

CHAPTER - I

INDIAN TRADITIONAL AND FOLK THEATRE

TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



The Western scholars who visit our country, after witnessing our folk art forms, comment on them in their own way. Some write appreciatingly and some of them criticise these forms.

According to K. N. Panikkar

"We often come across Western scholars who approach Indian artistic traditions in a meticulously analytical way and create theories on our theatre concepts after their own fashion. I have all respect for their analytical approach which helps them make their own deductions. But the question which baffles anyone in theatre is whether these deductions can be taken as guidelines for the practice of Indian theatre. A theory is generalised from our experience of doing a thing. Even when an artist practises an art after thoroughly learning its grammar, he cannot neglect the creative impulse which springs up from within, necessarily paving the way for further enlargement of theory."²

In Western countries they consider folk forms as a community activity, but in India it is quite different. The folk forms are considered as traditional forms, which are performed by following the traditions very strictly.

According to J. C. Mathur

"In these circumstances, the question arises how did the contemporary traditional and folk forms arise? In the West the folk form is considered only a community activity of an amateurish kind. This is not so in India because our traditional and folk drama has very important and strict traditions in some cases and is far more sophisticated than the Western folk drama. While editing jointly with my friend Dashrath Ojha some medieval plays on North Eastern India and Nepal (C. 1300 A.D. - C. 1625 A.D.) I came to realise that those plays along with similar contemporary traditional forms in other parts of India, actually belong to the corpus of a dramatic genre which has received scant attention from historians of drama, including Keith who has rejected them as merely "irregular plays." The same attitude is disclosed in a recent work called "Sanskrit Drama: Its Origin and Decline" by I. Shukar (published in the Netherlands)."³



1.2 — TRADITIONAL FOLK FORMS, ITS INFLUENCE

From the folk forms, we are influenced in several ways and search for our own way of life

"Do all of us live the life the folk forms have sprung from? We don't. So what do we do? We get influenced, we imbibe, and ultimately search for our own theatre, a product of our way of life. The new contents are used in a modern theatre. Traditional and folk forms inspire and support us to create newer idioms for communication. We are not using these forms to prove their purity. The question of purity, even here, is debatable. The folk forms fascinate by their content. Now, what do we really mean by "content"? Do we mean political slogans, political sermons, or the oversimplification of a social order? The content of these forms, sacred or secular, is the shared myth of the community, not the experience of individuals. Now, when we introduce new content in city theatre, we have to find out whether it is part of the collective urban consciousness. The re-introduction of myth in contemporary theatre is necessary as it imparts a collective consciousness."¹⁴

Folk art forms are very powerful media. These forms were used and are still being used as a means of conveying message to the people as most of the people are living in the villages in our country. Though some folk forms contain cheap entertainment, a majority of these forms are good and they serve to mend and also to entertain the people. They teach us to learn new things for our way of living.

According to Bansi Kaul:

"Most of the folk forms are not cheap entertainment. They provide us with social wisdom. This wisdom does not work on obvious levels. We have to search for it with continuous concentration and ultimately find our own expression, so that we do not imitate by imbibing. My grandmother has a very interesting story to tell me about imbibing. She used to say that humans are like small pebbles rolling down a hill, collecting dust, mud and snow on the way. When these pebbles reach the foot of the hill, they come in contact with the wind of the plains, the snow melts, the mud dries, and the dust blows off. The pebbles come to rest. I am still rolling in search of an answer."¹⁵

The influence of traditional folk forms not only fall on the lifestyles of the people but also in the production styles. With the influence of these traditional folk forms, most of the contemporary theatre companies are staging their performances. Playwrights are trying to write their works

TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



taking the folk forms as their sources of inspiration. Moreover, in scenic design, in the usage of language too, the present generation is adopting the folk styles

According to Bansi Kaul

“In traditional Indian theatre, abstractions are not permitted in design or language. Scenery, no matter how minimal, must represent something concrete to make sense. Space is created by narration and gesture. This is one of the important things modern theatre has imbibed from the traditional. One can see these concepts used in many modern Indian productions. Then there is the audience factor. In traditional theatre, creation of locale and space is the product of a reciprocal exchange of imagination between the audience and the performer. In most of the secular theatre forms, the acting is free of props. Realistic theatre, on the other hand, has always resorted to illustrational realism, using the acting area for elaborate sets.”

