



# **A Sacred Folk Dance from Mysuru**

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## ANNEX II : LIST OF A MIN OF INFORMATIONS

- **Name of Dance:** Nandidhwaja Kunitha
- **Country:** India
- **Region:** Southern India, Karnataka State , Mysuru District
- **Ethnic group:** Veerashaiva
- **Spirituality:** Shaivism
- **Dance still alive:** Yes
- **UNESCO Intangible heritage:** No



**MYSURU Location**



**Video-1 about Mysuru is uploaded.**

## TEXT : A SUMMARY OF THE NANDI DHWAJA KUNITHA

### (a) Origin and tradition

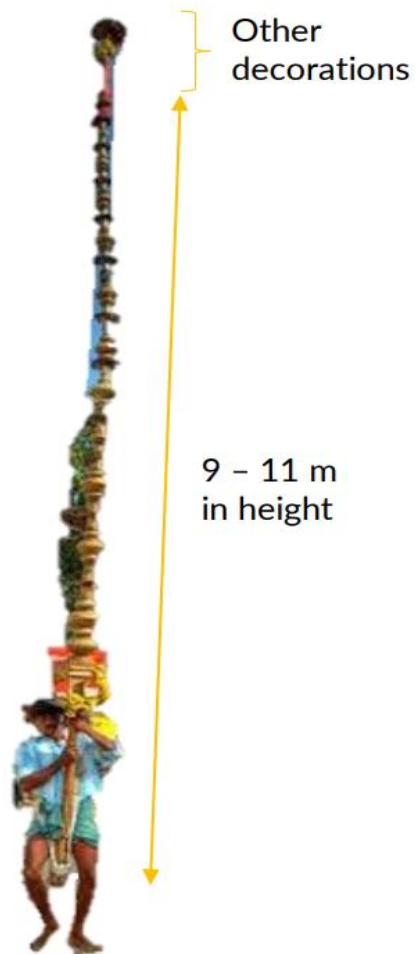


- Nandi dhwaja kunitha is a synonym for Mysore city. It is a male prominent form of energetic dance. Dance is the primary element of this art form.
- Nandi Dhwaja kunitha is a unique dance form of followers of Lord Shiva.
- According to Veerashaiva faith, this is a symbol of the victory of Veerabhadra over his rival Daksha Brahma.
- Currently, in Karnataka, Veerashaiva, Nayaks, Mysore king's relatives and a few others perform this Nandidhwaja kunitha during religious festivals.
- Nandikambha of Mysore, which is displayed at the Dasara Festival, is a symbol of the Royal dynasty of Wodeyars.
- The other names for Nandi Dhwaja are Nandi Kambha, Nandi kolu, Vyasagolu ...

## **(b) Significance**

- This dance is mainly performed by men-folk . This art form is taught verbally from one generation to another dating back 500 years . Training starts at 14 or 15 years of age of a student. It is a Solo dance .
- This form requires High level of physical strength, balance and concentration required (bhakti, yukti, shakti)
- Being mindful of the wind direction is important
- The weight of the Pole will be about 120 kgs!
- Performance lasts between 5 and 30 mins
- The music used is mainly instrumental with strong percussive beats

