Table of Content

INTRODUCTION:

Every discipline has its own techniques and procedures which have in its cult few rules and regulations that makes it stand apart from other faculties. Due to its proven practices these techniques & processes enhances ones ability to grasp the discipline with rigorous rehearsals & passion. Any such use of technicality in any language or shastra is better known as its grammar. Few examples of such grammatical works are Aristotle's *"Poetics"*, Bharat's *"Natyashastra"*, CanamiJiami's *"Kadenso"* etc. Natyashastra stands as an instance for Indian classical dance. The morphological existence of folk dance and folk theatre are irretrievable. But the age old practices of these kind of cults has made it difficult for people to ignore its presence. All its proven procedures can be confined into an artistic work without which the essence of our folk culture might get lost for future reference.

Purulia's Chau dance is one of the most enriching forms of folk dance. But with changing times many of its elements are subject to ruination. It's true that time changes everything but it should remain within a constricted format and not topple the main essesnce of the cult. The main objective of composing *ChauSashtra* is to preserve its enrichment and doing so would prove its success.

This book will not only enable a reader to grasp within his limit all the factual & proven details of Chau dance but would also encourage its enthusiast to savour the fascinating elements that this book has to offer.

According to folk researcher MoloyChoudhuri: " the informative side of Chau is still unknown. Most of its statistical details are based on assumptions. Few handful of researchers were able to locate the informative details but in vain."

Many arguments are subject to clash so those were extracted which seemed to be more focused and logical in the long run. In doing so a number of renowned personalities and experts were consulted and finally the more certain ones are put to use for which the author have asked for forgiveness.

While writing this book I have received full support of Mr. Sunil Mahato, Mr. Moloy Choudhury, Mr. Subhash Roy, Mr. Tapan Ghosh. And I would like to thank my well wishers Mr. DhananjoyMahato, Beenadhar Kumar, Bhuban Kumar, Jagganath Choudhury, SwapanKalindi, Nepal Mahato. The eassays of Mr.SrishtodharMahato, Mr Subodh Basu Roy and MrAjit Mitra has provided unparallel help towards this work.

ORIGIN & EVOLUTION:

In agricultural society apart from their daily chores the inhabitants perform certain occasional folk songs, folk dance and folk plays which centers around specific festivities. This involves invocation to Lord Shiva for endowing them with rain after the onset of summer. This invocation includes Bhagatanach, Kapjhap, Natuanach, Machani, Nachni and Chau itself. The Chau dance has accumulated ingredients from all this above mentioned forms and has enriched itself which dates back to hundred and fifty years.

At the intial stage, Chau was just a mask-less form of dance which was called 'Akaura chau'. The Akaura chau originated with the Kapjhap artist when they started emulating the gestures of different wild animals accompanied by the rhythms from the instruments of Bhagta-nachh and different physical exercises of the performer. Chau was earlier performed wearing ash on the body but with changing times ash was replaced by colours. This development brought with it tempo and motion in its form. With increasing demand age old mythical characters were often introduced and with it came practices of new forms in dance and metre. The use of mythical epics demanded the introduction of Mel nachh and Pala nachh and increased the need for female characters instead of male characters like Durga, Kali, Sita, Keeratini etc.

These female characters are inspired by Santhali and Darhanaach and their gestures and actions. To give these epic characters their justified beauty masks were introduced. The first wooden masks were made by the family of ChuridaarSutradhars but due to its heavy weight it was soon replaced by paper masks(Paper machei). This period was a transitory period in the history of the Chau dance. With the passing time chau came to be identified with its masks only. The changes that were brought in the appearance of chau dance did not confine itself to just the use of masks but also in their clothes. The unwillingness to use colours on their body initiated the use of colourful and vibrant clothes that was previously used by the theatrical groups(Jatra dal). This brought the essence of the theatrical groups of the villages. In the past they have even used striped towels or loincloths while dancing but now it's all about shiny, bright clothes. The popular apparels are waist belt, vibrant chest belts and also shoulder belts etc. These shoulder belts often resembled the English tail coat but again everything has its side-effects and they realized that the heaviness of the belt made the actions invisible to the audiences. Going to the details of the mask, those were simple at first but with time they started decorating it with mere leaves, stick or feathers at first but then opted for more elaborate items like glitters, tinsels etc. This increased the market value of these masks which were otherwise supposed to be cheap.

With the increasing heights of the mask increased the competition amongst the Chau community regarding the vastness of the masks. This distorted the aesthetic value of the mask and other components of the Chau dance. This uncomfortable arrangement lasted for ten years. Regarding the competition one important discussion that started was **"Chau NaccherAsaar"**(gathering of the chau performers and the audience). From the time Chau

became a community centered dance form this gathering became important for the rising competition. This consists of two groups of dancers. Though not compulsory the performance starts with invocation of lord Ganesha known as GaneshVandana. While one group performs the other group prepares themselves for the upcoming one. They take a turn and rest while the other group performs; this way the audience would not even feel bored. This entire process is known is known as *"AadabadiNachh".* These kind of performances creates a competitive ambience which inspires both the groups to give their best. At first both the groups used to give the same performances but now they put different ones. When Chau dance started gaining popularity outside its immediate circle of gajan, they became innovative about the dance steps and newly created gestures. This advent was accompanied by metallic bells strung around the ankle. These bells makes the moves of the artists even more attractive and they control the rhythm desirably. It requires immense practice for the chau artists to master the art of synching those bells with the instruments. Some four decades ago the artists started abandoning the idea of using those bell on their feet as they believe that it gives rise to wounds caused due to the friction with the ground while they adopt different poses.Also one of the reasons of leaving the metallic balls was assumed that the new generation of artists are not so hardworking as their ancestors to put themselves through rigorous practice of capturing the art of of it.

During this time Gambhir Singh Mura was performing internationally and was acknowleged by many. He was awarded by the Sangeet Natak Academy of the Indian government for the excellance in his field. He became a household name in Purulia. He was mainly a skillful *"Ulfa"* or *"Baji"* performer. Those young performers were not interested in his meticulous dance forms rather took up ulfa as their main course of action; since it took less hardwork and could be practiced anywhere around the village. This also made Baji the identification mark for addressing Chau dance.

From the very beginning Dhol(Indian drum) & Dhamsa(percussion instrument) has been a constant ally of Chau dance, even the theatre dance performances involved the use of such instruments.As the musicality of this art form progressed, Shehnai(Indian mouthpiece) was introduced. These three instruments became the main musical accompaniment of Chau. Though Bheri was introduced for a short while, they could not do away with the grace of Ghungur(metallic balls tied around the ankle) even after abandoning so came in its place Jhumjhumi. When music was infused with chau the essence of the Manbhumi region inculcated into duets among Chau & their native folk song Jhumur. Different characters were introduced through songs for which a singer was now required. Successively with the singer came western influence of harmonium, flute, cornet etc. From the last decade changes in Chau cult is evident which replaced harmonium with electronic synthesizer and dhol and dhamsa are not often in sync with the synthesizer that often controls Chau folk music.

The role of the singer here, though brief has a significance in Chau. Before the onset of the dance performance; the singer introduces the the background of the folktale which is then

taken up by the shehenai players. For the last twelve years a new trend has been introduced in Chau where a presenter would be delivering all the dialogues meant for the characters. This has brought a huge change towards the vision of the dance and acting. Chau which was once dependent upon just body languages now got used to the day-to-day paralanguagelike you, me, us, go, etc.. Besides, with the introduction of a presenter the importance of the play through song is reducing. But the presence of Jhumur is undeniable so the artists are therefore using the common Jhumur songs to entertain the community. These changes are not very good for its development.

It has been mentioned earlier that Puranic(mythological) stories were the main topic for chau dance and theatre and this has been the custom for quite some time. But for the last two decades, historical stories are also adapted for the Chau play. In the recent past social plays are put up after a lot of experiments for the betterment of the society.It has also been seen that the demand and attraction for mythological folk tales have notbeen reducedamongst the audience. Puranic folk tales have given a lot of success to Chauas a cult. Tradition gives birth to heritage this concept has been proven by Chau as the traditional dance theatre.

At the initial stage Chau used to be performed during spring & the onset of summer since most of them were farmers. They still remain farmers but the opportunity of income from their performances encouraged them to put effort on the art form. International recognition also helped Chau establish a firm footing on their mother land- India. It has also promoted large scale economy. This economic aspect of the cult is not wrong unless it gives rise to any bad intentions among its practitioners. From its origin, through its process of development commercial sides of Chau has its own disadvantages starting from the use of bigger masks, synthesizer, modern bollywood songs, lack of physical activity etc. Though Chau is still expanding and only future will tell what form it will take.

NAMING:

Why has been Chau named so?

A number of views on this topic has been propounded:

Such as:

1. Chau from the bengalinumerics*"Choy"*(which means six)
2. In Purulia's native language the word Chau resembles 'fun' or 'entertainment' hence chau used as a tool for entertaining the community.
3. In the native Kurmalilanguage boys are often called 'Chaowa' and also the performers are mostly men therefore the name.

4. From Shouvik form of dance (shouvik nritya) to Chau. (As propounded by pandit Sri Sukumar Sen)

What is the relation between the sixth number inbengalinumerics (Choy) with Chau?