As mentioned above, with the influence of traditional folk forms, the contemporary playwrights are writing their works, and on witnessing their performances on stage, the audience is also falling under the influence of traditional theatre in the villages. Girish Karnad wrote *Hayavadana* and *Nagamandala* after being inspired by these traditional folk forms which were very successful among all sections of the audience.

According to Rajinder Math

“If we take a brief look at some of the plays which have used traditional or folk forms, two conclusions emerge clearly. In all those plays where the playwrights have been able to achieve a complete fusion between form and content, the results have been very satisfying, whenever the form has been imposed on a particular play, the result has been disastrous. Whereas in the second category there have been umpteen plays, one can recall only a few in the former category. *GhasiramKotwal*, *Hayavadana*, *Madhyama Vyayoga* (K. N. Panikkar’s production) are some of the plays where the author/director has succeeded in the use of traditional/folk forms.”⁷



13 -- TRADITIONAL FORMS IN CONTEMPORARY THEATRE

In almost all the languages of India, the contemporary theatre companies are staging their performances by taking the traditional folk forms as their source. For the past 20-30 years, this practice has spread very fast. Whether it is historical, mythological, social, they imbibe the traditional elements in their performances and were very successful in their efforts.

After Independence, these traditional folk forms got very good exposure in our country from the side of the Government also, they got recognition. That is why Government has accepted these folk forms as the source of media for propaganda. Health, family planning, adult education, anti-dowry programmes etc. were being publicised through these traditional folk forms. In addition, the voluntary organisations, amateur theatre people, professional theatre people have a media shape to the traditional folk forms and they have framed their activities in the traditional folk forms and are giving their performances. Even in inter-state and international cultural exchange programmes, these traditional folk forms are standing first. The popularity of these folk forms is spreading all over the world very rapidly with the conduct of cultural exchange programmes.

According to G. Shankara Pillai

“Tradition is not an isolated phenomenon. It is the residue of the total achievement of a generation, the fabric of its life pattern, passed onto other generations, and if we want to analyse it, we have to examine all its aspects. Sociological, ethnic, ecological and cultural layers of tradition must be examined in detail, and the backgrounds of traditional forms analysed in all their multiplicity. These forms (I refrain from calling all of them theatre) have their own idioms of expression, obviously based on the nature, conditions, and ultimate aims of performances.”

The well known drama of Maharashtra written by Vijay Tendulkar, “Ghasiram Kotwal,” directed by Jabbar Patel, in which the play begins with Ganapati Vandana and also the production style of this play is in traditional folk style. The dialogues are very rhythmic. The actors swing with dancing mood, dialogue delivery, gestures, movements, make up and costumes, symbolic scenic design, everything is in traditional folk style. Mr. Jabbar Patel succeeded in producing this drama in traditional folk style. This production leads with music, dance, rhythmic movements, poetic

TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



dialogues, traditional dress and hand props, modern lighting equipment. In this way, in my research, I found many modern dramas being produced in traditional folk style.

I saw the famous drama of Girish Karnad, "Nagamandala," both Telugu and Hindi versions. The Hindi version was produced under the supervision of Bombay's famous stage artist Bhakti Baruve, at Lalitha Kala Thoranam, Cultural Allans open air auditorium, Hyderabad.

The actual main script is in Kannada which was translated into Mumbai Hindi style. The actors are from Maharashtra. The style of their production related to traditional folk form. Even the settings, costumes, make up, stage atmosphere, music system, everything was presented by way of traditional folk style. Even in the translated script, the translator of this play has concentrated on folk slang, i.e., Mumbaii Hindi. The famous well known theatre actress Bhakti Baruve acted the role of "Kurudavva" which is the lead role of this drama. They used modern lighting equipment for this production and also used modern sound system, well equipped dais in the open air theatre. Even though Hyderabad is a non-Hindi speaking area, they performed their production in the open air, and hypnotised the audience with the style of traditional folk form. In this way, the modern contemporary dramas, completely or partly, are adopting the traditional folk styles, to attract audience because the audience always need a new style of production.

