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HOLI MAHOTSAV

The Bhil are demographically dominant tribe in the predominantly tribal district of Banswara, Dungarpur, Pratapgarh and Udaipur of in southern Rajasthan. The Bhila Tribal Community is generally Shiva worshiper, and also believes in the folk deities, Raja Poonja Bhil (Commander of Maharana Pratap), Bansia Bhil, Maavji Maharaj, Govind Guru is revered as great man, Beneshwar Dham, Maangarh Dha, Ghoti Amba Dham (Place of Pandava's *Agyaatvas*) etc., are considered as the pilgrimages. Ganga Kalash Yatra, Local flea markets, Fairs (fair of Baneshwar Dham, fair of the Ghoti Amba etc.). From time immemorial to maintain the unity, harmony and self-reliance, the entire Bhil tribe has social tradition to get financial support from the community for weddings and other social obligations. In such time the entire tribe contribute which inculcate the feeling of security and brotherhood among the tribe. Similarly to solemnize the new harvest, the festival of Holi is celebrated. For the celebration, they worship the Goddess Gauri (Wife of Lord Shiva), thousands of tribal men, women and children come from surrounding villages and gather at a central place, wearing their traditional attire they play *Gair* or *Gavri* dance for seven days. This dance signifies not only the continuation of tradition but also community spirit and harmony. Unfortunately, the anti Hindu forces active in the area, conspired to close this age old tradition in the name of law and order. Some youth became part of the obstructive forces and in the past few years and demanded the cessation of “Fagotsav”, the traditional celebration and community dance (*Gair* or *Gavri* dance) festival. The local administration also support the cessation demand out of lethargy and reponsibility. After understanding this conspiracy afoot and in order to save this unique cultural heritage of the tribe society, on March 22, 2019, a “*Gair Dance*” program was organized on Bharat Mata Mandir Maidan Banswada by Banswara Pariyojana.

Around 1100 women, men and children of 78 villages participated in this program of “*Gair Dance*”. In the program, the entire system of sound, light, stage refreshment etc was done by local society, the program was commenced in the presence of local Hindu society and saints.

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Tribal brothers performing traditional *Gair Dance*



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