- Gathering of six group dancers are called Chau
- Six organs are used while performing led to such a name
- Chau dance has six specific features
- Six things are used in the performance hence the name
- While presenting, six episodes are portrayed
- Six forms of art work are togetherly known as Chau
  Now this six stages are described:

A. **Culmination of six dance forms:**
  Nachni, Natua, Pata, Kirtan, Bhagta, Santhal
  Apart from these six   there are
  Daar ,Kaap, Daharshalia, Ghera,Ghura are evident in Chau
  With changing times the different dance forms influenced the formation of chau.

B. **Use of six organs in Chau:**
  Shoulder, neck, chest, waist, hand & legs are the six organs uses in here. Though other forms of dance use these organs but those are accompanied by other gestures like eyebrow movement, lip and eye movement and so on.

C. **Six features of Chou:**
  Deck- foot steps

  Body language(chhal)- body movements and gestures

  Vault (Dig baji)-"Baji" or "Ulfa" ; pouncing in the air and then standing on
              the   feet or topple across someones shoulder or chest.

  Circular motion- going round after taking a leap in the air; it might include

  turning from right to left or left to right and then standing by taking the intial

  position

  Jump - leaping in the air and then sitting on the ground

  Hooliganism – portrayal of bravery or which is the main essence of Chau

D. **Six things use in Chau :**
  Dhol, Dhamsa, Shehnai, Masks, Ghungur (Metallic balls), Costume

E. **Six types of Chau presentation:**

a) Pavilion inspection- Just before the starting of the show all the singers gather at the nearby Shiva temple or on an empty ground to play the instruments slowly arriving at the main stage; they would take circulate around the pavilion.

b) Uranbajna – The drummers would play on and around the stage ; this way they would create the energy of the performance.

c) Prayer - Invocation to lord Ganesha. An artist would take up the character of ganesha and dance around the stage. They would sing a welcome song in tune with shehnai.

d) Symmetrical group dance – The artists would make different geometrical formations and dance by changing places in sync; there has to be formations of even number of artists like four, eight, sixteen, thiety two etc. every gestures, steps should be similar to one another.

e) Theatrical dance - These dances are based upon mythical folk tales (Puranic katha) or clearly dance performances with mass theatricality.

f) Dance of the masters (Ustadinaach) – The pre-eminent master would showcase a solo performance in the attire of a famous personality.

F. Six skilled art work used in Chau :

Dancing, singing, instrumentalist, playwriting, painter & mask maker

Therefore dance along with songs, masks, colouring and acting were the main art items of chau. According to the character type colors has been used for example Krishna would be painted blue, Balarama would be painted fair, Kartik would be painted golden.

Each and every view point is essential in case of the name

The view propounded by Acharya Sukumar Sen is not totally agreeable. The fact that the pioneers of the chau dance belonged to the lower rungs of the tribal community makes it hard to believe that their art form has simply evolved from the Sanskritic "Shoubhik" dance.

Culmination of six dances creates the name Chau – though this statement sounds appealing but not sufficient; because it has been affected by at least twelve dance forms that has helped in structuring the different components of Chau.

Natua (a formation component) – standing posture, warming essence, gestures of the natua (the artist)

Nachni (the female dancer) - venerated female characters like Durga and portrayal of her delicacy & style

Pata -   group dance, tranquility (shantarash)

Kirtan (a form of religious folk song accompanied by some dance moves) - gesticulation of Kirtan

Santhali -   santhali forms (a tribal dance form)

Bhagta -   Bhagta formations, intensity, expression of warmth but humane

Darh -   gestures and actions of the characters from *Keerat* (another type), tranquility (shantorash)

Kaap-   storyline of the theatrical pieces (play), ghoststeps, humor

Daharshalia– formations of Daharshalia, daunting art

Ghera(surrounded) – intention of surprising elements

Ghora(horse) –courageous elements, sacred animals of gods & goddesses (bahana)

Circular movement (pradakshin) - process of going around the pavilion (stage)

The view that six of the body parts are used is acceptable but, according to eminent artists the use of parts like shoulder, chest, both hands and legs are difficult to accept. Since each hand and leg are not considered as independent figures. Adding to that neck and waist are also used in chau. Accompanied with the appropriate rhythm neck has been

immensely used. In the dance form of Keerat waists are used as well while portraying characters like Durga, Krishna etc.

Competency of the actors:

Chou is the dance of youth. Without immense physical strength performing Chau becomes impossible. Chau practice should start from early childhood because the body of the child still remains soft like mud and can be moulded in a good shape. So teaching should ideally start from ten years onwards. It's very common for the children of Purulia to playfully learn about chau from their elders. But there are some criteria for being a chau artist; those are as follows:

1. Interest – like any other work, chau isn't possible without being interested in it.
2. Courage – there are many techniques of chau like jump, vaulting which cannot be mastered without courageous attitude.
3. Passion - without passion the expressions of the art form would not be expressed fully in the performance
4. Physical resilience – the artist should be hard working and physically active. Without physical sustanance mastering this art would be impossible.
5. Vigilance and carefree –on one side if the candidate is care free then it will be easier for him to master the techniques at the same time , he should be vigilant as to avoid any kind of mishap.
6. Physical delicacy - without physical grace achieving proper expressions for dance would not be possible
7. Cognitive observation – if any gesture, any step cannot be used for some other character then a dance has to be put mechanically
8. Developing capacity: chau is a distinguishing art form which develops over time. A true artist keeps on inventing new forms and continues applying it.
9. Team spirit – chau is a group-oriented art work so it every member has to be a part of the dance.

10. Sense of tempo – like any other dance form chau is also based on rhythm and tempo which needs to be mentioned through the performance.
11. Inspection ability – like any other skill this is also required in this art form.

Character:

The characters portrayed in chau pieces are extreme versatile human nature but they are not over simplified or clichéd. Characters that are more often presented are characters of different gods (both male & female), human characters, demons and also animal characters based on needs.

Divine characters: Ganesha, Shiva, Krishna, Indra, so on

Human characters: Ram, Laxman, Luv, Kush, the Pandavas, Duryodhana so on

Female demonic characters: Sita, Kiratini, Uttara etc.

Male demonic characters: Ravaan, Mahishasur, Tarkasur, Narkasur, Marichi etc.

Other demonic characters like: Surpanaka, Hirimba, Taraka etc.

Animal characters: tiger, bear, monkey etc.

Bird character: duck, crane, peacock etc.

There are characters which are neither totally human nor demon, or animals for instance Narasingha (half human half lion), Hanuman (monkey in the figure of a human) etc.

Whatever the character be evil or good, it has to be portrayed under the light of bravery. Characters have no place if they are not showcased with full of courage; like Kali, Durga. Even the tale of Sita though not presented as courageous is no less bold.

In one word, Chau is an art of valor

In modern times many of the Puranic tales are now replaced by historic incidents and characters, but they hold the same resemblance with the mythological characters that is they are brave examples of historic characters are Sidhu-Kanu, Birsa Munda and so on.

These characters are the proto type of the archetypal characters.

Collective essence of Chau dance:

The quintessential spirit of chau dance comes from its portrayal of the valor and humaneness of the characters. Due to the effect of this courageousness and warmth-benevolence it also creates the respective essence of strangeness and sympathy. The demonic and evil characters give rise to an intensified and fearsome premonition. The dramatic characters showcase the delicacy and the fashionable aspect whereas the loose comic characters give rise to humor. In the forms of "Pata" & "Darh" (dance techniques) we get the taste of golden calmness. Therefore, all the nine essences namely- style, humor, valor, humaneness, comfort, tranquility, frightening, strangeness and vigor are evident in chau. Still the presence of bravery and epic kindness is the main spirit of this art form, whereas anger and excitement is the sentiment.

Dance & Acting:

Chau's theatrics is dance based; the character expresses him through dance. It wouldn't be wrong to say that use of sharp gestures (mudra) of hand is almost none since the major actions used are fist, 'sarpashirsha' (snake charming figure), and flag etc. with two hands the most common gesticulation is the formation of prayer hand (anjali). Usually expressions are made through the use of different body languages, hand movement, chest and neck actions, and variety of footsteps because facial articulation is nil. The presence of bodily movements and yogic (sattvik) formations are very much at vogue in chau. That's why the use of costumes, masks varies circumstantially.

Six types of style in chau:

a) Gods
b) Warrior
c) Demon
d) Animals

All the actions pertaining to the divine characters (gods) falls under the first type, similarly all the steps of warrior, evil and animal characters fall under their respective types. Apart from these specifics, there are other types as well which can be used across all situations and characters. There is another type notable known as the 'Bhootchal' (ghost style) which are used during portrayal of haunting characters; while during the use of loose and humorous characters – 'thumki' & 'sakhi' are the two types that are used.

Addressing different steps and posture:

- Use of head and chest: 'Chhatiurra', 'Jhaildhuna'
- Use of hand movements: 'Bahi-malka', 'Bhuj-hila', 'Jhik'
- Body language: 'Abhti'
- Footsteps: 'Choti'(sandals), 'Chamka', 'Mati-gija', 'Babu', 'Muni'(saint), 'Santhal', 'Chhalka', 'Kirtan', 'Natua', 'Bhagta', 'Dahar-shalia', 'Sakhi', 'Thumki'
- Downward movement: 'Topka'
- Upward movement: ' Ufli'; apart from this
- 'Paak', 'Baji' or 'Ulfa'

   These effects are mainly used for the characters of gods & goddesses, warriors and demons.