According to Kironmoy Raha

"Thus Bengali theatre in its early and middle periods used, consciously or otherwise, elements of the hoary folk form even as it strove to emulate the formal structure and style of drama and theatre of an alien province. The result was an amalgam which somehow gelled and did not seem either incongruous or transitory, an achievement which was possible because of the enormous absorptive and innovative talents of people like Girish Chandra Ghosh, Ardhendu Mustafi, Amritlal Bose and others. When, in the early twenties of this century, the passion has been spent and Bengali theatre has apparently gone to seed, Sisir Bhaduri rescued it with overhauling measures that amounted almost to bringing a new theatre into being. But even he did not dare to do away with a few vestigial appendages of Jatra, like tasteless and pointless songs."

Bengal is very famous for theatre movement, and also famous for Jatra. Jatra is nothing but a traditional folk form. Other than Jatra, Bengali playwrights, drama directors and theatre people are mostly adopting traditional folk forms in their productions. Traditional folk forms are playing

TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



very powerful roles in their plays. Anyhow, the rural people like folk forms but even the urban people are also being attracted to traditional folk forms. Theatre people always plan their productions keeping in view the tastes of the audience only.

That is why most of the Bengali theatre producers are adopting traditional folk forms and they are mingling these forms with their plays and producing plays to attract audiences.

According to Kironmoy Raha:

“The new drama movement of the early forties, by which time Sisir Bhaduri’s theatre had become almost a parody of its former glory, broke away from the traditions, conventions, style and content of Bengali theatre, and avowedly and boastfully brought it to the common people. It is again a paradox that a movement which swore by the toiling masses and whose banner bore the legend “People’s Theatre” should have least relied upon the most popular folk theatrical form of Bengal Jatra. It is not necessary here to go into the reasons or resolve this paradox. The fact is that the new drama movement opened up avenues for Bengali theatre to explore and gave it an élan it had not known before, but not by way of using folk forms.”

As already said, Jatra is a traditional folk form and the subjects of Jatra are mythological. Jatra is a very powerful propaganda media in Bengal these days. Every day, a number of Jatra Productions are held everywhere in Bengal. The producers of Jatra present their Jatra productions within the limits of traditional folk forms. They use their costumes, their dialogues, make up, everything of a traditional style. Even the stage atmosphere, scenic design, hand props, style of make up, costume, production process, all follow traditional folk form styles. Even if the subject differs, whether it be a historical, mythological, or social one, the system cannot be changed in their performances.

According to Utpal Datt:

“This talk will be based on my experiences with the “Yatra” in Bengal and I hope it will be relevant to the subject in general. Before the current trends appeared, the Yatra both in form and content was distinctive:

- a) Its content was closely associated with mythology.
- b) It was also morality play, setting forth good and evil in terms of black and white.

TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



- c) It relied on community of emotions between actor and audience, on predisposed sympathy of the audience for the mythological hero it knows so well and its hatred of the Asur.
- d) Thus, though the actor wore no mask, he was bound by such predetermined norms that individual conflicts and emotions played no part in his behaviour. He was in effect wearing a mask.
- e) During the great anti-imperialist struggle of the people, new plays adapted the mythological pattern and the Englishman became the new fixed Evil and the Indian revolutionary a rigid Good.
- f) Though songs and dances and stylised gestures did play some part, the Yatra has always been essentially spoken theatre. Even its prose had to be poetic.
- g) Perhaps the most exciting thing about it was its clowns and their horseplay free of religious code, its Bibek and Juri.¹¹

14 — MISUSE OF TRADITIONAL FOLK FORMS

Most of the modern theatre personnel are adopting the traditional folk forms in their productions, without having any root level knowledge of those folk forms. Some of the theatre people of Andhra Pradesh begin the play with Burrakatha — narrating the story content — and takes the story into flashback and runs the play, again at the end the Burrakatha appears on stage and concludes the play in folk form.

