royal family as pledge given to princess at the time of becoming SATI which is inherited and continuously taking place for the last 200-250 years. As a part of the pledge the royal family members of old princely State, Dhama firmly believe in the tradition and it is continuously practiced, solemnised every year even if some death occur in royal family. The facts of origin has been revealed and disclosed through the members of royal family as well as by senior locals in the vicinity. Hence the fair is substitution of Human sacrifice of some prisoner later animal sacrifice at Maha Kali temple, on fixed day of the fair. The blood teeka is still offered at Maha Kali at the same old local temple, when some one is hurt, bleed during Pathar Ka Khel. Thereafter, fair starts after the event Pathar Ka Khel concludes and offering of blood of hurt person to Mahakali-Kali. The Maha Kali temple near Khel Ka Chaura also called Sati Ka Chaura is also adjoined by local deity idles Devta Kurgan, Devta Dorani worshipped by local people. Rath/idol yatra of Devta Kurgan Starts from Kings place with supporters of royal family. This Dev Yatra is ornamented, associated with traditional musical instruments e.g. Shehnai, Dol, Nagara and Narsingha. The Dev yatra reach the Mela site to seek blessings to community and led by members of royal family, their associated group members and mela committee. The Members of royal family also join to solemnise and start the event, Pathar Ka Khel. The royal family group and opposite group are identified and also written on Sati Ka Chaura.

Its for general information of public which is fading away amongst youth regarding authorized traditional groups, participants for 'Pathar ka khel'.

Since many youth who are unaware of history and significance (which is nowhere documented and only revealed from generations to generations), also join the pathar ka khel voluntarily wishing they get hurt and their blood offered to Mahakali thereby feel blessed. Since 200-250 years the people of the area have been getting assembled without any pause/brake, fail around 'Sati Ka Chaura' on Paduwa tithi,

next day of Diwali at Sati Ka Chaura every year and play this game of pelting stones amongst two known inherited groups.

G Who are the bearers and practitioners of the element/Cultural Traditions? Are there any specific roles or categories of persons with special responsibilities for the practice and transmission of it? If yes, who are they and what are their responsibilities?

The locals are the common participants in festival beside people from the surrounding villages take active part in the fair. Other viewers are outsiders, interested people, including TV channel and News reporters. There exist two known major groups in the community with their associates, who pelt stones on each identified groups jathoti and Jamogi, for the event play and stand opponents. Each of the groups place itself on identified fixed places around Sati-Chaura. The serious stone pelting event is played till someone is hit with stone and bleeds. As revealed by royal family members the upper neck human injury is accepted as rule for stopping the stone play. This is perceived by spectators when participants of hurt group indicate walkover by raising hand. The moment is further highlighted by group of ladies who cross the common space between two participating groups, waiving their dupatta overhead. It is indicator of ceasefire to stop throwing stones- the game is over indication.

Only male members of the identified groups of community are the active participants for stone pelting till someone hurt, bleeds to offer his blood to Maha Kali. The Hurt person feel blessed as his blood offered to Mahakali. So far no serious injury has been reported since inception of this very old tradition prevalent in the area for which timeline not documented to witness. The wound is speedily healed, felt as blessing of Maha Kali prevailed a belief amongst royal family and local participants. The participants known groups are called KHOONDS, the Rajput warriors' family residing in the area.

There is huge crowd on hill tops to watch the event. The Local Mela Committee also exist. beside, the District Administration also deploy medical team and police personnel so as to avert untoward incident. Temporary market/shops stalls are also permitted by "Mela Committee" for selling eatables, sweets, artificial ornaments beside daily need goods. With the passage of time the site became more attractive as the sellers has been invited to display, sell their goods. The organisation of fair is done by mela committee. The others also join the fair from the surrounding areas of villages and city to watch the event, fair.

The event has been a vital traditional, social fervour point for the local community. The occasion is further celebrated by sharing sweets with close relatives by rural population.

This is also point of attraction, interest for small vendors, shopkeepers beside printed media and news reporters.

A. How are the knowledge and skills related to the element transmitted today?

The basic idea of the festival is to seek blessings of goddess for the peace and prosperity and on the other hand pursue the traditional religious, inherited rituals. This is the reason for continuation of heritage social values, practised till today for 200-250 years which is inherited through offsprings/generations.

With the life style change, particularly in the present scenario when electronic media, internet is dominating the whole world, it is clearly understood that the local folk activities and the personal or telephonic interaction are losing their popularity. Considerable part of educated

society willing to have quick fix, download the available relevant information on the desktop, palmtops. Hence are gradually moving away from traditional life style, folk culture and traditional events.

