

Gavaniyar

artists from the Thar



In the sand of Thar, lives a rich and vibrant tradition of folk art in the form of rhythms, melodies, colours, puppets and passion of the artists who have enchanted the desert for thousands of years. These performers not just entertained but also documented through them- the tales, memories, hue and a Thar way of life, an idea that forms the crucial part of collective cultural understanding of the Thar society.



In 80's, sudden socio-cultural changes, including the new media forced this clan of artists into a gross challenge like never before. The mandate was clear, these artists had to take a call. It used to be 'perform and earn the livelihood' but suddenly it changed to 'either perform or earn the livelihood'.

Some decided to migrate to cities, continue as manual labour and get unplugged from where they came from. While those who stayed back couldn't help themselves sliding into the hands of poverty and insecurity.



In the early 90's, Urmul Trust, a social organisation working in Thar desert, recognized the need of a forum where these folk artistes could come together and explore possible solutions. Thus Gavaniyar was born.

Artistes from various parts of Thar joined the group and with some skill enhancement, training and exposure to new possibilities- we were ready to seek sustainable solutions to the problems on our own. Ever since, the Gavaniyaar has been committed to working with the marginalized communities of folk musicians in the Thar of Rajasthan.

Gavaniyar helps artistes earn a livelihood through their art; in turn improving the quality of life and restoring lost dignity and the community status. Most important of all is a fresh motivation to pass on this legacy to their children.





Restoring dignity and life...

Gaavaniyar, so far, has successfully created a prototype of income generation using traditional forms of folk expression and eliminating costly middlemen. We are regularly trying to develop greater artistic, marketing, management and production skills in order to reach new audiences and expand the possibilities for our craft. Diverse approaches and collaborative support would expand the Gaavaniyar platform for hundreds of more artistes, in turn, inspiring a change at various level of markets and patrons.



Gaavaniyar works at two levels simultaneously by giving services to social organizations for their campaigning activities on one hand and doing commercial performances at various destinations in the country, on the other. This ranges from social issues including - Education, Health, Environment, Children's and Women rights, to Folk music, Drama, Puppetry, Sufi, Folk Dance. Some of the newer initiatives include music albums for commercial distribution, development of new range of Paper Maché products.



Gaavaniyar would now like to embark on a systematic effort to locate and groom young artists from the traditional performing communities, and open up more livelihood opportunities for them.



if you are interested in learning more about Gaavaniyar, purchasing crafts or inviting artists to perform, please contact us,

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While Gaavaniyar is firmly rooted in the folk tradition of Rajasthan, it is constantly evolving with effects far reaching. Deeply committed to individual artists, Gaavaniyar works to preserve a vibrant heritage while seeking innovative solutions to current challenges. It is enabling a growing number of artists to pursue a dignified livelihood while keeping their arts alive.