



IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION, DANCE AND MUSIC IN ODISHAN CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Odisha has a great tradition of music and dance. The fact that Odisha has a glorious tradition of music and dance is evident from the singing and dancing figures adorning temples in Odisha. The Odissi dance form which originated here is one of the oldest classical dance forms of India. The postures in this dance reflect the temple statues of Odisha. The ancient name of Odisha, Utkala, literally means "the highest excellence in the arts" including folk paintings, painting on canvas, statuary and sculptures, the Odishan style of temple architecture, and tourist and pilgrim mementos made of horn, papier-mâché, and appliqué work. Classical Odissi dance, colourful folk dances with indigenous musical instruments and also Western instruments, dance dramas, shadow plays with puppets, folk opera, mimetic dances, and musical recitation of God's names are all very popular. Odissi music, largely following classical tunes, and folk music, are rich and varied.

KEYWORDS : RELIGION, DANCE, MUSIC, ODISSI, CULTURE

Religion, dance and music have marked a strong influence on the culture of Odisha. Followers of all religions and sect today live in harmony in Odisha, their magnificent journey of being ruled by the rulers of many religions have imbued the qualities of tolerance amongst them. The qualities that makes Odisha unique, a place on earth where not only human beings but the wilds and the woods along with the nature, all are contributing towards nurturing of each other. The principles of Vaishnavism were preached from the holy lands of Puri, the Buddhist monasteries spreading the message of non violence, the splendid classical dances of Odisha which originated from the devadasis or the dancers who used to perform in the temples of Odisha during the ancient and the medieval ages like Mahari dance, the folk dances like chow or sambalpuri or the dances forms performed by the tribal like the like Ghumura or Paraja all combines together to make Odisha the land of wonders. The mystifying charms of this coastal state, mesmerize you with its charms and tranquilize your body and rejuvenate your soul.

The systematised and developed form of music which has been sung in the world famous temple of the Lord Jagannath at the sacred Puri-Dhama in its different festive occasions as a part of the temple services, and cultured in the 'Jaga-Akhadas' of Puri and 16 Sasanas, 36 Karavada (Brahmin villages) as well as other rural areas in the district, is known as Traditional Odissi Music. This tradition is also having a long and glorious history of its own for more than 2500 years. It is performed deftly in the shape of Raga-Ksydrageeta-Prabandha-Gana a form of Indian classical music by the illustrious and celebrated poet Sri Jayadeva in Odisha (Formerly Odisha). The treatise of Bharata, a pioneer of music and dance in India refers to the musical tradition of Odra substantiated by archaeological finds from the times (1st century BC) of Chedi dynasty. The innumerable sculptures of musical instruments depicted on the walls of temples from 6th century AD to 13th century AD testify to the glorious tradition of music and its patronage by successive kingdom in Odisha. The classical Odissi Music owes much to the great Saint poet, Jayadeva, who's highly lyrical Geet Govind, composed in Sanskrit in the 12th century was ritually sung in many of these temples. By the 15th century instead of Sanskrit, Odia language was being used for literary works and the poetry developed on the love theme of Radha and Krishna. The musical forms like chhanda, chautisa, champu, chaupadi, bhajan and janana had developed. The period between 16-19th century under the local patronage saw great composers of lyrical music based on raga (tune) and tala (beat). Treatises on music like-Sangitarnava, Chandrika, Gita Prakasha, Sangita Kalpalata, Sangita Sarani and Sangita Narayana were compiled.

Like Hindustani and Carnatic systems, Odissi music is a separate system of Indian classical music and is having all the essential as well as potential ingredients of Indian Classical form. But it has not come

to limelight due to apathy from the time of British rule in Odisha (Formerly Odisha), want of its proper study, revival, propagation, etc. Despite the fact, the traditional music form could be saved and maintained in its pristine form. Thanks to the musicians particularly of Jaga Akhadas of Puri district, who could develop and maintain the music. The music movement of Odisha (Formerly Odisha), however, took a different turn after independence.

Musical instruments used in Odissi Music are few in number. Some of the basic instruments which have been used in Odissi Music are the Ravan Hashta, the Harmonium, and the Veena or Sitar. Nowadays, a number of instruments are being replaced, like the Violin is being used instead of the Ravan Hashta. The Tanpura (a string instrument) is used by all the three streams of mainstream classical music- Odissi, Hindustani as well as Carnatic music. But one instrument which stands out among all as typical and irreplaceable both in case of Odissi dance and Odissi music is the Mardal. Further details of this typically Odissi instrument are given below.