### (c) Description



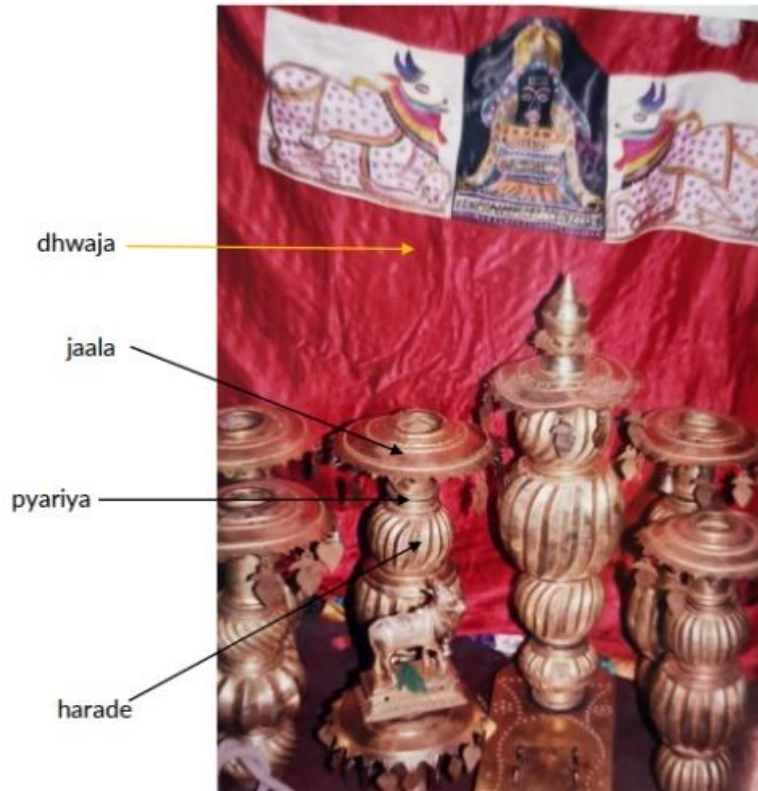
- The “Nandikambha” or “kolu” is the pole made of special bamboo that have the right acoustics.
- Usually 9 to 11 m in height with 15 to 25 cm in circumference.
- It will be kept protected from excess sunshine or rain.
- The pole is collected by the community person who has good knowledge on the Bamboo plantation.

## (d) Costume



- Simple clothing of the performers ensures comfort –
- Usually white or red in colour
- “Navara” is a pouch hanging from their neck to their knees
- The ropes help maintain the pole upright

## (e) Decor



- Stacks of round-shaped bronze „harade“ make-up the pole
- “Jaala“ is fixed at the top of the pole
- The “kalasha“ is believed to contain the elixir of life. It is a pot with a large base and a narrow mouth . It symbolises abundance, wisdom and immortality.

## (f) Dance pattern

*Video -2 My Movie Nandidhwaja. WMV {Video File attached}*

### THE TECHNICAL EXPLANATION OF NANDI DHWAJA KUNITA---

- The dancers will have a pouch which will be hanging from their neck until their legs. This is called NAVARA. The pole or Nandi Kambha is kept in this pouch which helps them to balance the weight of the Kolu.
- The dancer has to be looking at the pole raising his neck always. This needs lot of rehearsals, vigorous training and also the dedication and the surrendering attitude towards deity lord shiva.
- The time duration of a performance varies, and it depends mainly on the strength of the dancer. This varies from 5-10 minute to 30 minutes.
- Nandi Kolu will be swaying to the sides as a performer dances and shakes the pole. Because of this there will be a high chance of Pole falling down. It is believed that if To avoid this two ropes will be tide. One end of the rope will be tied to the tip of the pole and another end will be held by the co-dancers.
- Tossing and catching of the pole marks beginning of the performance
- The tempo of the music is raised with time
- End of performance marked by vigorous pole shake



## **(g) Background Music**

- For the rhythm they use karadi waya. It is also called as karadi sammelana. it gives the rhythm, the support the energy to the dancers will stop this percussion instrument will be sounded with the help of sticks.
- The instrument used is also specific. Nagari, Nagaswara, Karade and Chamele are the main instruments. In some parts of Northern Karnataka, instruments such as Tamate and Parasi are used.

**(h) Specific Criteria : Sacred and Ritualistic**



**For many generations, Nandi Dhwaja was performed before Dasara celebrations and was a royal custom. It was also customary to perform this dance before undertaking any pious or important activity**

**Video-3 about uploaded – about rituals of Dasara Festival and performances of sacred dances**

### **(i) Risks for the survival of the dance**

- The danger comes from the rapid process of Globalization, Migration of Younger Generation to big cities for employment, {Dance form not considered as means of Financial support for Living.}
- Homogenization and pervading influence of Modernization.
- There is even more critical situation facing intangible culture: the intense pressure of adopting the cultural framework of ruling class elite from within.

## **(j) Effect of Pandemic on Survival of the dance**

Never like before, the whole world has changed after COVID 19 Pandemic. Pandemic affected all the issues of the mankind, including culture too. From the pages of history we all know that any natural disaster affect preservation of Arts including Sacred Dances.

Our new problems / questions concerning preservation are as follows:-

- Is Social distancing affect the Sacred arts which are basically a group performance?
- What will be the geometrical patterns if there are no a good number of performers.
- Will this lead to more solo performances?
- Struggling for survival leads to arise of new dance form?
- What will be the duration of performance?
- Will the Music/ lyrics change?
- If it is online teaching.... Will sacred arts survive?

