

Music And Dance Tradition of Odisha - Quest for Odia Identity

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Odisha is a divine land of art, architecture and religion. The land is also known as land of synthetic culture, where Lord Shree Jagannath, the Lord of Universe is worshipped, Jagannath cult preaches equality, fraternity and peace, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. The artistic sensibility of Odias has been well reflected in art and architectures of world famous temple at Konark, Rajarani at Bhubaneswar, Shree Jagannath of Puri, Lingaraj at Bhubaneswar and of many monuments and rock, caves. The artists of Odisha not only excelled in architecture, but also in performing arts. The musical tradition of Odisha had a glorious past, dating back from 1st Century B.C. where the emperor Kharavela ruled Kalinga whose territorial boundary was spread from Ganga to Godavari river in south. The documentary evidence of Odishan ancient musical tradition has been discovered and deciphered in the famous "Hatigumpha inscription of Udayagiri, Khandagiri hills situated in the western side of the temple city Bhubaneswar. In this Hatigumpha inscription (called elephant cave) has been carved in Prakrit, language with Brahmi Lipi, which delineates that the then Emperor, known as Kalingadhipati Kharavela was a great patron of Gandharva Kala (Music dance). Though Emperor, Kharavela was an ardent devotee of Jainism, his religious tolerance and love of art,

music and dance of Odisha made him the most popular ruler of Kalinga. He constructed nearly 117 caves at Khandagiri and Udayagiri with artistic sculptural excellence.

It is worthwhile to know the origin and evolution of ancient musical tradition of Odisha with an object of shaping the continuous enrichment of Odishan music. In this context it is necessary to know what has been written in this Hatigumpha inscription regarding this Gandharva art ? The fifth line of Hatigumpha inscription reads as follows.

"Expert in Gandharva Veda Kharavela arranged for entertainment of his subjects, the musical items such as DAPA (combat), NATA(dance) GITA (music), VADITA (orchestra), USABA (festival), SAMAJA (Play or dramas, SAMAJ Jatra)". These words as reflected in Hatigumpha inscription, coupled with clear evidence of interesting scenes in RANIGUMPHA caves depicting dancing performance of beautiful female dancers clearly show the beauty and grandeur of performing art specially musical tradition where an orchestra party with four seated figures - one playing on DHAKA, one playing on Mridanga, the third one on the lyre and last one playing flute. Dhiren Das, a great scholar dramatist has observed in his book

JATRA that Hatigumpha was arena theatre. Prof N.K. Sahoo, the well known historian of Odisha has opined and narrated- “The dancing scene presents a feeling of exhilaration, grace and depicts the spirit of the Hatigumpha inscription where Kharavela has been represented as great lover of dance and music.

Thus the musical tradition as reflected in Hatigumpha inscription of 1st century B.C. flourished gradually with royal patronage of rulers of Kalinga state. During Gupta and Bhoumakar Dynasty, spanning from 681 AD to 717 AD many talented enlightened Gurus and Acharyas, wrote “Boudhagan” Doha in Prakrit mixed with Odia colloquial language.

Kanhupa, wrote “Naujata Charjya” in Kamodi Raga. Sabaripad wrote “Sabar Sabari Prema Charjya” and Luipa wrote- “Kayataru Charjya” The Charjya were written on palm manuscripts in Brahmi Lipi. These evolutions of Odia language and music developed with rich oral tradition. In the ancient temples, many scenes of instruments such as Veena, Flute, Mardala, Dambaru, Kahali, Mrudanga indicate that, these instruments of music were prevalent and popular among the Odia people.

Poet Jayadev, a great musician scholar in Sanskrit and an ardent devotee of Lord Jagannath wrote his magnum opus “Geeta Gobinda” which were sung with dance at Nata Mandap of Sri Jagannath temple during the period of rule of Chodagangadev by Debadasis. Jaydev became the most famous musician of Odisha in 12th century. In 13th century A.D. “Sangadeb” wrote a book on music titled “Sangeet Ratnakar”. In 15th Century very well known Odia Sanskrit scholar Biswanath Kabiraj wrote a book named “Sahitya Darpana” in Sanskrit. In this book in separate chapter the subject of music was discussed with types of notations and *ragas*.