Like this, some people adopt “Oggukatha” form in the beginning and at the end of the plays. In Maharashtra, the Tamasha style, in Uttar Pradesh the Nautanki style, are being used for narrating the story of the play. If the performers have any knowledge of these folk forms, then it is good but if they do not know anything of these forms and introduce them in their productions, the productions will end in a flop show. That is why the theatre people, before thinking of adopting traditional folk forms in their plays, should deeply study the forms and discuss them with the experts of those forms and then adopt it in their plays. If a historical play of Andhra Pradesh is produced in the Bhavai traditional style of Gujarat, the audience of Andhra Pradesh will not accept this because the audience of AP are unaware of the Bhavai form which is of Gujarat. Like this, if Burrakatha, Oggukatha of Andhra Pradesh are adopted in the plays of Uttar Pradesh, the

TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



audience of UP will not accept these forms. Therefore, the atmosphere, the area of the folk style, the language should be taken into consideration before adopting a folk form in the contemporary plays. Then only these folk forms will be of any help to modern plays otherwise the performances will become flops.

According to G. Shankara Pillai:

"We should be extra-cautious about these three approaches to the traditional theatre. We should know which to promote and which not. The first is to present traditional forms as they are, is less harmful than the others. The artists do as they are taught to do and the modern theatre man is not allowed to meddle with them. The one and only thing we can do is to prevent them from the two eventualities of decay and death. But, the second trend according to me is to be viewed more cautiously. Almost all attempts to "modernise" the traditional theatrical forms have played havoc with them. The innovators either by their ignorance or by their lack of understanding have destroyed the purity and the innate qualities of the traditional forms. I don't say that it is not at all possible to have any change. But for a man to effect any substantial change in an art form of a long heritage, he will see the purpose of every minute factor included in it. Moreover, he should have the creative genius to alter any part of the traditional forms and should be daring in that endeavour. As a result, much talk and very little action has been achieved in that direction. The changes which certain forms are said to have achieved are superficial in nature. When I say this I have in mind the oft-repeated cry in Kerala about the "innovations of Kathakali." The slight modifications effected are mostly immature in nature for the simple reason that the advocates for these modifications fail to have an all-embracing knowledge of both the literary and theatrical aspects of this particular art form. The history of the development of Kathakali as an art form shows that all the innovations introduced in its acting, costume, make up etc. were done by patient theatre practitioners who had a comprehensive knowledge of that art form and who were most observant of the other similar forms existing in those times."

While adopting the traditional folk forms by the urban theatre people, they are using the forms as they are or by slightly improvising the original forms. So they are diluting the folk forms and showing to audience that they are the original forms. For example, in Andhra Pradesh, most of the theatre people are composing dance scenes for their productions by adopting the traditional folk forms. A dancer may not know about Banjara dance and may have never seen that dance,

TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



but they compose these dance forms through imagination. By staging these false dances of Un-original form on stage, they put a stamp on the audience that they are the original forms. In addition, these dancers imitate Chenchu, Dhimsa, Naga, Ghond etc. dance forms. They use the dress and costume of the original dance forms but the dance is being diluted by these modern urban dancers. The audience who witness these dances occasionally and think that these are Un-original dances and even if they happen to see the original forms, the situation has arisen that the original forms are treated as fake.

Because of these fake dancers, the reality of the original dance forms has become difficult to recognise. Cinema people are also committing this type of mistake. They are diluting these traditional folk forms and changing them into cinematic forms. Even the traditional folk songs have also been changed into semi-classical songs which are being used.

