



Daskathia - A Birds Eyeview

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'Daskathia' is one of the existing trend of folk dramas like Yatra (plays), Lila, popular plays (farce) in the path of development of Odia drama. Though Odia drama has reached at the top of experiments or progress/development now-a-days we can't forget the importance of folk drama. The immense impact/use of 'Daskathia' is also represented in today's play/drama. The plays of modern era have represented their theme through 'Daskathia'. The role and importance of Daskathi in modern drama is indicated by kind of flash back technique. The subject of Daskathia is generally collected from the myth throwing lights upon the classical form of it. Dr. Hemanta Kumar Das says - Love - affection, war, desert are the subjects selected for this purpose.

Birth of Daskathi

D a s k a t h i originated in selected regions, though it became a popular art all over Odisha. Taking birth in Ganjam District of Southern Odisha, it spread all over Odisha. Critics are silent about the time of its creation. It took birth from a deteriorated spiritual collision/friction.

'Daskathi' originated from the mutual friction of Hindu and Muslim religion. When Muslim religion gained ascendance over Hindu religion, Hindu religion took the help of Baishnab ideology / principle to make its culture, monument and tradition live forever. When one part of the Baishnab religion gave emphasis on Lord Krishna', the other part of it gave emphasis on Lord Rama'. Daskathi took birth from this consciousness. Folk drama has opposed against



the defamation of Muslim religion and through Daskathi. So the period of Daskathi may be taken as the first part of seventeenth century because the hostility between Hindu religion Muslim religion



resulted in communal riot from the Aurangjeb reign.

'Daskathi' was born for the purpose of adoration of Lord Rama. Ramalila has a great influence over it. The meaning of Daskathi is a stick of Das' (slave), i.e., the stick by which Hanuman, the servant of Lord Rama could satisfy this dear Lord's heart. There is an amazing folk tale regarding the origin of Daskathi'.

During the interval of the representation of a topic/theme, in order to give some space the man repeating in harmony adds some ridiculous / proverbs / banter, some-times questions are asked to the singers. The singer tries this level best to answer these questions. The singer put the narration to an end after further adoration of the Lord. Several Gods and Goddesses are placed in this adoration in the language of the writer Prahallad Panigrahi.

Nature of Daskathia

There are some attachment to two pieces of sticks. It is performed by the help of a couple of sticks with two hands. The faintly performed dance, song and musical instrument is known as Daskathia. Some say it 'Daskathis' however this 'Daskathi' or Diskathia consists of two persons. He who performs the song or plays the important role is known as singer/Gayak or Gahana and he who repeats the last stanza of the song is called as Palia'. When the 'Gahana' cites different types of poem stanza from mythology, the 'palia' having cited satire, chorus and different proverbs entertaining the audience with a view to give the Gahana/Gayak a temporary break.

The success of Daskathia depends upon the skill/talent or citation of the 'Gayak'. Basic differences between Daskathi and Pala' are manifold. The contents of both Daskathi and Pala are same. Both of them collect the findings/ means from the pages of the Ramayana and the

Mahabharata. The birth of both these epics is to satisfy the spiritual thirst of people and to make their heart filled with thought provoking ideas. The basic difference between 'Daskathi' and 'Pala' lies on the person and the musical instruments. There is a Gahana and a 'Palia' in 'Daskathi' where as in a Pala there is a Gahana but there are more than one Palia. He who play the Mridanga is one of the five or six members. The other 'Palias' plays the cymbals (Jhanja) or makes clapping. Daskathi is considered to be the main musical instrument on the other hand 'Mridanga' is vital in Pala. The Gayak, the Bayak and the Palias move keeping pace with a harmony of Mridanga. It was all about standing Pala/ (thia Pala) or Satyanarayan puja 'thia puja. Except the aforesaid Pala there are other types of Pala named as 'Pothi puja' or Pothi Pala'. Lord Satya Narayana is worshipped in this Pala. There is no need of any or decorative expensive stage for both Pala and Daskathia. Both can be performed at any place. Some difference regarding the origin of the two are that Pala took birth from the assemblance of Hindu and Muslim Culture where as the birth of Daskathia is from the hostility of religion and culture of the two. Baring a little difference between the two, the voice of Pala and Daskathia is almost same.

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