Sarala Das the epic poet of Odia Mahabharat in 15th Century has also enlightened the Odia reader/with prevailing musical Odia *ragas*. Many poets and singers of medieval period have also enriched Odishan music by composing musical songs. Ray Ramananda, Krushna Das, Madhabi Das, Dina Krushna Das, Gopal Krushna, Bhakta Charana Das, Kabi-Surya Baladeb Ratha, Banamali Das, Biswanath Khuntia and Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja have also enriched Odia musical songs. Dhirendranath Patnaik, a noted connoisseur of art and dance and music has opened in his famous book ‘Odissi Nrutya’ that Odissi music originated and propagated more extensively with advent of MAHARI and GOTIPUA dance of Odisha. The search for Odia identity having classical nature of Odia music was started first by Kalicharan Pattanayak, a poet play-wright scholar and theatre man of Odisha. He started a theatre movement for revival of new identity of Odia music in forties and fifties. He founded “Orissa theatre” in 1939 and introduced Odia music in his plays. Thus “Orissa theatre” brought new innovation in theatre and enriched Odia theatre blending with Odissi music and Odissi dance. His untiring effort of enriching Odia theatre, dance and music during fifties made him a popular leader in Odia performing art. His zeal and vigour in establishing Odia identity in Odishan music in national seminar held in January 1958 in Madras are praiseworthy. At Kala Vikas Kendra, Cuttack Babulal Joshi deputed Kalicharan Patnaik to Madras to present a paper in national seminar on music of Odisha. Kalicharan Patnaik’s paper on Odia music emphasized speciality of Odia music with practical demonstration of Odissi songs, especially Champu songs. His paper was highly praised by scholars on music. In this seminar, he proved that Odia music has got speciality, that was indigenous characteristics of Chhandas, Champu and

Chautisa. Kalicharan Patnaik, while showing difference between Carnatic music and Odissi music advocated that Odissi music has indigenous *ragas* like Nisari, Kuduma which are not found in other school of music in India. Chhandas written in Raga Chokhi are exclusively Odishan in its style. In this Madras Seminar Kalicharan Pattnayak, categorically declared that Odia School of music is distinctively different from Carnataki and Hindustan music.

In his autobiography “Kumbhara Chaka” Kalicharan Patnaik has narrated the minutes of discussion, arguments, questions and answers about Odia school of music. Many learned scholars of music who were unaware of speciality of Odia music admitted the classicism of Odia music.

Time has come to face the challenges of globalization in this 21st century, when regional traditional valuable cultural, literary, Musical tradition are being crushed and relegated to oblivion by aggressive consumerist culture. The advent of internet, mobile, social media like face book, twitter have attracted new generation who are not willing to hear traditional classical musical songs like Champu, Chhandas and Chaupadis.

The entertainment industry, like TV, Cinema and TV serials are also now a day’s being vulgarized with sensuous item song.

The craze of the youth for western music like pop, jazz, rock and rapine associated with primary ingredients of “Hip Hop culture” is increasing day by day. That is why time has come to infuse our youth with beauty and grandeur of own traditional music which has got still relevance in this present world of performing art.

Relevance of traditional Music

Many dramatists, composers, musicians have made experiments with revival of regional

folk music and traditional music. In the world of Indian theatre movement Habib Tanvir, a great director and actor used Indian folk music i.e. Chhatisgarh music in his play “Charan Das Chor” and got worldwide recognition when staged at Paris. In Maharastra Vijay Tendulkar, another great dramatist, used Marathi Music in his famous play Ghasiram Kotwala and also got worldwide acclaim in Berlin when this play was staged. The use of Marathi music with Chorus songs made that play popular and successful in both East as well as in the West. The relevance of regional traditional music is now felt by artists, and musicians in production of modern plays. Any music, whether folk or classical has got wide appeal if it is properly blended with modern theatre. Similarly in some modern films, some classical music has attracted audience. In all countries, now there is new slogan-”go back to basics”. That means in any form of performing art one artist or actor or musician has to go deep to know his or her roots of tradition. Hallucinated by western way of life of western consumerist culture, Indian youth including Odia youth should now make special endeavour to study own language, literature to know the nuances of dance and music. Let our doors to western world be open, but we have to choose the subject which is healthy to our tradition.

