# Pandavani Art Form & Teejan Bai

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## Why in News?

*The passing of legendary folk singer and Padma Vibhushan awardee Teejan Bai on July 5, 2026, at the age of 70, marks the end of an era for Pandavani.*

## Teejan Bai

- Teejan Bai, who elevated Pandavani from a localised, rural performance to a globally celebrated art form, passed away in Raipur.
- Born into the Pardhi Scheduled Tribe, she broke severe gender barriers in her youth to perform the highly physical ***"Kapalik" style*** of Pandavani, which was traditionally restricted to men.
- **Highest Honors –**
  - Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1995),
  - Padma Shri (1988),
  - Padma Bhushan (2003), and
  - Padma Vibhushan (2019).

## Pandavani

- It is an ***ancient, soul-stirring musical narration*** of the Mahabharata from Chhattisgarh.
- **Etymology -** The word is derived from "*Pandava*" (the five heroic brothers of the Mahabharata) and "*Vani*" (voice or speech), translating literally to "the voice of the Pandavas".
- **Theme -** Rather than reciting the entire Sanskrit epic, a Pandavani performer enacts selected high-drama episodes focusing on themes of
  - Heroism,
  - Duty (*dharma*),
  - Justice, and
  - Devotion.

- The adventures of Bhima typically occupy the central focus of these local versions.
- The performance is rendered in the vibrant Chhattisgarhi dialect, heavily relying on musical accompaniment, dramatic voice modulation, and facial expressions.
- It is typically a solo-lead theatrical act supported by a chorus of musicians playing the *tabla*, *harmonium*, *manjira*, and *kartal*.

**Reference**

The Hindu | Pandavani & Teejan Bai