- Animal movements: 'Bokotpoka', 'Bokotpoka- ghetla', peacock, tiger, pig, monkey, frog, cow, elephant, hen, duck, snake, worm, crab, bear, insects, rabbit etc.

   There are some more postures which are nameless

   Description:

   - Ba-himloka: two hands folded in a fist(mushthi); elbow laid out of the shoulder at the height of the chest and the fists should come parallel to the waist whereby chest is wide enough.
   - Bhuj-hila: the palms closed in a fist at the level of the chest parallel to the elbow, elbow laid out, right fist on the left side of the chest and vice versa and then both the hand would rotate(pointing from the fist towards the elbow)

- Jhik: fisted hand at the level of the waist which would go back with a shake and again come in front accompanied with a movement of the upper part of the body.

- Abhti: it is a way in which the artist stands right after entering the stage; divine characters would stand collaterally whereas the warrior characters stands with incongruity. Their right foot will be posed first. Same goes with the evil characters only they place their let foot first.
After 'Abhti' starts the actual dance which is locally known as 'aaibhat'.

- Chhatiurra(chest): fisted hands and the chest would be on a rectangular position and the entire body would remain static only the chest will shudder immensely

- Jhail-dhuna: fisted hands will be placed beside the waist, elbow extended outward, from the waist line the upper part of the body would tilt backward a bit coming to front; first the head will come then creating an impression of moving the head in hair the artist will stand straight on their feet. Though it seems all about moving the upper part of the body but the feet holds an importance position as well. If the artist doesn't stand still he wouldn't be able to perform this art. This is specific for the character of different 'asuras' (demons)- Mahishasur, Goshingasur.

- Choti chal (posture): the feet placed along the same line parallel to the shoulder; knees to be bend a bit, both the feet should be lifted off the ground by small jumps. This is a step of going forward.

- Chamka: both the feet should be placed side by side; the artist has to shake his body by making fast movements with the legs then by putting a leg in front has to topple and stand in firm place. All has to be done within the same spot.

- Mati-gija: it refers to wrangle with soil. Both the feet are placed side by side. When one foot is lifted off at the knee level then placed vigorously on the ground, the other foot would automatically be lifted off in the same manner, this will continue for a long time as an action in itself.

12

- Babu chal: both the feet to be placed side by side. Then the right foot to be lifted, passes the ankle then taking it to the left foot should touch the ground and then put the entire pressure of the body on that foot, this is repeated for the left foot as well.

- Muni chal: it is similar to the 'Babu-chal'. Only the feet need to be pulled to the height of the knee, hands should be placed along the front of the waist. One hand to be formed in a fist other in reaction to the walking position; in a still position the entire left foot will bear the weight of the body whereas the right foot will be put forward on the ground.

- Chhalka: it's a sideway posture. Both the feet to be placed side by side. The right foot is to be put at such a distance that the knee bends and the left foot should be stretched. The entire body weight should be put on the right foot and the other foot should be now brought closer. The foot which is lifted off should also have that sides palm in a fist taken up to the vocal cord elbow outstretched pointing towards the direction.

- Kirtan chal (posture): from waist to the head, the upper portion will be leaned forward, knees slightly bend, the right foot to be placed firmly on the ground and the left foot to be placed behind the ankle of the right one; when the right foot will advance the other foot will follow. When one foot will be lifted off the ground that side of the waist would crouch a little and both the hands will be placed on the chest.

- Natua chal: as usual both the feet place side by side. From the waist line the upper part of the body is tilted a bit to the back; the hand is outstretched from the shoulder, the palm fisted and placed in front. Remaining in this position any one foot is to be lifted and placing the weight on the other the artist has to take a vault in the air and have to come back on the previous foot and continue doing the same with the other foot and set himself on the ground. The body should move in a circular motion. This can be done from both the sides. When the artist does this with the first leg, the entire upper part of the body bends forward.

- Bhagta chal: when the right foot places itself in the front on the ground the left foot would pass it and place on the ground then the right foot would come behind, this will continue for some time .

  When the right leg will be placed on the ground firmly, the anterior part of the left foot will come behind the right foot and sets on the ground similarly when the left foot is placed forward firmly on the ground, the anterior of the right foot will come behind the other foot. This will continue.

Thumki chal: this is similar to Kirtan chal. Only when one foot is placed firmly on the ground the anterior portion of the other will place itself beside it and not behind it; when the artist will walk his waist will swing from side to side. One hand will be folded from the elbow and place still in front whereas the other hand will move in tune with the swing of the waist.

- Sakhi chal: when the anterior portion of the right foot is placed at the back of the left heel and puts on the firm ground; the right foot will pass the left foot taking a round it will place itself forward putting the left foot behind the right heel. Elbow of the left hand will be stretched outside. From the elbow to the wrist will remain parallel to the ground. The palm will be placed on the chest whereas the right hand will remain active in sync with the opposite foot.

- Topka chal: it's adownstream posture i.e. reaching near the ground. This includes plunging on the ground, taking a vault or toppling which are integral parts of Topka. These kinds of leaps are also divided into types.

  a) Keeping the body straight, the artist needs to take a leap in the air and then putting the anterior of both the feet forward he has to sit on his heels without bending the knee.

  b) Sitting on the ground while doing the Choti chal.

  c) Keeping the body straight, one has to jump in the air and sit on the heel of one foot with the knee bended while the other knee would be in the upward direction with the soleof the foot

  d) jumping in the upward direction, the artist has to sit on the ankle of both the feet and placing the knees on the ground

e) not only jumping in the upward direction but also has to take few rounds in the air

f) after taking round in the air the artist has to sit in 'Padmaasana' (lotus position)

g) taking rounds in the air and then sitting on the anterior portion of any one foot

h) by folding one foot from its kneethe body has to rest on the tip of that ankle parallel to the ground, this way the body's posture will remain firm and balanced

i) by taking a vault in the air the artist has to lying on his back with two feet folded at his chest

j) it's a slow downward movement; both the feet will be placed in advanced and backward position. The leg which is placed in the front the body will turn towards that side; though the feet will remain at their place. with the body taking rounds both the knees will start to fold. the front foot will be placed on the sole while the ankle of the posterior foot will rise moving the knee towards the ground. The body will remain straight; this is to take the body as downward as possible. it's also a part of Topka.

1. one leg will be out-stretched, other leg will be folded from the knee. From that knee and the palms of two hands till the elbow are going to be balanced with a downward motion

2. the artist has to come running from a distance and take a vault in the air staying parallel to the ground. firstly hands will touch the ground and the entire mass of the upper part of the body will be placed on it protecting the chest; then after the legs are placed on the ground the body pressure would be distributed among hands and legs (though the artist is responsible for the change of posture and kinds of jump)
one special type of dance posture is-

the knee without being placed on the ground, the anterior part both the feet will bear the pressure of the body and keeping the hip on the ankle he will take small jumps to make advancement.

Ufli- it's an upward movement; from the ground towards the upward direction. after every Topka movement or downward movement there is an upward movement or chal.

a) standing after one jump

b) standing up with a slow movement and stopping

c) balancing on the anterior position of the feet the artist has to sit on the ankle-using this movement he has to immediately take the upward direction to stand

d) along with the Choti chal(movement), the artist has to sit aloft and stand up it that position only

e) along with the Choti chalthe artist has to sit aloft and then using this movement both the feet should be distanced as much as possible now keeping the sole of the feet flat on the ground he has to rise up

f) after the third jump putting entire pressure on one foot and half pressure on another foot the artist has to rise

g) after the fourth jump, lifting the knees off the ground the artist has to jump putting the pressure on the anterior of the feet and stand on the entire feet. This way he has to maintain a half-sitting position. Then with pressure on both the feet he has to stand completely.

h) if the artist wants to bounce while encircling and also rising up then he has to do it without delaying; using the kinetic force of both bouncing and encircling he has to continue

i) if while sitting in 'Padmaasana' the artist wants to rise then keeping the pressure on the step and hip he has to stand in a half-sitting position with the entire sole of the feet on the ground and then he can rise again anyway with speed or by halting

j) by jumping in the air or by not the artist can settle on the ground with pressure on the back and using the reverse speed power he has to stretch the legs and jump off to stand on the feet and immediately stand

16

k) after completing the second leap and settling on the ground; with the help of the hand he has to pull up the upper part of the body and then bringing the feet closer he has to rise and stand on the feet

hands can be used in case of Ufli but only during the jump in the air the culmination of both the hands can be made creative. Since during a leap the hand would put a pressure on the ground so it's not considered.

Twist(Paak)- after leaping in the air, the artist has to create an arc with his body to create a full circle and then coming back on the feet. Twists are of two types:

Shunya Paak(in the void) & Bhumi Paak

Shunya Paak- pulling two feet up in the void and then taking a twist

Bhumi Paak- one foot will be taken off the ground whereas the other foot will remain on the soil at the centre of the circle

Shunya Paak are of two types:

a) Mamuli Paak (common place twist)
b) Jora Paak(paired twist)
   Mamuli Paak: In this, two feet will be out stretched in two different directions; even while starting with the twist and also after landing on the ground
   Jora paak: it refers to double twist at the same time. This creates a delusion in the eyes of the audience as if the artists have just taken a leap and landed on the ground.

