Folk strands in Sanskrit dramas - A study based on bhana

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Abstract
Sanskrit plays are usually termed as Rupaka. There are ten different Rupaka that enriches the plays with its own peculiarities. They have scientific lakshana as per Bharata’s Natyasastra and other interpretations those came after it. Uparupakas are also mentioned by Bharata in his text Natyasastra. Uparupakas were well defined and interpreted later by other eminent scholars who followed Bharata. Uparupakas are small performances within Rupaka performed according to the lakshana of Natya, Nritta and Nritya. Uparupakas keeps on changing and later turned into Rupakas. It means course of time Uparupakas merged in Rupaka and they became less important in its own and this resulted in the wide acceptance of Rupaka among performers and audiences. It is lead to Uparupaka became extinct. In this paper discussed that the influence of the folk element in Bhana and its origin and development stage.

Keywords: Bhana, drama, folk, natyasastra, rupaka, uparupaka

Introduction
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Though Uparupaka gave more importance to sentiments in plays they lacked emotionally rich performance. Word to word explanations made by the performers is the major peculiarity of Uparupakas. They are also mentioned as Padarthaabhinaaya (word meaning acting). Some of the eminent interpreters noted that Uparupakas can play crucial roles in creating rich emotions in Rupakas and gave importance to Uparupakas while writing plays. The writers who supported Uparupakas and classified it into eighteen. One among those scholars was Visvanatha who lived in AD 14[10], considering the attractiveness and importance of Uparupakas he classified them into eighteen with his own style and interpretations, namely Totaka, Natika etc.

Uparupakas were developed so as to influence the emotional feelings of spectators. They got prominence because of their Raga and Kavya elements. Raga Kavya Uparupakas had reached its peak as it dealt with the characters, themes, plots, emotional story situations and apt timely changes adopted by the writers. Compared to the depth of Rupakas, though rich in content Uparupakas remained as Uparupakas even they had strong similarities with Rupakas.

Uparupakas were classified according to dance emotions and theme. Rasaka, Hallisaka, Nartanaka, Chalika and Samyalasya gave importance to dance performance[11]. Natika, Sattaka, Prakaranika, Trotaka gave importance to reactions and emotional feelings. Nataka and Prakara are the two main Rupakas among the classification of Dasarupaka. Play historians considered Uparupaka as by-product of Rupaka. Scholars namely Bharata, Dhananjaya and Visvanatha had the same opinion on Rupaka and Uparupaka. Natika gave only less importance to male characters. It gave prominence to the emotions of female characters and also to sentiments, dance and speech more than lalitabhinaya.
So Natika is considered as predecessor of Nataka. The key element and main objective of Rupaka and Uparupaka is to express Rasa. Thus body movements and emotions are used to create Rasa. Uparupakas that give Rasa can be seen at emotionally rich scene of Uparupakas. There are too many situations in which Rasa is expressed in dance based Uparupakas. Thus Sanskrit plays got emotional richness apart from body movements and became Rasa- Bhava based performances.

It is clear from the above stated facts that Uparupakas played a crucial role in the development and totality of drama. There is no clear evidence to prove that Uparupakas were derived from Rupakas. To express Rasa in Rupaka, emotions and sentiments etc of Uparupakas were merged into Rupakas.

Folk Strands in Bhana
Bhana is one of the most important Rupaka among Dusrupaka. It is the Rupaka which have more folk elements compared to all other nine Rupaka. Bhanika is considered as the Uparupaka of Bhana. Bhanika is structured in a way to awake the Rasa, Bhava and emotional sentiments. Story and Characters of Bhanika made the audience enthralled as the Lasyanga and Sandhyanga is combined together in the Uparupaka.[vi]. Most of the characters in this Uparupaka perform similar to folk arts.

Bhanika performance use masks on stage to present characters especially that of animals. Martial arts, war scenes, games and other entertainments are performed on the stage in Bhanika. Different kind of songs and dialogues are also presented on the stage. These scenes and masks performed by artists in Bhanika can be seen in different classical dances we see today. From these facts it can be stated that for the development of those classical dances Bhanika had played its role. The popularity of those classical dances is the result of folk elements that are incorporated in those dances. Because of folk elements in the Uparupaka it helped its Bhana to develop completely. Among Sanskrit plays, Bhana is the first model to consider folk elements.[iv].

Nritta and Lasya in Bhana
Bhana give more importance to Nritta and Lasya. Folk elements are also mostly seen in this Nritta and Lasya. Though Nritta and Lasya can be seen in other Rupakas like Nataka and Prakarana when compared to Bhana it is less. In Bhana there are four types of Nritta and eleven types of Lasya. It may because of the influence of Nritta and Lasya that existed at that time.