It is the westernisation challenge which gradually crawling into the Indian mindset. its convincing people to move away from their traditional folk lifestyle, farming, mass migrations from village to cities in the craving to quality educate children and to get white collared employment. Consequently the joint family system has shattered and most of the youth population are accepting core family life styles which is emerging the need of old age care homes.

In one way, its good to develop mentally and study the lifestyles of developed societies and join the international village thought for the sake of development but on the other hand its causative to serious damage to the traditional rituals prevalent in the area which attract need for documentation and preservation.

One of the traditional fair- Pathar ka Mela at Dharmi, keep the local youth aware of their cultural heritage. It transmits the idea of social personal get together atleast once in a year, post Diwali in the local population and also keep the local youth aware of old heritage activities containing social and spiritual beliefs and rituals. Now a days, society is tending to social portals for social interaction and updates whereas personal visits/meetings are lessening even phone calls are decreasing.

B. What social functions and cultural meanings do the element/cultural tradition have today for its community?

These day the families are becoming nuclear and splitting away from their native houses. In most of the cases youth, migrating from their native places, to cities even to foreign countries in search of professional education, employment, earning more since studying, employable youth population is available in abundance in the country. Good education entitles them high salaries and more exposure and also compulsive migration. The lifestyle in the Metros, Cosmopolitan, Foreign lands attracts them and pulls them away from rural areas/native places. Farming tendency that demands a hard physical efforts to survive decreasing gradually.

The heritage peculiar folk events and tradition attract the rural folks to their roots/native places and preserve their hereditary social life style. Hence these traditional village festivals, fairs are necessary to be preserved which abreast youth of their own culture. The fair, festivals ties the rural families and society together, at least once a year. They enjoy the family get togethers and also apprise their own children aware of their native rituals. Further it provide happiness to the elders since they really could meet their offsprings, occassionally through heritage events. We need to put sincere joint efforts to keep tradition and culture alive, documented and preserved.

C. Is there any part of the element that is not compatible with existing international human rights instruments or with the requirement of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, or with sustainable development? I.e. describe any aspect of the element/cultural tradition that

may be unacceptable to Law of the country or may be in opposition to practicing community's harmony with others.

Not at all. As per the International Human Rights Instruments, it is offensive to hurt anyone physically or otherwise. This event Pathar Ka Mela is mutually agreed traditional, religious belief and played lest any compulsion to offer prayers beside to fulfill promise given to a queen by royal family before she was to perform SATI rituals. The queen was against violent practices prevailed i.e. human sacrifice and animal sacrifice. Although Human sacrifice performed earlier was later substituted to animal sacrifice. Finally the queen took a promise from the royal family to shun human and animal sacrifice and proposed the present event, Pathar Ka Khel/Bhed(Bhed means fight in community language).

Localites, actually, wait for the event with a great excitement. Peacefully assemble near the Durbar(Raj mahal), the old palace, as one group alongwith associates of the then ruling family. The procession begins/start moving after DEV prayers and then reach the venue of the traditional prayer offering event, where start of event is waited for eagerly by other identified group and the viewers.

The fair, event begins with throwing first stone high in air by member of royal family. The stones and pebbles for this play, event are picked up from the surroundings and subsequently used for throwing in air, as high as possible. The distance of participating groups is approximately 50 metres for throwing stones and surrounding high places are full with spectators, viewers. The localites as well as members of royal family affirm that non has got serious hurt so far, right from inception of this traditional ritual which has been continuously taking place every year for the last 200-250 years. In general, the members of participating groups try to escape stone hurt but whosoever gets hurt wilfully/voluntarily, feels himself lucky. It is heart felt that blood of bleeding would be touched/offered to Mahakali, the Goddess.

No incident of legal trouble has been heard reported so far. Rather it is believed to seek blessings of Goddess and Sati for peace and prosperity for residents of area. The day is declared as Local Holiday by the Himachal Pradesh State Government. Now a days the police personnel and Medical team also deployed for relief to the hurt person and to control crowd. Stone hurt continues to be believed healed naturally within week or so as blessing of maha kali and local dieties.

D. Your Project's contribution to ensuring visibility, awareness and encouraging dialogue related to the element/cultural tradition

There are number of events, played, performed and followed locally which are not known to the world outside. "Pathron ka Mela" is one of them. Although it is an event of interest and can be an appealing and fascinating visual delight for anyone travelling to the area from the other parts of the world, yet the event has not been declared as a State level festival. It is preserved by the localites of Dhamsi and also listed in the fairs list of district shimla through State Government official portal.