According to M. K. Raina:

"However, it is exactly here that the problem lies — and the very real danger of degeneration and the worst forms of revivalism — as this urban exercise is usually one of the short cuts, and is ambitious and exploitative in nature. The urban theatre worker has picked up the product, but has ignored aspects of its genesis — its history, its anthropology, its religion and therefore its link with the past. He has only seen and picked up the shell — the form — its design, decoration and colour, and he uses these to decorate his ideas. Therefore, the experiment remains superficial and hasty. Unfortunately, this is what has been so far accepted generally as a successful search for the growth of our indigenous theatre. To me, this is the worst kind of search — incomplete, superficial, self-serving and exploitative. A trader has picked up a saleable product, polished it and marketed it for cultural profits."¹³

My experience says that if any traditional form is adopted into modern theatre without knowing its history, knowledge and blindly taking the form as it is does not work always. It will be a discredit to the performers and the very purpose of adopting these forms is being defeated if they are not used properly.

According to G. Shankara Pillai:

"The traditional forms and their structure, the relationship of the performer to his people, the fundamental differences these forms have with a regular theatre form of any kind, were not

TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



properly analysed and very often the wrong terms were used. This results in the practice of plucking out certain elements of traditional theatre and pasting them onto the fabric of a contemporary play. The process throughout was a conscious one and the audience had no difficulty in knowing from which source the graftings/mutilations came. This kind of pluck-and-paste job is now sometimes widely publicised to bring credit to a production. I don't think this kind of grafting will serve the purpose. Not only will it discredit the ultimate goal, it will also disfigure and discredit our glorious tradition of ritualistic forms. As all forms are basically products of an organic inner growth, this would be a crime committed on the form.¹⁴

1.5 PRACTICE OF TRADITIONAL FOLK THEATRE

Indian traditional theatre is very popular among village folk. Generally, the subject of these traditional folk theatre are of mythological-based ones – mostly from the *Ramayan*, *Mahabharata* and from other Puranas. The playwrights of these traditional folk theatre wrote these plays in a very simple manner which is very convenient to be performed on the stage.

There is flexibility in the usage of music, song, rhythm, dance, even in costume. They use these as per their availability, and if they are not available for use, they avoid them. Sometimes, if they happen to forget a verse or a dialogue, they skip those verses and continue their performance. Repetition of dialogues, songs and also on the request of the audience, the artists repeat certain verses, dialogues or songs during the performance. This type of flexibility is there in traditional folk theatres. This facility is available only in traditional folk theatre and there is no such scope in modern theatre. In India, there are different folk theatre forms prevalent in different regions. “Veedhi Natakam” in Andhra Pradesh, “Yakshagana” in Maharashtra, “Bhavai” in Gujarat, “Nautanki” in Uttar Pradesh, “Yatra” in Bengal, etc. Though the production style of all these forms differ but the aim and objectives of all these is the same.

Though the style of dance differs, they synchronise the theme of the performance. The integral element of all these different folk forms are identical even though the areas differ. The music of traditional theatre is very dynamic. In some of the traditional theatres, the music is very systematic. The practice of these traditional folk theatre of different areas is the same.

TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



According to Suresh Awasthi

“Music is highly systematical and developed as in “Ankia Nat” (Assam), “Rasleela” (Uttar Pradesh), and “Yakshagana” (Mysore). Song-dialogues are set to various melodies prescribed for different situations and characters. Specific rhythms are prescribed for the entry and the exit of different types of characters. Orchestral pieces are often used for the entries and exits of the characters and as incidental music as in Jatra of West Bengal. The orchestra plays in union with the vocal line and repeats the melodic phrase giving the actor an opportunity to present choreographic patterns and enrich its gestures by an elaborate interpretation of the text as in “Kathakali.”