   Starting to twist while outstretching two legs in two opposite direction, while creating the arc the artist has to pull his legs closer and after completing the circle placing the anterior of the feet to touch the ground. Going back to the previous force he has to take another twist. After completing the double twist the artist has to go back in the out-stretched posture and be firm on the ground.
   it's not a compulsion for the artist to use consecutive simpler twists but he can make twists depending on his competency and skill; twists can be made from both the sides as per the customs.
Baji or Ulfa: leaping in the void
Baji can be done on all sides- left, right, front, back; it depends upon the artist's skill. Baji can be done standing at a spot or can be moved backward or forward while doing it. Baji can be initiated from the ground & end there or it can be started from a higher place like the artist's shoulder or back and can end in the ground.

Foremost Baji can be of three types:

1. lifting both the hands in the hair, then thriving the body ahead then placing the weight of the hand on the ground lift off the legs and twist them and finally place it on the ground

2. without using the hands bouncing in the air twisting the body and again placing it on the ground. In this form knees are folded and pulled closer to the chest and again stretched out.

3. after jumping in the air the artist needs to place either his right or left shoulder ahead and then taking a turn around have to come down to the ground placing the pressure on the back(part of Topka). After rolling on the back & waist has to come up to his feet and stand firm('palti' in native language)

Paschyat(behind) Baji are of two types:

1. putting both the hands above in the air, then pulling the upper part of the body back shaped in a bow and bouncing with two legs; placing both the hands on the ground the artist has to throw the legs in the air and stand firm on the ground.

2. without using the hands, the artist has to jump in the air then folding the knees pulling it closer to the chest. the folded body should be folded backwards stretching the legs outward and standing firm on the ground.

The artists can modify with the formations and postures according to their ability and choice.

Parshogotir(sideways movement) Baji can be of two types:

1. the hands and legs should be outstretched in such a way that it forms a X sign. Now tilting the body on one side, the hand should touch the ground beside the leg at the same time the other leg will go in void; the other leg should follow. Now when two hands are going to be place on the ground both the legs will be placed in the air, again when the body will tilt to the other side the first leg will touch the ground whereas the hand will move up in the air now the other hand will follow

this step. both the legs will come to the ground whereas the hands will be in the void. Every time the hands and legs are going to be stretched out.

2. Another step of Baji is 'Dori molat'(rope twisting). It is used for cyclical navigation; it's a native word. Taking a long rope and holding it at one end and shaking it with a constant rhythm it will create a small wave like structure. The entire process is called 'Dori molat'. if this rope is twisted in cyclical direction that's how it will look in this type of baji.

Dori molat: standing straight throwing the hands in the air. the body needs to be turned sideways by wrenching the upper part from the waist. Now by bending the upper part hands need to be placed on the ground firmly. Along with this ,both the legs are to be lifted off the earth; legs being outstretched the lower limb has to be twisted ahead by wrenching the waist. This has to be a continuous process resulting into the cyclic formation which complete 'Dori molat'.

Pashu-chal (animal mannerism): observing the mannerisms and formations of birds, animals and reptiles and imitation them as much accurate as possible.

Bakatpoka: it's a parallel formation, knees slightly bent. The upper part of the body in the lower formation the artery is ahead. Both the hands are placed behind at the coccyx. This is the posture of a crane. one leg is placed higher than the other. The toe nails are pointed towards the ground. One leg will be placed at the knee level beside another knee. One knee is going to be stretchedand the leg is going to fall down oddly. first the toe nails are going to touch the ground then the entire foot will be placed on it. When the front leg takes the weight of the body the rear leg follows the same pattern. when one leg rises, the body will fall ahead and chest and knee would come closer; when the leg goes down body will straighten. The artery will sometimes turn left or right and the entire body will follow. when the chest and knee comes closer then the artery and the other parts of the body will turn and this will repeat. When the right leg rises the body turns to the right and when the left leg rises the left parts turns.

Bakatpoka- ghetla: It's similar to the previous mannerism. Only during rising the part from the knee to the downward portion of the leg will rotate in a cyclical manner.

Mayur(peacock): The standing posture is almost similar to crane. The hands are fisted around the waist and elbows stretched out.So both the hands would create triangle at each corner. The leg will be raised at the thigh level with knee bending forward. The leg will rise at the thigh level of the other leg and move forward then again come back to stretch and touch the ground. When the weight of the body is placed on one leg the other leg would be behind and would repeat the same task.

Bagh(Tiger): The palm and the elbow are placed on the ground on which the body pressure is settled. Bending the body on one side with the help of the waist and hip the body gets laid in a recumbent posture. One side of the leg placed on the ground with knee bend. The inner portion of the leg is touching the groundwith knee in the same manner. This is how a tiger sits.

The side on which the body is bend, the opposite hand would straighten first then the other hand, the chest along with the artery and head would tighten. The recumbent waist will leave the ground and slowly he will rise and stand up putting the pressure on one knee & the other knee would be a little behind. This is how a tiger stands up.

From the waist line to the head, the part will remain tight and advanced also the five fingers on which the pressure of the hand is put. With the pressure of the hand the body will recline and the knee will rise to touch the chest. The posterior knee would also rise a bit. The anterior part of both the legs would touch the ground. The ankle will rise. With tremendous pressure of the legs the body will throw itself ahead. The hands will be stretched out. The knee of the front leg is bent while the leg which is behind is tightened. The palms of both the hands, the knee and anterior portion of the foot of the front leg and the anterior part of the posterior leg will be placed on the ground together. This is the way the tiger jumps. By putting pressure on the hands and the sole of the feet the tiger will

make its advancement. Whichever leg remains behind will be stretched out. The waist would not rise much. This is the way the tiger walks.

Pig: both the palms are firmly placed on the ground. Elbow slightly folded. The anterior portion of the leg firmly placed on the ground. The knee is placed below the chest. Head and waist at the same height is positioned parallel to the ground. In this posture it has to move ahead.

Monkey:

1. Body held ahead. All the fingers of both the hands are placed firmly on the ground and are static. The weight of the body is put on both the legs while the knees are slightly bent. the right hand placed forward while the left leg behind. Similarly the right leg placed ahead and left leg put behind; first the right leg will move ahead then the left leg same movement goes with the hands. Now with small jumps it will move forward. The chin would be pointed towards the ground while the forehead up. (most of the men are steady on their right part so they are asked to place their right hand and legs first and the other way round for the left sided people).

2. both the legs are spread out with knees bent. The entire sole of the foot is placed on the ground. The body is straight. The elbow is folded downward. The wrist packed near the chest. The palm of the open hand towards the ground. The hands are relaxed. Hands are folded as much as it keeps the body light. With pressure from the anterior part of the legs it can jump with a little roam with sometimes on the elbow. From the tip of the fingers below the wrist it will itch its body.

Bang-churpa(frog posture):

1. the prostrated figure laid on the ground. The neck bent to one side. Any one side of the head can remain downward towards the ground. Knees and elbows are folded & out stretched. The palms and the head are combines at corners and the sole of the feet are parallel to the knees. With this posture the sole of the feet, wrist, elbow, palms and knees puts pressure to bounce for moving ahead.The body can be still to protect from any kind of accident. This is the movement of a frog.

21

2. The portion from the waist till chest remains parallel to the ground. Hands placed below the chest. The elbow is folded and knee placed behind the elbow. The ankle lifted from the ground, though the anterior part of the foot is grounded. The weight of the body is put on the hands and legs. The artery lifted off a little and face brought ahead. Using this position the pressure on the hands and legs would enable to the frog to jump and move around and then again with an interval it would stop. This is identical of two types of frog.

Cow:

The body is placed on the pressure upon both the hands and the anterior of both the legs. The cow is supposed to move at a slow pace.

Elephant:

1. The palms of both the hands and legs are completely and firmly placed on the ground; and the legs and hands are straightened. The elbows and knees would not fold. Hands and legs would be pulled off the ground with the simultaneous movement of waist and shoulder.The right leg and right hand would be lifted off and also placed together, similar pattern to be followed for the right hand. This way the weight of the body is felt.

2. The body will be straight. The right hand placed above the head and the right arm pressed against the ear. The left hand passing through the head is trying to hold the right arm. The left elbow tries to form a triangle at the left side of the hand then resulting into a cone. In this posture the upper body part has moved ahead a bit. This way the leg will remain straight and the knees would not fold. The leg will be lifted off at the dragging of the waist. During walking the body will swing; the right hand will stir while the left elbow will move sometimes.

Hen: Two knees folded and brought closer. The hip placed on the ankle. The entire body weight is placed upon the anterior portion of the feet. Arm and elbow attached to the body. The body is straight. The hands are outstretched. The fingers are spread out. This is the posture of a hen. It has to move in a upward direction with the help of the anterior of the feet.

Duck: The folded knees are stretched out on two sides. The hip placed on the ankle. The body is straightened. The fisted hands are placed on the waist. Elbows stretched. This is the posture of a duck. Within this posture the duck has to swing left and right to move.