The inscription may play an active part in attracting the tourists and outsiders to watch it and hence promote the local economy of the area. Moreover the fair is also source of outing, shopping and socialising for rural folks who rarely find time to meet their old friends and relatives.

The documentation after historical research, internet, relevant references and video film broadcast as the present endeavour may enhance to share this heritage traditional social event with the outside world, the unknown audience. Beside it will definitely strengthen the traditional inheritance of traditional values within the local youth who are unsure of such facts, rituals and events.

The royal family as well as the opposite group, of princely State, Dharni, wilfully and playfully join the stone play, which is played till someone got hurt to bleed over neck and blood teeka offered to mahakali. Thereafter people enjoy folk dance with folk Pahari musical instruments and songs. Since the event is mutually agreed to between participating groups to seek the blessings of goddess for peace and prosperity. Therefore, the event is promoting harmony of language, culture and traditional values for localities. Moreover the event highlights the stoppage of social vices prevalent in society such as human, animal sacrifice prevalent in India besides Sati Pratha during pre-independence period.

The traditional event is celebrated continuously next day of Diwali for the last 200-250 years between identified groups. Hence the nominations amongst groups is taking place but the event is continues without pause, interruption. This turned possible only due to inter personal interaction between royal family members and residents.

E. Information about the safeguarding measures that may protect or promote the element/cultural tradition

- a. (Write "Yes" in one or more boxes to identify the safeguarding measures that have been and are currently being taken by the communities, groups or individuals concerned)
 - i. (**Yes**) transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education
 - ii. (**Yes**) identification, documentation, research
 - iii. (**Yes**) preservation, protection
 - iv. (**Yes**) promotion, enhancement
 - v. (**Yes**) revitalization

b. Write about the measures taken at local, state and national level by the Authorities to safeguard the element/cultural tradition?

This has been started by the royal family with two identified groups of khoonds(warriors) so as to fulfill the promise given to princess when she was about to perform sati rites. The funding of fair is managed presently by the mela committee with little help from Distt. Administration of H.P. State. Police and Medical team is deployed to the event/fair.

The royal family and mela committee alongwith localites have poured unforgettable contribution and successfully prolonged celebration of this intangible cultural heritage for the last 200-250 year. It is obvious that the tradition has been inherited from previous generations by the localites.

The whole idea is to spread the awareness and preserve the varied languages and culture. This may also be considered as a way to preserve the diversity within the States forming incredible nation. As mentioned above, there are numerous languages and events, folk activities performed locally in provincial States which have not been found any significant recognition at State and National level as yet thus fading away gradually.

It is realised that folk culture preservation deserve much more attention than they are being given. Presently, randomly voluntary uploaded information is available on internet, which is incomplete, patchy and may mislead local youth and viewers/readers. Also the historians who have researched on Himachal Pradesh, have sparely mentioned the event in their papers. News articles have also been written in the past to mention the event as news items which are based on telephonic conversations by news paper reporters, interviewing localites during event.

The inscription is an endeavour to add to previous acts e.g. cover the event through live videography, creating low budget documentary film which would be creation for preservation of this folk cultural heritage prevalent and celebrated in shimla district of hilly provincial State also called Dev bhoomi of Incredile India.

So far the H.P.State Government included the mention of this event in district administration portal under fair and festival of district shimla, Himachal Pradesh. Beside the local TV channels and news reporters record and publish, broadcast the event once in year. The Mela committee advertise the event through pamphlets since budget restraint remain problem. Voluntarily uploaded videos also available available on youtube link.

Gradual efforts and cooperation of royal family, mela committee, localites still continues which resulted in continuous celebration the event every year on next day of Diwali. The event dates acknowlege to pre-independent period and 200-250 years older.

The inscription is an additional effort to add to these previous acts e.g. cover the event through live videograph and converting the live shoot into low budget documentary film which would be new endeavour for preservation of diversity of culture and folk activities prevailing in hilly provincial state of the country. Prior to the event for making pilot the locality has been racked many times basically for video recording, interviewing the selective localites viz. present members of royal family, senior citizens to attempt popular script based on myths and old traditions followed by the residents of the area which have been inherited through previous generations.

Besides information available on internet which is mostly voluntarily uploaded videoshoots, old written books of Himachal are being consulted and known references, books are also being researched for making a fact based script.

Gradual efforts and liasoning for seeking cooperation from royal family, mela committee, localites being sought and being strengthened for socialising, interacting for vedio interviewing, prior to event and live shoot on celeration day of event.

- F. Write about the threats, if any, to the element/cultural tradition related to its practice, visibility and future longevity. Give facts and relevant reasons based on the current scenario.