There is no bar to hear Jazz or adore pop queen Madonna for her western song, but too much obsession with western music of Madonna, Britney Spears and Beatles are not healthy sign of modern humanistic culture. Once upon a time song and dance of Michael Jackson who was the King of Pop attracted our youths. He was so much popular that youth were in love with Jackson dress and style. At this critical stage of crisis of values every state or country has to frame its cultural policy. Thus cultural policy should give stress for revival of indigenous from of music, dance and

art craft. I think that some enlightened intelligentsia, writers, poets, musician should form Non-Govt. Cultural Organization (NGO) for revival of own cultural values. In Odisha literary stalwart like Fakir Mohan Senapati a great writer who started language movement, saved Odia language from onslaught of Bengali, Hindi and Telugu. Similarly, Bichhanda Charan Patnaik a great connoisseur of Art started also movement to save Odia literature from going away from classical literature. He started “Kalinga Bharati” which still works for revival of Bhanja literature.

In Odisha there are a number of very talented musicians, like Guru Prafulla Kar, Guru Gopal Panda, Guru Ramhari Das, Guru Bijay Kumar Jena, Guru Keshab Chandra Rout, Sunanda Patnaik, Shyamamani Devi, Pranab Pattnaik, Himansu Sekhar Swain, Dr. Mitali Chinara, Trupti Das, Subhash Das who can make road map for increasing popularity and mass acceptance of Odia music. In my opinion, a new

school of Odissi Music should be established with twin objective of educating, creating awareness and rendering aesthetic pleasure in the present day of decadent social and cultural values, where Odia youths are bewildered as to which way of life they should choose to get happy and peaceful life.

Let us think and ponder over the problems of degeneration of values and how to use music as a therapy to our restless westernised youth who have forgotten Odia mother tongue and own culture.

Indu Bhusan Kar, Sraddha Nivas, 1595, Bhaktamadhu Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751030.

GOVT. TO HARNESS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN HEALTH, FOOD PROCESSING AND MANUFACTURING SECTORS

In another bid towards enhancing the scope of employment for youths, Govt. of Odisha has initiated steps for harnessing of emerging employment opportunities in health, food processing and manufacturing sectors. To this effect, Chief Secretary Shri Gokul Chandra Pati inaugurated a State level interactive workshop on Placement Linked Training Programme (PLTP) organized by State Employment Mission. Various stakeholders like Training provider Institutions, Industries, employers, policy makers, field officers from different parts of Odisha participated in this workshop.

In his inaugural address he emphasized on qualitative training and NCVT certification for the trainees. He said that major part of the training should be imparted in actual workplace with hands on practices and practical exposures. NCVT certification will provide trainees the scope for more specialization at higher levels. They can get employment both within and outside the State as well as the country. Chief Secretary asked the industries to make available their workshops and production centres for practical training of the trainees with adequate safety measures. He also advised the companies, corporations and industries to have a continued training programme for regular updating and skill enhancement of existing employees for maximization of output and production.

Outlining the objectives of the workshop, Secretary, Employment and Training & Technical Education Dr. C.S. Kumar said, “there is need for regular interaction between the Industries and Training imparting agencies for more effective training and placement”. Dr. Kumar added that the new employment opportunities are now emerging in Healthcare, Food Processing and Manufacturing sectors. He requested to Training providers to start training in these sectors. He also said that Government intends to empanel more number of agencies to impart skill training in these sectors.

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