With dance-like movements, striking poses and codified gestures the play builds up a spectacle of great choreographic beauty and pictorial charm while in the temple-based drama like “Rasleela,” the dance content is rich and highly developed in secular forms like “Khyal” of Rajasthan and “Terukoothu” of Tamil Nadu it is rather thin, but enough to maintain the choreographic character of the play. The musical and the choreographic structures of the performance are interdependent and fully integrated.”¹⁵

1.6 — CONVENTIONS OF SPEECH

There is as much importance for speech as for music, dance and song given in traditional folk theatre. The speech used in traditional theatre can be dramatised through different styles. The Veedhi Bhagavatam of Andhra Pradesh is a very famous traditional folk form among village people. This form is also called as ‘Padya Natakam’¹⁶ (verse drama). The drama is presented through verse. Actors sometimes utter these verse forms by way of singing and those who do not know singing sometimes deliver these verse by way of prose form. Some other actors deliver the same by way of chanting style. By this way, there is a flexibility in delivering the dialogues available in traditional folk theatre. The style of the speech changes from one actor to another.

According to Mr. Suresh Awasthi:

“The practice in traditional theatre is guided by a set of conventions and the nature of stylisation. These conventions and the scheme of stylisation are determined by the staging conditions and the dramatic values of traditional theatre. There is a whole set of conventions determining the nature



I. INDIAN TRADITIONAL FOLK THEATRE

1.0 — INTRODUCTION

In rural areas, particularly in villages, when we heard a beat of a musical instrument, an expression enters into the mind which does not exist in the daily lives of people. This is the expression of lives and beliefs of people, their joys, sorrows, their struggle against the forces of nature, then struggle for survival, which form an integral part of life. But an urban educated man calls this as "folk" or "traditional" as the way of their living is quite different from that of rural people.

The traditional and folk theatre of India has not been discussed from the historical point of view so far. After *Natya Sastra* of Bharata, a number of works on Drama and Theatre were written in Sanskrit by Abhinava Gupta, Dhananjaya, Sagaranandi, Sharada Tanaya, Nandikeshwara, but none of them gave the examples of folk type of plays performed in the villages.

We can see folk poetry in the Prakrit work of Hala in *Gadha Saptashati* but the folk and traditional dramatic forms have not been described in any of the books written on drama. But very recently, Dr. Raghavan, a Sanskrit scholar, has referred to some of the folk forms in his paper, "Sanskrit Drama and Performance".

1.1 — WESTERN AND INDIAN FOLK FORMS. A COMPARISON

"Indian traditional theatre, like its counterpart in any other country, is a very rich and important element of the traditional culture. It is a comprehensive sense of the term. It incorporates elements from poetry, music, dance, mime, graphic and plastic arts, religious and civil pageantry, and various decorative arts and crafts. It reflects the people's beliefs and social ways."

This way, it can be said that India is very rich in culture and we have quite a number of folk art forms all over the country, from length and breadth of the country, which are being performed and are entertaining people.

TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



and the delivery of dramatic speech. Repetition, superimposition, simultaneous speaking and alternation of the speech between the character and the chorus are some of the devices of speech delivery. The alteration between the singing of the chorus and presentation of brief dance sequences by the actors is so worked out that the dramatic piece becomes virtually a conjunction of recitation, miming and dancing. Rasleela is the best example for these conventions of speech. The speech treated through many conventions and presented as chant, song and rhythmic prose extends the range and the impact of the dramatic word.¹⁷

In almost all the folk theatre forms of all languages in India, the forms have chorus. Just the actor on stage sings which the chorus repeats. Sometimes if the actor happens to skip or forget some of the words, the chorus fills the same by way of prompting. By this way, if anything in the text is skipped, there is opportunity of adjustments available in these folk theatre forms.

"In the scheme of dramatic structure, the use of the chorus is very important. There is a chorus in most of the forms of the traditional theatre, both in the secular forms like "khyal" and "Terukoothu" and the religious forms like "Rasleela" and "Ramleela". The chorus in Indian theatre has a different character from the Greek though it performs many similar functions. It is a group of singers attached to the play in a secondary capacity and less involved in the action of the play than the Greek chorus. It sings the narrative text and repeats or accompanies the actors in singing dramatic dialogues. It also sings the entry songs describing the costume, the qualities and dramatic functions of the characters."¹⁸

1.7— ACTOR-AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP IN TRADITIONAL THEATRE

In villages, the actors will have some fans (favourites). If a favourite actor is participating in a particular drama, the fans attend those programmes by taking all chances. The actors of traditional theatre are generally very popular in their field. That is why almost all the actors will have fans. Hence, audience witness the performances from the beginning till end interestingly.