Snake: This is mainly posture of few types of snakes.
1. The artist has to lie flat on the ground in the form of a sleeping posture. both the legs are joined with the feet attached along with the hands caught together(hands are to be imagined as snake's head). With the pressure of the wrist, waist, knee and fingers the body has to move ahead.
2. Body straight and hands placed above the head. both the elbows stretched sideways. The wrist connected to the skull-top. All the fingers along with the wrist are attached to one another. This is the posture of a snake. The steps should go like right-left-right & left-right-left. When the right leg forward it has to be placed on the left side of the left leg ,same goes with the left leg. The front leg needs to place itself on the ground while the body will on the opposite side of the rear leg i.e. from waist to the head.
3. Body straightened. The location of the upper part and the arms are similar. The weight of the body is placed upon the knees. remaining in this posture the artist has to summon a leg and put in front while the rear leg would be stretched. This way whichever leg remains behind will remain stretched. While pulling the rear leg the body along with the head would be held back and then again placed straight with the completion of the action.

Crab: The palms are placed firmly on the ground. The tip of each fingers are pointed towards one another and are closed. Elbows are folded and stretched. Knees are also bent and stretched out. The ankle and the anterior of the foot is also placed on the ground. The hip raised. The chest and stomach are parallel to the ground. The entire body weight is put upon the anterior portions of hands and legs. This is the way to move forward.

Bear:
1. Both hands and legs placed on the ground i.e. the entire feet and the fingers. Knees slightly bent. The legs to be raised from the knees and move ahead. The body weight to be placed on the legs and hands will just maintain the balance.
2. The knees and the anterior part of the legs on the ground. Ankle lifted off. The thighs and knees are parallel. The upper parts are slightly ahead with elbows stretched.The palms are towards the ground. The fingers are faced towards each other connected and curvy. The hands are placed a bit above from the ground. The forehead is situated bit above the hand. The forehead is parallel to the ground. The entire upper part would come together and bend left and right at a pace. whichever side it bends the knees would be lifted off.
3. Knees folded are stretched. The sole of the feet placed completely on the ground and body stretched. The elbows placed in front of the stomach and the wrists in front of the chest. The wrist is also folded. The fingers are attached in the shape of a snake-head. The palms placed towards the ground. One palm is placed a bit above than the other palm. Standing in this posture it has to shake its hands and also swing from side to side while walking.

Rabbit: Thehand till the part of the elbow will be placed sideways on the ground. Fingers in the shape of the snake-head. Knees bent with little stretched out.The heel is lifted off with the anterior of the feet placed on

24

the ground. The hip is placed on the heel. This is the posture. The weight placed on the hands with it the hip will rise from the heel whereas the head will move downward. When completely free of any charge it will bounce on its legs and move ahead; after placing the weight on the legs it will bring the legs ahead. This process will continue.

Insects: (It mainly emulates the movement of worm); the body lies flat on the ground. With the anterior of the feet it will advance itself while using the hands it will stop itself. The knees would not fold while the waist will rise. The upper part of the body is settled on the hand. The elbow will remain straight. The middle part of the body will be lifted up while the head will move down. The legs will come closer to the hands during movement. When the toe nails touches the back of the hand, the legs will become static but the hands will be in motion. And the hands will be placed on the ground while in motion while the middle part will grow closer to the ground. At last it will lay itself on the ground. This process will continue.

Bhoot chal(Ghostly movements): (According to the dictionary- ghosts are said to be the disciple of Lord Shiva or the devil. 'Pisach' refers to those who eat meat. among the ghost practitioners. Those dead humans who suffer in hell for 27 eras becomes the devil. In short it's a tremendous and horrifying creature. It's an unimaginative & illicit character. From that idea Purulia's Chau has developed such wretched movements and postures which is not only terrifying but also creates laughter.)

Bhoot chal(movement) can be performed in both rhythmic and non rhythmic movements. the hands, legs and body will be placed in a curve and the artery will sometimes rotate like a snake, vulture or a crane. All kinds of ugly, horrific steps are applied through their movements. Though the characters will stand firm, it would not portray them in any courageous or elegant ways.

In spite of showcasing ugly tremendous movements to become messy and ridiculous it still doesn't show immodesty. This is the beauty of 'Bhoot-chal'

25

Acting in Chau: Dance is a hidden component of Chau. That's why steps and movements are based on characters and circumstances. One of the important factor of chau is to see. That refers to seeing the audience as well as portraying the character as it is to the audience. The artist dances then stops and this is the process that continues. Let's take two characters for instance Arjun & Keerat who are fighting a battle. Keerat is performing certain twists and turns while Arjun is standing in a certain pose looking at the audience. Now suddenly he takes a gigantic leap and starts dancing whereas Keerat who was so long is action ceases and takes a look at the audience. The dance belongs to the character whereas the pose portrays the artist in him.

This way the artist separates him from the character. This alienation is an important aspect of Chau which tells the audience about the act.Overall its a way of looking from the view if the observer.

Since Chau seems to be an assembly of heroic characters therefore to elaborate on heroic qualities an opposite character type is needed. So that the qualities of the protagonist character can be proved to be superior when comparing with its reverse type. Therefore the character of 'Lipka' was created. Since 'Lipka' has no place in a dramatic narrative therefore it can enter and can do whatever it wants. When it gets ousted it exits then again comes back. Its humorous acts and mannerism creates a sense of comic relief which is otherwise impossible in Chau. Take for instance there's a battle going on between the lion and Mahishasur(demon) suddenly enters Lipka to attack the lion. But with counter attack from the lion flees the stage; enhancing the courageousness of Mahishasur. At the same time it proved the limitations of the heroic character. This dialectic reasoning and reaction carries the main essence of Lipka. That's why a humorous act in Lipka is a conflicting journey in Chau. Leaps, twists, baji and other such actions have huge importance in chau; this is because of its heroism and warm & humane sentiment. The reaction to bravery is excitement whereas the reaction to vigor is anger. Therefore it's important to showcase these two sentiments that's why the use

of jumps, curves and twists. With the use of twists and jumps excitement is shown whereas with the use of Baji anger is shown. Within any character's dance this steps can be applied.

Use of Baji is restricted in divine characters because divine characters are not aggrieved characters. Though at times anger generates among such characters but they are not permanent traits, it depends on the characters. Therefore divine characters like Krishna or Lord Rama does not make use of Baji. Their excitement arerestricted to jumps and twists. All these characters express their anger with trebling of their chest. On the contrary demonic characters express anger through the use of baji and they are restricted to the use of jumps, twists and tremble. Baji is the actual avenue of portraying the character's anger.

Godly characters are soft-hearted charming and tranquil in nature. Without any doubt, divine characters are limitlessly powerful; they are not full of pride because they are truly mighty. That's why when godly characters use their steps those are comparatively charming and tender than the demonic characters. On the other hand demons use their steps with full force. This goes even with heroic characters like Duryodhan, Bheem etc so they can use baji; but Arjun in spite of being a heroic character cannot use baji. Because Arjun is not forceful. Such graceful characters as Arjun and Karna needs the use of 'Bahi-molka' to portray greatness and warmth. With the rhythmic use of arms and shoulder the pride and restrain of these character are evident. The Keerat characters also use 'Bahi-molka' to showcase their vigor. On the contrary, the demonic and evil characters uses this particular movement to portray the horror of their action. There is another formation that restricts the vigorous expression of the heroic characters which has not been named. This is similar to the image of Swami Vivekananda with one arm folded on the other over the chest; the only difference is that both hands does not remain attached to the chest rather it rises up. This way the chest gets width and also the character get to express vigor and calmness at the same time.

Use of waist is very rare in Chau. The demonic characters do not employ it all even most divine characters do not use. Though divine characters like Krishna

can make use of his waist because he is a very intricate and fine character. The delicacy of his character allows the techniques to use the waist. The most commonly used step for Krishna is 'Tribhongi'(three-sided formation)- here use of waist is different or sometimes even impossible. Even heroic characters like Kartikeya makes use of the waist due to his fineness and charm. The Keerat characters does not make use of the waist. But when Keerat is accompanied with mild dance then the use if waist line is employed because the circumstance is romantic and he is the lover. Sometimes the elements of 'Darh' & 'Santhal' can be applied.

Lord Ganesha is one of the heroic and heroic characters in Chau. Chau reflects the elements of his characters. His characters have heroic brevity. When he advances uses the 'Choti' chal his heaviness is visible. It will also uses the 'Bahi-molka'to prove that in spite of being a heavy character he's a heroic character. Therefore this character has a culmination of contradictory traits.

When two heroic characters descend from their chariots, in order to show their neglect against each other they arrange for the process of 'Kata-kati' (passing by). Kata-kati is a process by which two artists walk towards each other, comes in front of one another but does not stand but rather walk past the other. When two artist perform such an act it seems as if they are not noticing each other or does not think them deserving enough to look at each other. Also the stage needs to be used properly. Chau artists use innovative techniques while employing various steps, movements and gestures; they even invent new forms and steps into it. But it is also important to understand the features of the characters and also the background of it.