In Odissi Sangeet Sastras it is mentioned that among all the skin percussions Mardala is the best. Its description is found in Charyagiti and various Sastras and Kavyas of medieval Odisha. In all Odishan temples also one finds the sculpture of Mardala players. Mardalavadini (the woman Mardala player) of Konark is famous. It is played during various Sevas (services) of Lord Jagannath. It is played as an accompaniment both in Mahari dance as well as Gotipua dance.

The intimate relationship experienced between the poetry and music in Odissi is a feature on which the aesthetics of the style is built. The musical accompaniment of Odissi dance is essentially the same as the music of Odisha itself. There are various views on how the music of the Odissi relates to the music of greater North India. It is usually considered just another flavour of Hindustani music; however there are some who feel that Odissi should be considered a separate classical system.

Like its excellent rich culture and vibrant tradition, dance and music of Odisha is also very charming, colourful and encompassing various types of tunes. The existing dance and musical tradition of Odisha is the cumulative experience of the last two thousand and five hundred years and can broadly be grouped under various varieties. Based on the practice and preparations, the music of Odisha is categorized into five sections. These are Folk music, Tribal music, Light Music, Light Classical music and Classical Music. Similarly the unique dance form of Odisha has contributed a lot to the classical dance, martial dance and typically traditional dance form of India. Hinduism of various sects is a central and unifying force in Odia society. The overwhelmingly important Vaishnava sect has their supreme deity, Jagannatha, who lords it over the religious

firmament of Odisha. Lord Jagannatha main temple is at Puri on the sea, where the famous annual festival with huge wooden chariots dragged for the regional divine triad— *Jagannatha*, *Balabhadra*, and *Subhadra* (goddess sister) — draws about half a million devotees. The famous Lingaraja temple of Lord Shiva at Bhubaneswar, the famous Viraja goddess temple at Jajpur, both in coastal Odisha, and Mahimagadi, the cult temple of the century-old Mahima sect of worshipers of Shunya Parama Brahma (the absolute soul void) at Joranda in central Odisha, are highly sacred for the Odia people. The synthesis & harmony of the different forms of Brahminic worship Vaishnavite, Shaivite, Shakta, Ganapatya are all to be found in the great and grand temple of Jagannath or whose origin goes back to the tribal worship of Wood God. Around him, resolves the entire cultural milieu of Odisha. Religion & culture cannot be separated in a land, which claims to celebrate thirteen festivals in twelve month.

The present form of traditional Odissi music is no doubt the outcome of the continuous evolution of the earliest Indian classical music. One may reasonably believe its inflow during the period of Aryanisation of this land. Possibly Aryan culture crept into this land during the Age of Brahmans when bulk of Indian peninsula came under the Aryan influence. Music tinged with religion, attained mass appeal and royal patronage. As such the royal patronization of Art and Culture made the Odishan music so developed and enchanting for enjoyment of both Gods and Goddesses and human beings as well. This tradition is still continuous in its different manifestations. Odisha music is a combination of four typical kind of music like Chitrapada, Dhruvapada, Panchal and ChitraKala. Its music is also much charming and colourful. Folk music like Yogi Gita, Kendara Gita, Dhuduki Badya, Prahallad Natak, Palla, Sankirtan, Mogal Tamasa, Gitinatya, Ghoda Nacha, Danda Nacha and Daskathia are popular in Odisha.

The figures or dancers musicians Carved on ancient temple walls speak of Odisha's rich musical heritage. There were saint-poets of Odisha who composed lyrical poems to be sung. Bards usually went from place to place singing these songs which were meant to propagate religious ideas in various religious. Instructions were usually given by the poet himself as to how the lyric was to be sung, i.e. the raga or tune to be employed and the tala or beat scheme to be followed. The systematised and developed form of music, which has been sung in the world famous temple of the Lord Jagannatha (also spelt as Jagannatha) at the sacred 'Puri-Dhama' in its different festive occasions as a part of the temple services, and cultured in the 'Jaga-Akhadas' of Puri and 16 'Sasanas', 36 'Karavada' (Brahmin villages) as well as other rural areas in the district, is known as Traditional Odissi Music.

This tradition is also having a long and glorious history of its own for more than 2,500 years. It is performed deftly in the shape of "Raga-Ksydrageeta-Prabandha-Gana", a form of Indian classical music by the illustrious and celebrated poet Sri Jayadeva in Odisha.

Like Hindustani and Carnatic systems, Odissi music is a separate system of Indian classical music and is having all the essential as well as potential ingredients of Indian Classical form. But it has not come to limelight due to apathy from the time of British rule in Odisha, want of its proper study, revival, propagation, etc. Despite the fact, the traditional music form could be saved and maintained in its pristine form. Thanks to the musicians particularly of Jaga-Akhadas of Puri district, who could develop and maintain the music.

Violin was introduced to India about 300 years ago and is a very important string instrument in the South of India. It is played in a sitting position and is held between the right foot and the left shoulder.

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