As a result of various visits to local area and approaching, interacting with various strata of local senior citizens, present members of royal family, researching news items, the few videos and illustrations in the old looks on Himachal, the subjective observations, threats to the element based on current scenario are listed as below:-

The list of event story as per royal family members:

1. The event has been started as a result of promise given to a princess by the royal family before she was to perform sati rites;
2. The promise given have been inherited, fulfilled till date by celebration of event on fixed day on Padwa thithi as per Hindu calendar, next day of Diwali;
3. The event is celebrated on scheduled day despite death in royal family which is contrary to generally accepted Hindu community customs;
4. The event symbolises lessening prevalent brutality of human sacrifice and animal sacrifice for offering blood teeka at Mahakali temple.
5. The list of identified group of khoonds has been written on Sati-Chaura.

Literary localite version:

1. The princess from royal family of Dhami was engaged to prince of Bhajji princely State who was poisoned in Koti princely state;
2. Hence there remained conflict/enmity between identified groups;

The major obvious threat observed/concluded is lack of documentation, publication, knowledge base.

The youth in the absense of factual knowledge base are joining the voluntary stone pelting event so as to feel blessed for offering blood teeka to Mahakali though they may or not belong to identified heritage groups.

G. Safeguarding measures proposed

(This section should identify and describe safeguarding measures to protect and promote the element/cultural tradition. Such measures should be concrete and can be implemented to formulate future cultural policy for safeguarding and promoting the element/cultural tradition in the state)

1. Through this inscription proper script is proposed after possible research and documentation.

2. The low budget documentary broadcast through Regional, National channels will be effort to preserve this cultural heritage.

H. Community Participation

(Write about the participation of communities, groups and individuals related to the element/cultural tradition in formulation of your project)

1. Liasoned with royal family; 2. Local mela committee; 3. Senior local residents; Concerned community organization(s) or representative(s)

(Provide detailed contact information for each community organization or representative or other non-governmental organization that is concerned with the element such as associations, organizations, clubs, guilds, steering committees, etc.)

- i. Name of the entity: localite persons of repute;
- ii. Name and title of the contact person
Member of Royal family of Dhami;
 1. Kunwar, Jagdeep Singh; 9816165630, 9459978555.
E mail;jagdeepsdhami@gmail.com
 2. Kunwar, Davinder Singh; 9418919157
E Mail:NA
 3. Kunwar, Dushyant Singh; 8894034603
E-mail Dushyant58@yahoo.com
- iii. Address: village and post office halog(Dhami)Tehsil and District Shimla,H.P.
- iv. Hema Nand Sharma; 9418021480
E mail:arunbharti1952@ gmail.com
- v. Vinod Kumar vyas;9816388786
E mail:vinvyas05@mail.com
- vi. Other relevant information:
 - 4 Give information of any Inventory, database or data creation centre (local/state/national) that you may be aware of or of any office, agency, organisation or body involved in the maintenance of the said inventory etc.
 1. **Liasoned with royal family; 2. Local mela committee; 3. Senior local residents;**
 2. **Dhami(princely State)**
Dynasty of Royal family:Chauhan;migrated from Ambala in Haryana State.
Capital:Halog
Revenue:15000(1901)
Prevalent name:Dhami princely State
State:Himachal Pradesh
Accession;15th April 1948
Area;73 km sq.
Privi Purse;Rs.15,760

Principal published references or documentation available on the element/cultural tradition.

(Books, articles, audio-visual materials, names and addresses of reference libraries, museums, private endeavours of artistes/individuals for preservation of the said element, publications or websites)

1. **Himachal Pradesh ka Itihas, written by Mian Goverdhan Singh,
Publisher:H.P.Language and culture academy Shimla.2016 edition**

2 **hpshimla.nic.in>fair and festivals**

3.**tribuneindia.com>community>vill.**

4.**youtube;m.youtube.com>**

1.**watch link pathar ka mela;**

2.**/watch?v=A9tadid0u00-Dhami villagers celebrates fest of stones;**

3.**in.shimlaonline.in>cityguide fairs...**

4.**travel.india.com>.....>Shimla**

5.**Tv9news:Devotees in Shimla participate in stone pelting festival-**

Link:m.youtube.com/watch?v=4gxwijub...stones cross fire

Signature: sd/-hard copy submission duly signed;

Name & Designation: **Devender Sharma. Director/Actor**

Name of Institution (If applicable): **Individual.**

Address: **R.C.Cottage Kagnadhar Phase iii New Shimla- H.P
171009. Contact No:094186-65046;**

Email:devensharma.12@gmail.com