Entry & Exit Custom:

Firstly, it's significant that the entry and exit way of the group of actors are one and the same, it is sometimes from the left or sometimes from the right. (During any kind of theatrical performance the exit point is important because it signifies the character attached to it in the eyes of the audience. One of the

important elements of acting is character establishment which is rigorously followed in Chau. During the introduction of any character on stage, it does not come directly at the middle of the stage. At the entry point the character stands firm in a certain pose and does not move ahead. He will turn around to see the crowd and behave as if he is moving ahead but would not. This stagnates the focus of the character and the musicality of the instruments signifies the traits of them. This gives the audience a chance to observe the performance and eloquence of the characters. According to old traditions, the drummers and other instrument players would stand at the entry point to welcome the artist; this gives stronger emphasis on the character's entry. While standing still, the rhythmic tremble of neck, shoulder & chest gives the impression of the character's mind. A good actor can prove his skill in here.

None of the characters make an exit entirely. It will make exit a number of times. The character will make a comeback right after an exit; then will make another exit. This seems to be a continuous process until they make a final exit.
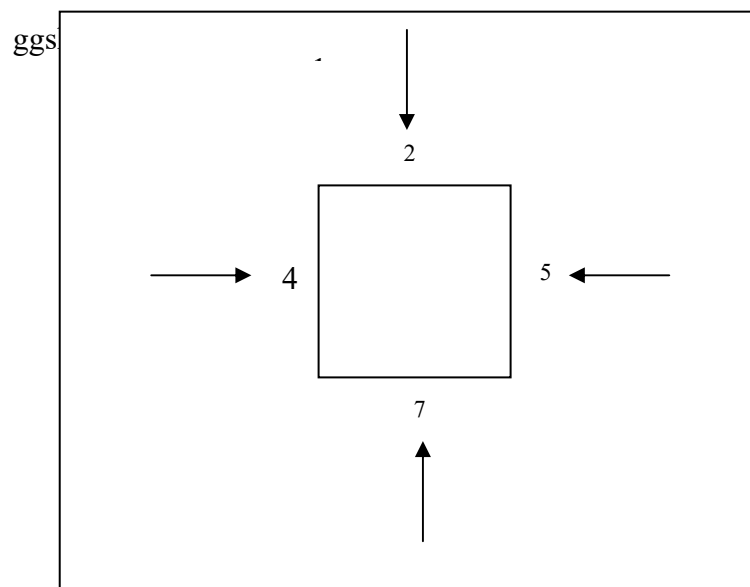
(Since most of the characters are heroic characters therefore they are stubborn. The stage seems to be their battle ground. In the middle of the battle, leaving the ground are not their principles. That's why they return. Their comebacks showcases even more courageousness which is their main aim. This even presents more vigorousness in their dance).

Group Dance:

Group dance is an important component of Chau dance.(though the quantity has decreased). It's a collective way of showcasing the art. A group of performers will present similar movements, steps, hand gestures along with the same rhythm in the same format. Group dance are mostly performed in even numbers at least eight that can grow up to thirty-two artists or even more that brings out the grace of it.

The main attraction of group dance is their assembled formation of geometric figures and different landscape construction. Group dance is a playful act of various formations like square, rectangular field, straight line, curve- their formation breaking and again forming. Along with it the half-sitting posture with the use of different parts of the body is also eye catching. They can also create an illusion of more number of dancers.

These group of dancers would enter the stage serially and with proper alignment. First they will form a circle and critically survey around the stage and divide themselves into two part. If there are eight people then the second person would come out and assemble on the right. Similarly, the fourth, sixth and eighth would stand on the right of the third, fifth and seventh. Then starts different formation and through Kata-kati they would come as 1-2, 3-4, 5-6 and 7-8 again as 1-3, 5-7,2-4,6-8. This way they would create pair and break it and again repeat it. After this continuous process they would assemble in one line after rotating they would separate and stand in three lines. In the first line 1,2 & 3 would stand beside them in another line 6,7,8 would stand; in between them would come 4 &5 behind 1& 3. From here the illusion game would start in a downward motion.

ggs

From top it seems to be a square whereas from the ground it seems to be to the eyes of the audience the placement of an artist because the emptied place are surrounded by other artists.

It is possible to create an illusion of twelve members when there are ten members or twenty when there are just eighteen members. In that case, square field will change into rectangular field. During group dance it is important to have mutual understanding amongst the members this would enhance the beauty and coordination.

During group dance accumulation of different characters are seen;

Dance of durga- gathering of forms of durga

Dance of Mahishasur(evil)- demonic forms

Dance of the courageous- gathering of the braves

Dance of Parashuram- accumulation of the formations of Parashuram

In group dance, presence of such number of a divine figure implies their strength and that just one figure is like ten of them. The costumes, masks everything is similar for the group dancers. All of them are just extensions of the same character. This is the language of chau. So if any particular character's personality & strength needs to be exemplified then amassing them is desirable.

Music & Instrument:

Chau is a music centric art form. Since its a dance form so music is essential. One feature of Chau is that, before making a new scene they have to compose new music(for which chau is compared to the Russian ballad). Musical instruments are also accompanied with it. Vocal music, shehenai(mouth pipe),drum, Madan bheri(a type of native instrument) jhumjhumi(jingles), rhythmic clapping even in dire need instruments like madal(a form of tom-tom), kartal are used.

Six types of raga(rhythm) are used in chau: Jhinjit, Bhairavi, Jayanto, Shivranjani, Bosonto & Vrindavan Sarang. Maanj-Khambanj can also be used.

For few significant characters in Chau, several Jhumur songs have been composed. Few songs have been mentioned:

Lord Ganesha: Sindoor boron Anga Mushik Bahan Sarbasidhhi data Hara Gauri-Nandan(Poyar rhythm)

Lord Kartik: Sathmundu dui kar jini Sashadhar/ Dev senapati name khyato tribhubon/ Suno suno Sabhajan- Taar kalapi bahon/ Suno suno Sabhajan (Poyar)

Lord Rama: Prabhu Sri Ram sathe bhai Lakkhan

        Panchavati vane koriche bhraman

        Pitri satya palibare he

        Agre Raghumoni modhye Thakurani

        Pichone Lakkhan bir he

        Boner bhitore patar kuthir e

        Thaken anondo kore he (Tripod)

During the entry of one such character, the singer would start singing verses like this and the shehenai(clarinet) player would take up the tune. After the clarinet player starts with the tune the singer would stop and the dancers would perform based on that tune.Therefore the initial duty of the singer is just to introduce the character & the background. Though the singer remains for a short while but his importance in immense. For his convenience the singer can make use of harmonium, or can even replace the traditional song with a newly composed song as long as it is devoted to the character and the situation.

It is to be noted that songs are the only vocal element of Chau from where the audience receives information. With the start of the song they will start the use of number of instruments like dhol, dhamsa and dance will see the use jhumjhumi; which is a similar instrument like ghungur or metallic bells. There are always two dhols(drums), dhamsa and one shehenai which are put to use in perfect ratio. Dhol is played by striking both sides of itby force. On the left side a stick can be used. Dhamsa is by structure one-sided. It's played with the use of hard rod shaped stick and not the usual thin twigs using two hands. The rhythmic structures of Chau are confined to 'Dadra', 'Kaharba', 'Ak-taal', 'Duu-taal' & 'Jhap-

taal'. But these rhythms are broken to turn them into complex, intricate several rhythms. The rhythms are mainly divided into three parts:

1. Taal(rhythm)
2. Chal
3. Thaki

This division is integrally connected to Chau dance. 'Taal' here refers to the main rhythm. Accompanied to this rhythm the dance will be performed.

Chal is that part of taal, that would play during shifting of the performer's positions. Thaki is that part of taal which is played while the artists standing in the same positions takes a leap-twists or baji.

Dhamsa will be played during taal& thaki. In many characters taal is not played with thaki. In divine characters like Durga, Shiva, Narad (many god characters taal is played with thaki) even in many Keerat characters have thaki in them. Those characters will make use of their characterized twists & turns. In Parashuram's characters the artist would change its position at the main rhythm because it does not have either chal or thaki.

We need to get accustomed to the tempo of different instruments:

Tempo of the drum(Dhol): ge, taa, taak, ter-khet, tre-khet, , jha, jhedag, teh uur, ghen, geda, ne, ghee, daag, khenk, ghe, daa

Tempo of dhamsa: Gur-guri, Dhern, Daram

Tempo of madol(tom-tom): dhi, nak, dha, dhaak, tung, tuun, tere-khete, daag

It's important to process the sounding of each tempo

processes of dhol:

ge- striking it with left hand or a stick on the left side.

taa: striking it with part of the right palm

taak: striking it with the right hand while pressing it with the left hand

ter-khet: hitting it with the ring finger and the middle finger and then with the index finger of the right hand and finally striking it with the left hand

tre-khet: it is similar to the previous rhythm but only with the use of thumb

jha: hitting it with both the hands

jhedag: right after striking it with the left hand with a stick immediately hitting with the right hand

teh: using three fingers of the right hand to hit it

uur: using four fingers of the right hand to create a sound

ghen: after using the left hand then using the right hand to hit it

geda: using a stick with the left hand or striking with four fingers of the right hand

ne: hitting it with the index finger of the right hand

ghee: using the fingers along with quarter-inch of the palm of the left hand to hit it

daag: hitting it with both the hands

khenk: using a stick of the left hand to hit it then pressing it

gheek: right after ghee using the tip of the thumb to strike with it

ghee: using the part of left hand's palm and right hand's index. ring and small finger to hit it

daa: using the four fingers of the left hand except the thumb and three fingers of the right hand except the thumb and small finger.