- Will there be a new style again?
- If pandemic or any disasters takes a long time to subside.. People are forced either come back to hometowns or have the threat of being stranded.
- Will there be any new style in both the above cases?
- An outcome of this situation is-
  - 1) The age-old tradition may resume.
  - 2) There will be an exchange of cultures by mingling with other .
- So, Documenting locally involving each common man is necessary.
- Even a public should be given a responsibility of recording/ video graphing / writing. about the talents of the artist in one's own neighbourhood.
- It is the responsibility of each citizen of a nation to preserve any art form before it get diluted others.
- Way of study should be Segregating, analysing the art forms.
- This should go beyond borders and languages.

## **(k) Recommendations to conserve the Dance**

- Intangible culture is the soul of all that we see in the tangible form of the culture. It can be pretty easy to conserve a temple or a palace but to co serve the real meaning of the temple, we should also conserve the festivals, processions, music dance and other rituals associated with it.
- Mysuru is popularly and respectfully known as 'THE CAPITAL OF CULTURE OR CULTURAL CITY'. It has a rich heritage of Tangible, Intangible and natural cultures. Mysuru is known for the world famous 'DASARA FESTIVAL' which is celebrated for 10 days during October month every year attracting International tourists . During this time Sacred, Folk, Traditional and Classical dance forms are performed.
- In ancient times the patrons of the folk arts were the kings who ruled 'Mysuru Samsthana' or 'Mysuru Region'. After India got Independence in 1947 there was a downfall of King's rule and a democracy was established. Because of this the ruling government both in the Central and State levels are changing quiet often . This is affecting the continuous patronage for Tangible and Intangible cultural heritages.
- The Nandi Dhawaja Kunitha is speciality of Mysuru observed by Veera Shaiva community of the city. Accordingly all the people from distant towns, like Mandya, Maddur etc.. also come to Mysore to witness the dance. This dance also attracts large segments of population irrespective of caste and creed from around the Mysuru region.

## **(l) Objective to Conserve Nandi Dhawaja Kunitha**

- The first objective is to provide the financial support
- The second objective is to motivate the young generation on to take part in the performing art and increase awareness in the culture with a sense of continuity with previous generations which is also important to cultural identity

## **(m) Methods of Conservation**

- The method involves some concrete program in order to increase cultural awareness among the carrier and bearers of the age old tradition. For this :
- A workshop can be organised ,once a year, participated by the academic scholars, community and members, professionals, and other participants interested in the field concerned.
- The scholarly papers presented in the workshop can be published in the book form that includes various faces of Nandi Dhawaja Kunitha e and also serves as a documentation of the performing art.

## Conclusion

### The role of documentation in **Protection - Preservation --- Performance**

- Removal of geographical borders as barriers
- Artist's own family should document through video recording.
- Literacy rate has been increased giving opportunities for self documentation by artists themselves.
- Local documentation by common man.
- Researches/ Documentation should involve Field work, collection of Data, Segregation and analysis.
- On the total Nandi dhwaja looks as though it is from the ritualistic background still it entertains the viewer. The performer will be professionally strong and the viewer will be feeling both devotion and entertainment at the same time. This shows the appreciation for the dance style on total. This very old dance form has become symbolic to Mysore city.
- The importance of Intangible Cultural Heritage must be recognized by the general public and the expertise as well. The people who are the bearers and performers of the performing art are the true guardians of the cultural heritage.



- Community participation in safeguarding such heritage not only help local people to appreciate the remarkable legacy of the past, but also teach them how to participate actively in promoting them, and by doing so contribute to a better common future.
- Cultural education through workshops and seminars in t e concerned population is another mode of preserving ICH of this category. Promotion of cultural awareness leading to cultural ownership is the need of the day. Once this happens, the people themselves will take interest in preservation.
- Heritage preservation is an expensive job. An effective budgetary plan for the preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage is needed.
- Sometimes a small contribution can carry a good result to preserve the intangible heritage.
- I am very nuch eager to plan the project of safeguarding the Nandi Dhawaja Kunitha of Mysuru, India thus making Mysuru as a good example here to mention.

**Reference: This article is written on the basis of Field work and Research by the author.**

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