Lasya
Lasya is considered as a folk element because of it is originated from mimicking. As it has elements of old and popular mimicking elements it is clear that it had strong relation with lay man and his life. The Lasya become popular because of its rich content of emotional sentiments in performances. Drisya, Sravya and Ranjana are the three factors that are included in Uparupakas. To retain the freshness and simplicity in conveying ideas to spectators Lasya and Lasyanga became an unavoidable factor in Rupakas. Ten different types of Lasyanga namely Geyapadam, Sthithapathyam, Asinapathyam, Pushpagandhika, Prachchedika, Trinmudhaka, Saindhavavahaka, Dvirdhaka, Uttramottamakam and Uktapratyaktagta[vii], is seen commonly in Rupakas. But Bharata enumerates and defines twelve Lasyangas[vii].

Nritta
Nritta is another folk element of Bhana. Like Lasyanritta too have its prominence in Bhana. Nritta is placed in Bhana to enrich the performance. Spectators of those times appealed for dance performances in Bhana. Keeping this in mind the play writers incorporated dance performance with caution so that Lasya and Nritta have equal importance.

There are four types of Nritta in Bhana namely Gulma, Sringalika, Lata and Bhedyaka. Out of it Gulma and Sringalika are based on Nritta. The other two Lata and Bhedaka are based on Ntya[viii]. Gulma- It is a group dance and it is also known as Pindhibandha. Sringalika - Performed in a chain formation. Artists hold hands each other while performing the dance. Lata– It is a performance by two artists. Bhedaka– Performed individually.

Other Nritta and Lasya Elements seen in Bhana
Bhana is the only Rupaka that present a whole dance on stage. Different dance prevailed in those decades are incorporated in Bhana. Though cultural and language differences were there all of them had folk elements in it.

As ten Lasyanga mentioned in Natyasastra we can see ten Desi Lasyangas in Sangia Raniakara by Sangadeva. They are Cali, Calivida, Ladihi, Suka, Uronganam, Dhasakam, Angaharam, Oyaram, Vilas and Mana. Nrittaratnavali written by Jayasenapatii also mention other types of Lasyanga. Sangitadarpana written by Damodara mentions about an order of concert with twelve sessions namely Mukhacali, Yatirittam, Sabdhacali, Udapadhruva, Soudasadbbha, Kavadha, Gita, Sindh, Desikatari, Vaipota and Sabdhaniuttta. Sangitamuktavali by Devanacaryan describes another format of concert with thirteen sessions namely Pushpanjali, Mukhacali, Sudhayatinrittam, Ragangayatinrittam, Sabdhaniuttta, Rupanritttam, Devanrittam, Sabdhacali, Sudagttam, Gitaprabandham, Sindh, Daru, Dhrupad. It is clear from these facts that these dance forms with folk elements were popular in those times. Apart from those dance forms Gondhali, Perani, Premkhamam, Sivapiyya, Kollattam, Kanthukanrittam, Sindh, Bhandika, Caranarinnittam, Jakkini dance forms were also mentioned in the book. Most of these are seems to be the art forms of different communities.

Gondus or Gondali s are the tribal community (Hunters) of Maharashstra. Gondhali is the developed form of their dance. Jayasenapatii has noted that Somesara, the king of Kalyan who saw the Gondhali dance later made it into a well structured one. Gondhali is performed by playing the instrument Trivali by the performer himself or not. Melapkkam, Pushpanjali is performed before the main dance performance. Singing song after each session of dance by the performer is the peculiarity of this dance. Kollattam is very similar to Pinnalattam that exists today. A ring with many ribbons will be tied at a height of the performing stage. The performer will plait the ribbons as he makes each step. They have to be very careful while performing so that the ribbons do not twist in wrong way. Kanthukanritta is performed by playing with ball. The acrobatic performance is very attractive one. The elements of Kanthukanritta can be seen in certain sessions of Kalyanuttta. Sindh is another popular dance among the Dravidians. Acting has more importance in Sindh. Sindh can be seen in the Andhra, Karnataka border villages. Kya fisindth that tells the story of Lord Muruka is popular in Tamilnadu. Bhandikanritta is performed by imitating the movements and sounds of Parrot, Peacock and Swan. The performer will act...
as a dwarf and sometimes as a differently able man. The performance gives a comic approach most often. 
Jikkini is an art form performed by Muslim community in which holding peacock plumes in both hand. The songs are composed in Persian language. 
Rasaka is similar to Hallisaka which give importance to Uparupakas. Sixty four performers will stand as pairs in Mandal shape. Many peculiar Tala and Laya are seen in the performance that may come under Sukumara or Udhata. According to Bhoja, it is performed by sixteen, twelve or eight heroines performs the dance by scripting Pibandha, Srinkhala, Bhedaka and Lata. Though Bhoja clearly make detailed description about Rasaka, Abhinava Gupta doesn’t mention anything about it. It is also known as Carchari in Vasanthartitu since it is performed to make the king happy.

Conclusion

Uparupaka and folk dances had helped the development and evolution of Dasarupaka. Uparupaka had influenced the growth of Bhana. Local and folk dance elements are mixed in Bhanika and Bhana. Thus Bhana became popular since it is the only Rupaka that describes the Nritta. Un- doubtfully it can be said that there are folk elements in Bhana as it give priority to Vacikabhinaya, Lasya and Nritta.

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