jhene: right after jha using the index finger of the right hand to hit it

different processes of the tempos of dhamsa:

Gur-guri: using two sticks at a fast pace and make sounds like rolling of drum

Dhern: hitting the two sticks with a gap of half dimension

Daram: hitting both the sticks together

Tempos of madol:

dhi: the tip end of the left palm would remain touched to the instrument

nak: the small finger of the right hand would be placed at the middle of the instrument whereas the index finger and the middle finger would be placed at the periphery

dha: hitting it with the left palm then lifting it off immediately

Dhaak: hitting it with both the hands; using four fingers of the left hand and till three fingers of the right hand

tung: use of four fingers of the right hand only

tuun: similar to tung but it will be pressed by the left hand on the left side

tere: hitting it with the tip of right hand, after striking it with the ring finger and the middle finger immediately hit it with the index finger

khete: hitting it with the left hand and keeping it attached

daag: using only four fingers of the right hand to strike at it; left hand would be free

Ganesha - rhythm - Dadra dimension

	+	2	3	4	5	6
Uur	dhaak	daghen	gedad	daghen	taak	teta

7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Uur	dhadha	daghena		uur	dhadha	daghena		uur	dhadha	daghena	

34

This rhythm will rotate three times 18 X 3 = 54
After this ends Chail will start

Chail:

+	2	3	4	5	6

Uur taa ter-khet taa   uur taa ter-khet taa   uur taa ter-khet taa

Thaki:

	+	2	3	4	5	6

uur geda geren,   geda geren, geda geren

Kartik: Taal - Dadra - 6 meter dimension

+	2	3	4

jhaur   jheda   geda ghen   uur --- taak ter-khet taak

5	6	7	8

jhaur   jheda   geda ghen uur   taak ter-khet taak

9	10	11	12

dagedaghen   daa gedaghen   jhen   taak taaktaaktaaktaak

13	14	15	16

jhaur   jheda   gedaghen   jhaur   jheda   gedaghen

17	18

jhaur   jheda   gedaghen

Role of the singer & the instrumentalist:

Apart from doing their respective jobs, the singers and the musicians have another role here and that is to encourage the actors through their vocal orientation. This is a process by way of

which they excite the artists in performing even better by calling them by the name of ustaad (expert &skilled) and also to enhance the audience's curiosity.

It is also to remind the crowd that the character on stage is also an artist and also to discreet him from the characterc

Mask, Costume & other accessories:

The significance of mask in Chau is immense. Thinking about this art form without its mask is unimaginable. It's the mask which unites the artist with the character, it is also this component which justifies the character to the audience. This is a definable aspect of chau. The characters portrayed in Chau are all super humans - some are gods some are demonic but no one is effortless or straightforward rather all are possessor of phenomenal powers. To grasp that remarkableness, use of mask is vogue. When the artist wears the mask, the prodigal personality of the character is attributed to him. The artist can pull off the heaviness that comes with characters like Shiva, Durga, Parashuram.

Purulia's mask makers are mainly idol artificer. That's why the mask resembles the face of different gods and goddesses. Furnished face, round eyes, wide forehead, sharp nose and pointed chin- in one word classic and aristocratic beauty. Even the common place people are used to thinking these Puranic (ancient)character in a gracious manner so if they see that these characters are played by people like them it would be difficult for them to accept it. That's why the use of masks are also justified for this reason.

To both the artist and the audience the use of mask is justifiable, because it makes the character what it is; it acts as a metaphor. The ingredients that are used in making the masks are day to day simple and accessible items. Items are like papers, what-flour, clay, rugged cloth material etc. Using such minor tools they make such extraordinary masks.

The techniques of idol making have been explained in point:

1. molding the clay and then creating a frame for the mask using one's own hand
2. polishing the nose, eyes, ears, forehead, chin smooth with a wooden tool
3. using ash; it starts one hour after the previous process; using a big piece of cloth and pouring it with ash; after that sprinkling it all over the mask so that while lifting the mask any layer of paper does not stick to it.
4. now sprinkling pieces of paper on the frame using adhesive; it is done in two layers
5. sticking the frame of the mask with a cloth in just one layer on top of those paper pieces;
6. now the entire thing is coated with clay smoothly
7. using a sharp thin wooded stick the artist sharpens the eyes, nose, chin, of the mask to give it an edge

8. now comes the drying part where the maker would put the newly composed mask under the sun; there is no way of drying it in fire because it will damage the paper covering
9. after sun drying the artist needs to pinch out the mask from the frame
10. the last part of idol making is decorating it with necessary items and colors.

Illustration here mainly refers to painting with colors. first the entire face is to be colored then the eyes, corners of the nose, eyebrows, chin everything is drawn. Specific colors are drawn for specific kinds of masks.

- White - Shiva, Ganesha
- Red - Parashuram, Mahavir (monkey- god)
- Crimson(orange/yellow)- Durga
- Blue - Rama, Rakshasa(demons)
- Sky blue - Krishna, Arjun
- Green - Demonic characters
- Black - Kali, Ravana, Asura(demon)
- Cream colored- Kartik, king, queen, warriors
- Maroon - Keerat, keeratin

There are characters which might not have been mentioned in the list, those characters needs to be appropriately painted keeping in sync with the backdrop and the feature of the characters; if any character have similar features as the aforementioned ones will have similar color. For instance, the character of Chandi. According to classic texts Chandi is a form of goddess Durga so her mask would be colored crimson. On the contrary Chandi is not a Puranic character so her mask might be colored maroon so that her folklore gets prominence. Taking for instance the character of Ghatotkacha. He is a monster because his mother is a monster's daughter(succubus). But at the same time he is a heir of the Pandavas - so he is an Arya human clan. So his mask can be painted in green or blue with human features or even he can be illustrated in fair color with demonic features. This depends upon the decision and innovative skills of the artist.

Illustration is over now it's time to decorate. According to the needs, jewels for nose and ears are required. crowns and other such items are made of foils etc.

For the last forty years Chau has been making use of shed. This is made of the frame similar to the structure of the idol making. The frame is made of a thick wire; then according to the character type they are decorated with trinkets, bangles, glitters, feathers etc. It has to be made sure that the tip of the shed of

the mask should not touch the ground while jumps as it might damage the structure.

Costumes: Two types costumes are used in Chau- under garments and outer garments (undergarments does not refer to the day to day wearable; but rather dhoti and vest). Outer garments refer to the chest wears, knee length shoulder badges or elaborate waist bands.

Specific characters have specific costumes:

Durga- red sari

Laxmi- golden sari

Saraswati - yellow sari

Kali - Black sari

Sita- white sari with red borders

Keeratin- white sari

Ganesha- dhoti(loin cloth), sash

Kartik- white dhoti, and outer garments

Mahishasur- blue/green dhoti and outer garments

Shiva- yellow with black stripes typical of a tiger

Ram- yellow dhoti, sash

Laxman- dhoti

Raavan- black dhoti, outer garments

Krishna- light blue

Arjun- dark blue

Keerat- black & white dhoti, upper garments

Parashuram- red dhoti & sash

Saint- white or sandal colored dhoti

Female demons- black dhoti

Hermitage characters, saints, Shiva, Keerat- all this aforementioned characters do not use outer garments. Pandava characters, or forest dwellers like Ram would not use much clothes on the upper part but rather a single piece of cloth from one side of the shoulder to the waist. The character of Shiva would remain naked or use flesh of the tiger to cover himself . Keeratini would wear sari till knees. Other female characters would cover intimately with sari whereas the female demons would wear long skirts called choli.

Any other characters who are not mentioned in the above list even their costumes are made based on the backdrop and their characteristic features. For instance the character of Chandi whose costume has to be compatible with the color and form of the mask. In this case the artist's freedom to choose is recognized. The cloth with which the costumes of saintly and hermitage characters are of cotton whereas bright and satin materials are used for making the costumes of divine characters.

Along with the costumes decorative items like jewels and other accessories are also used :

For male characters, most of them will wear bright ribbons from their wrist toll the elbow which matches the color of their costume. Female characters would be using jewels. This jewels are made of same colors as of the costume and the materials are of glitters, trinkets, feathers. Simple & saintly characters would not use decorative items. The Keerat or Keeratini characters are embellished of peacock or hen feathers.

Animal Characters:The major animal characters that are used in Chau are tiger,bear, monkey, snake, vulture, lion, birds etc. Even their costumes stand as an important topic of discussion.

The costumes are made which looks

similar to the flesh of the respective animals. For the character of snake the

posterior portions are made of black or maroon cloth whereas the anterior

portions are made of white cloth in a shape of a tubular structure. The two risen

hands signifies the snake's venomous position. For other animals, costumes can

be made which covers the entire body or half sleeved upper garments are also

made for the upper part of the body whereas the lower part of the body remains

covered half garments; while the wrist, knees have seperate different coating.

For characters like cow & vulture their costumes are made of feathers, and for

decoration artificial wings and tails. All these depends upon the skills of the

artist and he has all the freedom to try out his own innovative skills.

