



## CONCEPT OF MUSIC IN ODISSI DANCE

## Arts

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## ABSTRACT

We find the earliest reference of Odissi dance in the 13th chapter of Natyasastra of Bharata Muni, wherein he has classified four natya pravrttis, namely, Avanti, Dakshinaty, Pancali and Udrmagadhi. These pravrttis are combined with acting, songs, instrumental music, dance, language, literature and different styles of presentation in local usage. Out of that, Udrmagadhi points to the present day Odissi music and Odissi dance. During the period of compilation of Natyasastra, Udrmagadhi style was prevalent not only in Udra (Odisha), Kalinga or Kosala, but also in Anga, Vanga, Nepal and other states of Eastern India. An Odishan author, Maheswar Mohapatra has depicted about seven styles of dance forms in his work, Abhinaya Candrika written in 1670 A.D.. These seven styles are Magadhi, Sauraseni, Karnata, Kerala, Gauda, Pancanada and Udra. magadhi sauraseni ca karnatakeraladisu / gauda pancanadascaiva udranryadi saptadha //

## KEYWORDS

Odissi, Music, Antiquity, Dance, Song, Utkal, Gamak, Kalinga, Raga, Saint Poets, Lord Jagannath, Taal, Cultural, Tradition.

In this text, the author distinguishes among different styles laying down their respective parameters. Magadhi is suitable for depicting emotions. Sauraseni is established through its body movements. Karnata is complete in all respects. Kerala is famous for presentation style. Gauda is descent in duet dance. Pascanada is performed in pure form. Udra is famous for expressing bhava (emotion). Now-a-days seven types of Indian dance forms are treated as classical, such as, Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Manipuri, Kathaka, Kucipudi, Mohiniattam and Odisha. The main characteristic features of the dance flourished in Udra (Odisha) is established by depicting the verses of an epic or a song through a number of mudras and drsti-bhedas.

kavya vakya nibandhena mudradrstisca calanam / mukhya pradarsanamiti udradeseti sobhanam //

Though, Gandharva is more related to songs with verses, this term is used in Natyasastra in the sense of music consisting of gita, vadya and nrtya. The great Odishan scholar, Maheswara Mahapatra, also uses the term 'gandharva' for dance, along with its nyasa and pracara. There are varieties of dance (nrtya bheda), movements of limbs (nyasa bheda) and extension of limbs (pracara bheda). The terms 'udra-gandharva' used by this author evinces different varieties of Udra songs. Since Udra dance, i.e., Odishi dance is classical, Udra or Odisha songs are expected to be classical subject to its merits.

sru catra prvaksemi udragandharvalaknam / nrtya bhedam nyasa bhedam pracaram hastacalanam //

The Odisha dance rests not only on tala, mana, emotion and sentiments, but also it conforms to gita and vadya. However, tala is the unavoidable element of dance. Dance is more dependant on tala than the vocal and instrumental music, because there are anibaddha gitas without tala, But, in dance, there is no item without tala.

Natya, Nrta and Nrtya

When the meaning of the verses or feelings are expressed through abhinaya(acting) producing rasa (sentiment), it is known as natya. When the movements of hands, feet or gesture and posture conforms to tala, mana and laya (tempo) overlooking the feeling, it is called nrta. If natya and nrta both are combined, it turns into nrtya.

desaritya pratito yastala mana layasritah / savilasanga-viksepo nrtyamityucyate vudhahii //

**Tandva and Lasya** – Tandava or Ugra nrtya is predominated with heroic sentiment and lasya with the sentiment of love. Tandava is suitable for males with unique body movements and lasya is for female with beauty and emotions.

lasyam bhavamayam nrtyam naripakse susobhanam / ugram purusa gatrena vicitram canga calanam //

There are different varieties of tandava and lasya nrtya.

Mahari and Gotipua Dance

The essence of Udra nrtya was retained in Mahari, Sakhi and Gotipua dance. The present Odishi dance is its modified form. The literal meaning of mahari is maha nari, i.e., exalted woman. They are called so, because they offer their lives as the consort of a particular Lord and dedicate their lives to entertain the Lord as daily ritual of the temple. Devadasi is a synonym for mahari. The maharis, who dance before the Lord are known as nacuni (female dancer) and those, who sing in garbha grha (inmost side of the temple), are called bhitar gauni (inside singer). Those, who sing in the precincts, are known as bahara gauni(outside singer). The maharis, who dance during patuara (ceremonial procession) on the occasion of different festivals, are known as patuaris.

