

Report: Tonk Arts India Festival- TARIF 2017



Tarraqi I Foundation (TiF) had organized a four day **Tonk Arts India Festival-TARIF 2017** from 16th to 19th October at the Regional Public School, Tonk to promote Art and Heritage of Tonk; encourage the local Artists and Youth to develop their talents further and to create/strengthen Arts and Heritage based entrepreneurship and employment. Coinciding with the auspicious festival of **Diwali**, the title of the Festival was “**Jashne e Chiraghan’ (Festival of Lights)** with the theme being, “**Tonk- A Lamp of Diverse Arts, Brotherhood & Peace**”.

Competitions in Calligraphy, Floral Art, Embroidery and Char Bait- a famous oral art form of Tonk were organized. Winners were awarded prizes and certificates. **Mr. Amir Abidi, Director (TiF)** stated that this festival shall be held annually to identify and promote Arts and Artists from Tonk at various National & International Festivals/Exhibitions. On the concluding day an exhibition of the Artwork was put up and the exhibits were greatly appreciated by the visitors.

The Chief Guest was **Dr. Hyder Khan** from USA who is an Art Aficionado and Educationist. A medical doctor with over 40 yrs of professional experience he is now based in Chicago. He is actively involved in various social and educational efforts and has been at the forefront in the development of Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC) & US India Policy Institute (USIPI). He was accompanied by Mr. Jawwad Ali Khan from Chicago, Mr. Nazar Mohammad Khan from New York and Mr. Syed Yusuf Tanvir from Hyderabad. The event was attended by many eminent personalities of Tonk such as **Major Anwar Shah, Dr. Shaukat Ali, Dr. Saholat Ali (Director-APRI), Mr. Sitaram Gupta, Mr. Ashok Kumar Meena, Mr. Ashok Saxena, Mr. Yusuf Aijazi (Director-Regional Public School), Mr. Rizwan Aijazi (Pali), Prof. Shamsi Tehrani (Renowned poet and intellectual), Eminent scholars like Maulana Umar, Maulana Qamar, Mufti Khizr and Master Calligraphers like Maulana Jameel, Mr. Khurshid. Mr. Jafar Raza.**

While TiF in Tonk has been facilitating coaching and guidance of Class 9-12th students in Maths, Science, English and Life Skills besides facilitating workshops for School Leaders and Teachers for the last 5 years through the **Tarraqi GAIN Centre**

and its other projects, this was our much cherished and an **important first step towards preserving and promoting the Arts and Artists of Tonk.**

We greatly appreciate the **gracious and warm support extended by Dr. Hyder Khan for this programme.** While the scale of this year's programme given the budget was small and may not compare to the Mega Events (with corporate funding) which happen in big cities but we sincerely did try to keep the quality and process of assessing and presentation to a high standard which in Tonk was unprecedented and much appreciated.

On 16th October, the **first day of the Festival an Embroidery/Hand painting/Crochet competition** was held. Highlight of the competition was Amtul Apa and her students who had created the famous 'Batuas' of Tonk. Once lovingly made in every household for every occasion and taste now there are only a few masters left. Similarly there were artists of of hand painted flowers and soothing ashar (verses) on pillow covers, dastarkhwan and khonposh; Ladies and girls with embroidery and crochet skills passed through generations.

16th Oct, Day 1 TARIF Embroidery and Crafts Competition



The second day of the Festival (17th October) was dedicated to Calligraphy and Art work created by young Artists/Calligraphers. The theme given was " Tonk-Ganga Jamuni Tehzeeb aur Aman ka Chiragh" (Tonk- A lamp of Diversity, Brotherhood and Peace). Tonk, once a world renowned centre for Calligraphy has only a handful of Master Calligraphers left now. Very few youth are now interested and practising the Art. These works and more will be displayed at India International Centre, New Delhi on 1st Dec 2017.

17th Oct, Day 2 TARIF Calligraphy & Floral Art Competition



The evening of the **third day of the Festival resonated with 'Char Bait'**, an oral art form with origins in ancient Arabia & Afghanistan evolved and amalgamated through cultures and centuries and acquired its unique Hindi expression in Tonk enjoyed, participated as much by the elite as by the commoners. Today, there are only a handful of narrators/composers left and the great literary art form is gasping for survival.

18th Oct, Day 3 TARIF 'Jashn e Chaghan' Char Bait performance



TiF is striving to revive 'Char Bait' to infuse in the youth of Tonk self confidence, empathy, language and communication skills, spontaneity, general awareness, perspectives etc. We shall be introducing it back in the schools/colleges/madarsas for developing language skills in students both written and communicative since it is a versatile medium to share about current events, ecology, social issues et al. We intend to also use this as a **nurturer of cultural and communal harmony**.

We had to argue and reiterate even with many so called 'educationists' and 'school leaders' that what we are trying to do is not harp on past glory or promote 'decadent culture'. **We have been emphasizing on 'holistic development' , 'identity and self confidence' and 'multiple intelligences' and how all the aspirational schools and wise educationists across the world focus as much on Arts and Sports as they on Academics.**

We are elated that many learned scholars 'Ulama' were very supportive and honoured that some of the most respected ones **Maulana Umar Sb** (who now 80+ has done his Masters from JNU in the 70's after his Aalimiyat from Nadwa) and **Muft Qizr sb** (Imam of Shahi Jama Masjid, Tonk) among others were most appreciative.

We are very hopeful that in future the School Leaders, Educationist, Community Leaders of Tonk like **Major Anwar Sb**. (who opened his own house to host our guests from abroad who otherwise may have to drive back to Jaipur for night rest given the lack of decent Hotels in Tonk) ; **Dr Saholat** (Director- Arabic Persian Research Institute who proactively and warmly guided us in identifying and inviting the Calligraphers and Char Bait Artists and **Mr. Yusuf Aijazi** (who graciously

allowed us to not just use his premises but also actively supported in the arrangements along with his School team) will come forward to host and support such events meaningfully.

19th Oct - Day 4-TARIF Prize Distribution Ceremony and Exhibition



We have sent the concept note of TARIF to many Organizations/ Art aficionados whom we thought would be interested to support both by extending a grant and/or partnering by hosting the Artists in this and other Festivals/Exhibitions. We have received confirmation from **Ms. Smita Vats, Director-ITIHAAS** who have invited us to present 'Char Bait' at their annual event on 1st Dec at IIC, New Delhi.

TiF is a non profit organization and this initiative needs support to develop. Those wishing to contribute with funds please contact us. You could support the initiative by organizing exhibition in your city and/or connect us with relevant people. You could also volunteer and do internship strengthening the effort with your ideas and skills.

Meanwhile, we request to like the TARIF FB page for regular updates and also share this report as well as the YouTube videos to show your support for the initiative.

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Creations at TARIF by young Artists/Calligraphers/Embroiderers of Tonk



For more pics and videos check out TARIF fb page.