Use of Accessories: Those items which are used by the actors for properly

giving their role exposure and also to enable their delicate characterization are

known as the accessorize items. There are accessories whose presence are

evident in chau as well.

handy items

extra body feature

sacred medium

Items to be used in hand: bow, arrow, trishul, sword, flute, and other arms and

weapons, this are used during various needs of the character

extra parts of the body: for characters like Durga, Kali, Ganesh extra hands are

created through two dimensional construction while making the idols;

characters like Brahma, Raavan, have more than ones heads which are again

made out of the masks. The masks should be made light weight so that it does not interrupt with the dance.

Sacred vehicles: The cavalier's horse, Kartik's sacred vehicle peacock etc. They will create a light weighted horse and tie it from the neck of the artist which creates an illusion to the audience that the character is actually riding a horse while performing; this can be created with any other animal like peacock. But it should be noted for the performer's convenience these are always made light weight. Among the accessories one more thing is important and that is 'ghungur'(metallic bells). Tying these around the feet adds a new level of grace and rhythm. It is said that due

to lack of skill the artists have abandoned the use of ghungur but this reason seems to be meaningless to many; this goes against the age old customs and its wrong even for the experts not to use them,

Stage: Stage refers to the place where the artist performs. It can be permanent or adjustable as well. Anywhere on the vast grounds they can construct a stage out of bamboos and put up the show. Most of the times the stages are rectangular in shape; stable and permanent circular stages are also possible(Lohoria Shiv temple at Ayodhya hills have a circular stage made of bricks and stones) ; JhaldarBamnia village also have a similar circular stage constructed. The Baaligara village also has a newly built stage in front of the Shiv temple which is rectangular and stable.

Therefore the stage for Chau are of two types:

rectangular & circular

Rectangular stage: it can be rectangular as well as square

Entry and exit points are one, this point can be at the middle or at any one corner. One stage might have two opening points but any one has to be used. The singers and instrumentalists would sit outside the stage and they would sit exactly opposite of where the artist enter from.

The audience can sit around anywhere except the entry point. For the convenience of the audience sitting at the back high positioned seats are installed as well which are actually made of bamboos.

Measurement of the stage:

squared stage- length and breadth 30-34 foot

rectangular stage- length 30-34 foot & breadth 28-30 foot

circular stage - 30-34 foot

Role of the Audience:

The audience would not just come for entertainment or appreciation; but they have an active participation in it. Their cooperation and active enthusiasm is what is expected out of their presence. They will help out in any need without any demand from their side. They assist the Chau community in various ways like if while dancing the dancers drop any item from their body the audience would either move that or will help them wear it or if the artists forget to bring anything with them they would bring that to the stage so on without any interruption. In short, they remain mentally prepared for any kind of work when needed, it's their duty and right.

Chau is a folk dance & drama, it's for the people and created by the people. Both the artist and the spectator or the listener are part of this creation. So both of them are equally in hands in case of any trouble during performance. So the help that the audience provides to the performers is their contribution from their hearts because they feel allied to the art. That's why the villagers of Purulia provides the chau performer's guild with feedbacks to improve their performances and they take these suggestions seriously as well. The audience sometimes play the instruments in case any of the instrumentalists are absent so as not to interrupt with the flow. If this sense of attachment gets lost then it would hamper the art immensely. New age audiences should learn some from them.

Reputable Chau Artists:

Haru Singh Mura - One of theprimogenitors of Chau; son- Jeepa Singh Mura

Bonu Thakur - He was a cook; he secretly learnt dance while at the lord's palace; resident of the Boram village

Jeepa Singh Mura - Resident of Charida; he was ousted by the king Baagmunda, it was a proverb that he could squeeze everyone i.e. everyone is petty to him. It was said that he was poisoned out of envy. he was famous for his role of Mahishasur. His only son was named Gambhir Singh Mura. His well known disciple were Laal Mahato, Madhu Bhatt.

PotolMahato - specialized in Raavan's form of dance

ChepaBauri - specialized in peacock form of dance

Satish Mahato - resident of Shitalpur village; expert in Abhimanyu's dance form

Dhenukdhari Singh - Expert in portraying a hermitage form of life

Hari Goyal - he was expert in portraying true sentiments

Shanu Thakur - resident of Boram village, one of the progenitors of Chau and son of Bonu Thakur

Pelu Singh - resident of Maankiyari village, one of the pioneers of Chau

Madhu Bhatt(Ray)- a Brahmin of Charida village, expert in mask making and drum playing; later shifted to Joypur'sDumurdi village. He was an expert in portraying the sentiment in his dance and also was a skilled actor of Arjun's and Keerats's character. The famous film maker RittwikGhatak made a documentary on his art and contribution towards Chau. He was born in1900 and died in 1978.

Gambhir Singh Mura - he lost his father at a very young age and was brought up under strict poverty at his uncle's house; his sole livelihood was cattle rearing, but from a very young age his observation and love for the animals and birds their mannerism is what made him an expert in emulating their gestures and actions. He even travelled abroad international recognition with the assistance of Pandit Ashutosh Bhattacharya. He received Padmashree award in 1981 and Sangeet Natak Academy award in 1983. He suffered from many physical ailments and at last recovered but while returning from Kolkata to Purulia after an eye surgery in 2001 he passed away in the train. He was an expert in the portrayal of character like Abhimanyu, Mahishasur, Keerat etc.

Mangal Suri - resident of Torang village

Surya Thakur - resident of Joypurastha Sriram

KuilaMuchi - resident of GhorabandhaSindri

Niranjan Mahato - along with a skilled dancer he was an expert in portraying saintly characters

Sitaram Mahato - resident of Dhanara village

Jiban Singh - resident of Bagmundi village

GobraHaari - villager of Hesla; it was said that his jumps did not break an earthen pot if he jumped upon it

RaasuHaari - resident of Balipara village; Chau art runs in his family, he learnt it from his father, he was an expert in the form of natua&daarh, he was also famous for his leaps and also was very aware of the rhythmic pattern

Madhu Pramanik - resident of Joynagar

Jyoti Mahato - resident of Ramnagar;

Tulsi - one of the most famous group dancers

Aadalot - One of the pioneers of group dance in chau

BhikaLaya - resident of Bagmundi

KalipadaMahato - redident of Baligara

Chutu Singh - He was a skilled artist in portraying the dance forms of different animals

Laal Mahato - resident of Ghorabandha - Sindari; he was the pioneer of hanumaan dance

All of the aforementioned artists have passed away.

Assessment:

Purulia's Chau is a successful folk art that has been practiced for a long time. It has a huge impact on the people and their culture. Purulia does not only have spectators but also have their artist, advisers, pioneers and so on. It's not an imposed culture rather it

has culminated from the deep roots of Purulia. It's very rare in there to find a person who does not love Chau. They knows each and every aspect of Chau, they could even tell about the weak points or the strength of the performers. As they appreciate an artist's powerful performance they all critically examine their dance. Chau and the lives of thousands of people of Purulia are interdependent, its their way of coping up with their circumstances.

As a dance form Chau is a very enriched and teeming cult; it has its own rhythm, own music, own dance patters and so on. Chau has four types of genres(gharana) beaming in it :

Bagmundi

Jhalda

Bandowan

Arsha

In Bagmundi genre, two elements creates a different taste mingling dance of the demons(asur) with Baji or Ulfa

Jhalda dance gave birth to group dance

Arsha gave emphasis on the ustaadi (skilled) dancing

In the genre of Bandowan, it merges frontier dance with tribal dance.

These four genres use different types of rhythm, dance forms and music, though in the present times all four genre have culminated into one and their only identity in that they are part of Chau dance.

Within Chau the dramatic elements have taken its own place. It could be compared with the Noah or Kabuki theatre. Like Noah's entry point Hashikagari or Kabuki's Hanamichi similarly Chau's entry point has also been created with the dramatic element in it. Now it gives rise to the tension amongst the audience that who will enter? How will he enter?

All the characters in Chau are type characters i.e. the audience identifies with him one he enters the stage. Here Chau is compared to Italy's dramatic art form Commedia Dal Arte.

Chau is not only a dance form but also a traditional theatre. This tradition that exists within chau is invaluable and should be cherished. Even with changes occurring

everyday Chau has retained its customs and tradition intact. At the beginning of each performance the playing of the instruments, the tour of the stage, the entry and exit techniques, the introduction of characters, their costumes, masks and so on has given Chau its true identity. It is this tradition which has saved Chau in spite all the crushing of the new civilization.

The Jhumur songs featuring various divine characters have been put here straight from pg 31 onwards:

অর্জুন ঃ হিমালয় উপরে অর্জুন তপঃকরে
পাশুপাত লভিবারে
কীরাতকীরাতিনীর বেশে হরগৌরীএসে
পাশুপাত দিল তারে হে।। (ছন্দ ত্রিপদী)

কীরাত ঃ শিকারিক বাজন বাজহৌ
সঙ্গি জুড়িসবাই যা হৌ
তেগেধনিলোহাকের মুঠিয়াগে
হামি যাইব অযোধ্যা শিকারে।। (ছন্দ পয়ার)

মহিষাসুর ঃ মহিষাসুর দৈত্যপতি মর্ত্তভূমে রাখিখ্যাতি
স্বর্গপুর যায় বীর করিতে আক্রমণ
শুন শুন সভাজন - করি নিবেদন।। (ছন্দ পয়ার)