"Intimacy between the actors and the audience is a factor which vitally determines the nature of the Indian traditional theatre making it a most participative theatre. Intimacy is achieved through many devices and conventions. Traditional theatre is predominantly an audience-conscious theatre. Just as the actors are conscious of the audience and present their art for their enjoyment, so also

TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



are the audience conscious of the fact that they were sitting in a "theatre" and had come to see and enjoy the art of their favourite actors — their powerful acting, their dance and music. Their consciousness establishes a close bond between the actors and the audience."¹⁹

18 — TRADITIONAL THEATRE IS "ACTOR'S THEATRE"

For the performance of a modern drama in various theatres it needs a Director. Along with the director, the importance of scenic designers, backstage crew, etc. is also there. The prominence of the actor is not much in modern drama, but in the traditional theatre, the actor will have much importance. Without the actor, traditional theatre is lifeless, which means that the performance would not be possible. The actor plays all-in-one role in traditional theatre. The actor directs himself, composes songs, and even plays musical instruments also. They themselves are the choreographers of their dances. Sometimes they themselves erect the stage. Propaganda is also being done by the actors. Where there is no electricity in some of the villages, they arrange petromax lights, mashals, etc. themselves. While the actors are performing their roles on the stage, there are instances of pumping of these petromax lamps in between also happens. In addition, the actors paint the scenes, prepare backdrops themselves. The actors will not have a make up man and they themselves do their make up. While the performances are on, there were instances of cooking by the actors behind the stage. In one word, the traditional theatre actors are trained in all the fields related to them. Those who join the traditional theatre have to learn all the branches of that field. After having been trained in all the branches, then only the new actors will be given the chance of acting on the stage.

"Indian traditional theatre is an actor-based theatre and the actor is primarily a performer well versed in all the arts of the theatre — acting, mime, dance, recitation, music and acrobatics. The actor stands on a bare stage disengaged from any kind of decor, creating the scenic illusion with his own dynamic presence. He keeps all the time intensely busy demonstrating skill in various arts, switching over from one art to another with greatest ease and facility. In "Yakshagan" and "Tcrukoothu," the performance is set to a heightened pitch and the actors all the time move about in intensely dramatic gait to the accompaniment of drum music, even their sitting and standing

TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



poses are highly theatrical and eloquent. Intermittently, they burst into song and join the chorus and when the chorus sings their dialogues they dance in a circle with great gusto.¹²⁰

In these modern days, people began forgetting the traditional folk forms. Except a few forms in certain areas of India such as Tamasha in Maharashtra, Jatra in Bengal, Rasleela and a few other forms are still in vogue but the other forms have been vanishing from the scene for want of patronage and infrastructural facilities and because of the poor conditions of the artists. For example, Surabhi Theatre of Andhra Pradesh.

For the revival of the regional folk art forms, non-governmental organisations try to study the forms and perform them on par with dramas, etc. From the Government side, the forms can be made part of the syllabus in schools so that there can be a possibility of knowing the form by young children and they can establish their interest towards these traditional folk art forms in future.

Another step for the revival or for the development of these traditional forms is to help the actors and performers of these forms. As already discussed, actors are the heart of these forms. If actors and performers are in good condition both socially and financially, then only they can strive for the development of the olden traditional forms to flourish in future.

It is also essential that training camps should be conducted to the professional artists as well as to the amateur artists in these traditional folk forms, thereby they can know the roots of these forms through experts and establish interest towards these performances.

Attention should be focused on writers of these forms also. Workshops and seminars should be conducted for them through which they can know the techniques of writing and try to modify their writings which will suit the interests of modern audience.

If government and the traditional folk form lovers seriously think over these points, then the traditional theatre and folk forms will flourish in future and through which a number of artists will get their livelihood who are eagerly awaiting for this happy moment.

TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



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