The Mahari dance in Lord Jagannatha's temple, Puri during sakaladhupa (morning offering) is performed in the nata mandira without vocal recital. But during bada singara at night, the maharis dance in front of Lord Jagannatha in the inner sanctuary of Srimandira to the tune of the songs of Gitagovinda accompanied by male singers and instrument players. This practice of the Lord evinces the long, rich and sacred tradition of gita, vadya and nrtya in Odisha.

The tradition of Gotipua dance is not as old as Mahari. Though the exact period of origin of Gotipua dance is still a matter of conjecture, there is evidence that in the 16th century A.D., Raya Ramananda gave training to gotipuas. When Odisha went under the rule of Afgans in 1568 A.D., the Gajapati of Bhoi dynasty, Rama Chandra Deva, set up akhada gharas (gymnasiums) at Puri to train the young men to be physically fit and culturally knowledgeable to defend the temple against attack and continue the service of Lord Jagannatha unabated. Very young boys were being trained in music and dance in the akhada gharas by the gurus.

Gotipua means single boy, who initially performs solo dance in female garb. Gradually, a group of young boys were allowed to perform together with different costumes and styles. Due to influence of Sakhi dance of southern Odisha, the gotipuas dance in the sakhi bhava. There is influence of acro batic Bandha nrtya on Gotipua. Once upon a time, this Bandha nrtya was the favourite of the kings due to its various graceful limbs and soft body movements preferably performed by the girls.

Komalangena lalitam kumarya angacalanam / Nana krti samayuktah bandhah rajagana priyah //

The style, technique and features of Mahari, Gotipua, Sakhi and Bandha dance have major contribution for reconstruction of the present classical Odisha dance, in which natya, nrta and nrtya are combined. Odisha dance is now being performed with five items, such as, mangalacarana, batu, abhinaya, Pallavi and moksa. Bandha dance is included as an optional item.

Odisha dance is always accompanied by mardala, gini and other musical instruments with alapa in the beginning by a singer in a raga, Pallavi in a raga and abhinaya following to an Odishi song set to a raga. Pallavi is a combination of tena and pata. The abhinaya item of this dance performed to the tune of a song like Gitagovinda in Sanskrit or other Odia Padavalis composed on the theme of Radha – Krishna love affairs. This practice has been introduced at least from the 12th century A.D. There is evidence that Padmavati, the wife of the great poet Jayadeva, had embraced the life of a devadasi or mahari. She was dancing in Lord Jagannatha's temple to the June of Gitagovinda song by Jayadeva himself. In different texts of music, it is also mentioned that nrtya should be performed with accompaniment of musical instruments and song. While describing about characteristic features of dance, Harichandana has mentioned in Sangitamuktavali that when a group of ladies dance together with singing in native language, that is called nrtya.

vala yatra hi nrtyanti militva desabhasaya|  
tannrtyamiti vijneyam sarvesam sumanoramam||

Harichandana defines nartana differently from nrtya. When the sages or people belonging to savara tribe of forest region dance with singing and laughter, it is called nartana. Recital of song with dance is mandatory here.

tapasvinoaranyajana yatra nrtyanti va punah|  
hasyabhuyistarupain tu tannartanamihocyate||

While describing about abhinaya in connection with cari, Nandikeswara says that the dancer should be apt in five types of songs. Out of that, the salaga gita accompanied by kundali nrtya is known as gita-peruni. atra syatsalagam gitam yaduktam kundalividhau|

This indicates that gita is unavoidable in dance.

In Sangita Damodara, the author Subhankara distinguishes sangitaka as dance music which is different from gita. The Types of song, which follow rhythmic beats and musical instruments in a dance performance, are known as sangitaka.

Talavadyanugam gitam natibhryantu giyate|  
Nrtyasyanugam range tat sangitakamucyate||

The scholars like Raghunatha Ratha suggest to recite song before the dance starts. It is mandatory. Those, who dance without singings go to the hell being accused of the sin of abortion, it is said.

Yo gita vyatirekena kuryadabhinayam narah|  
bhrnaha jayate tena mahaniraya mrcchati||  
Tasmadadau parayatnena kuryadgitavidhim sudhih|

It is also mentioned in Bharatarnava Kosa that the raga received with dance is known as alapa.

Natarage prayuktastu tamalapam yugurvudhah|

From the preceding discussion it is conspicuous that Odisha dance is always Performed according to tala, mana and laya being accompanied by musical instruments and vocal recitals. The dancers express the meaning of the verses of the song through gestures and postures with feelings, emotions and sentiments. The alapa, pallavi and songs are always set to a raga and tala.

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