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Social Science

ANCIENTRY AND ESSENCE OF ODISSI MUSIC

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ABSTRACT

Music is one of the vital components of culture. It is the inborn nature of man and fully mingled with society. Therefore, music plays a special role in the cultural developments of any nation. Judged from this angle it is known that there is a long and continued tradition of music and its performances in the rich cultural heritages of Odisha. The art of Odissi has a long history with the all pervading influence of the religion of Jagannath. The temple bears ample testimony to it in its architecture, sculpture and paintings that upheld it as a living tradition. The archaeological evidences of Odisha show that music in all aspects was in highly flourished stage and that tradition was kept up through ages. In this way, the present tradition of music and dance of Odisha known as Odissi could be traced back into a long hoary past and is the outcome of continuous evolution.

Although the present Odisha has been known as a culturally developed region, no clear record or evidence is available about the dance and music of that time. However, one German archeologist studying some stone pieces collected from Shankarganj of Odisha said that they were the oldest musical instruments of India. They were of 3000/4000 years ago. However, it needs research to prove it is a matter of pride for the history of music of Odisha.

No information is available in the Vedas regarding the existence of geographical regions in the name of Odra or Utkal yet the word or name Kalinga is found in a few 'Brahman Granth' written between 3000 to 2000 B.C. The name Kalinga found in the Mahabharat written in 1000 B.C. and the Ramayana too. From all these great epics a lot is known about the richness and integrity of ancient Odisha.

The Natyasastra refers to four vrttis: Avanti, Daksinaty, panchali and Udra Magadhi, which flourished in the different parts of India. Odra here refers to Odisha. Different regions have different music and dance traditions each distinguished by its nature and technique.

Innumerable inscriptions bear testimony to the fact that dance and music were integral part of the people. The Hatigumpha inscription of the king Kharavela says that he was a musician. The Kesaris were adept in the art of dance and music. Jayanti Kesari took pride in calling him as Nrtyakesari and Gandharva Kesari. The archaeological evidences of Odisha show that music in all aspects was in highly flourished stage and that tradition was kept up through ages. In this way, the present tradition of music and dance of Odisha known as Odissi could be traced back into a long hoary past and is the outcome of continuous evolution. There are evidences in historical chronicles of the existence of various kingdoms and kings who patronized the art between 200 B.C. and 500 A.D. They throw light on the continuity of the tradition in the practice of the dance style.

In course of time the glorious age of development Odissi art and architecture, culture began. Chiefly during the reign of the Gangas and Suryas along with the development of art and architecture, literature was nourished enriching the great cultural tradition of Odisha. In one side was history written about the dance and music of Odissi in form of carving in the body of the temples and in another side were written volumes of Kavya-Kavita and Chand alankar. However, from the stone pieces to Talapatra from the chisel to lekhan every sphere was dominated by reserberation of music.

In the 15th century after Boudhacary and Jayadeva, saraladas laid the foundation stone of Odia literature. His writings like Chandi Purana, Vilanka Ramayan and other works gave lots of information about music in different chapters. After Sarala Das, the poets of the Panchasakha age there were some poets like Narasingha Sen, Dinakeishna, Upendra Bhanja, sadanandda, Kavisurya Brahma, Abhimanyu samanta Singhar, Brajanath Badajena rendered their

works on music, mentioned about the Raga-ragini, tala etc. There is the reflection of music in Odia literature as well as in music in the bodies of different temples beginning from the Parsurameswar of that century A.D. to Konark temple of the 13th century we find in them ample evidence of musical accomplishments from the dancer, drumbeaters and other accompanists of both the sexes with their musical instruments. Besides literature, there is a glorious tradition of writing music books in Odisha. From 15th to 18th century A.D., there are more than twenty books were written in music, dance, song and musical instruments. Some of prominent books and authors are mentioning here. 'Sangita Kaumudi', Sangita Sara of Hari Nayak, Gita Prakas of Brajanath Badajena, Sangita Muktavali of Raja Haricharan, Sangita Kalpalatika of Haladhar Mishra, Gita Prakash Boli of Gadadhar Das, Sangita Narayan of Gajapati Narayan Dev, Natya Manorama & Sangitarnavachandrika of Raghunath Rath, Sanget Sarani of Narayan Mishra, Abhinaya Candrika of Maheswar Mohapatra and Abhinaya Darpana Prakash of Jadunath Singh. Besides them many books like Sangita Sara Boli, Sangita sastra, Swara Sara, tala Nirnay, Tala Sarvasara etc. were written more over vivid descriptions of classics of music found in alankar Granthas of Rasa Kalpadruma and Kavi Kalpadruma etc. Krishndas Badajena, the writer of Gita Prakash achieves the distinction of occupying a place in the royal court of Akbar. The historian Abul Fazal entitled him as outstanding and peerless musician.

Undying love for music of the Gajapati Kings helped to uplift the musical accomplishment of Odisha. By due arrangement of programs on dance and music in the premises of temples the Gajapatis not only encouraged the musicians but encouraged love or interest for music in common people. Gajapati kapilendra Dev the founder of the Surya Dynasty stages the Drama Parsuram Vijaya under his supervision which says about his love for art, Gajapati Purusottam Dev wrote Abhinava Gitagovinda following Gitagovinda, after him Prataprudra Dev stages the drama Lalita Madhaw by Rupa Goswami in the premises-'ranga Chakada' of Srimandira. Gita Govinda singing is compulsory in the Srimandir Strngthened the musical performances on Uccanga Sangita in Odisha. The musician Krishnadas Badajena had a place in the court of Mukunda Dev before he joined the court of Akbar. Similarly, in the court of Gajapati Narasingha Dev of Khurda the musician, Pt. Kavaratna Purusottam Mishra rendered his service for 25 years and after the demise of Narasingha Dev, he occupied a place in the court of Gajapati Narayan Dev of Paral and write Sangita Narayan but in the name of Narayan Dev. Following this tradition, the other kings too honoring the musicians in their court developed the music culture of Odisha.

In the view of ancient Natyasastra, the ancientness of the musical tradition of Odisha is to be taken into consideration. In later time, the sculpture of Buddhism and Jainism built in different parts the evidences of greatness of art and architecture of Odisha are revealed. The 'Carya Sahitya' of Buddhist written between 9th and 12th century some hints about music tradition of Odisha is found. Most of the writers of the Carya literature hail from Odisha and from the names of the Ragas; it can be said as one of the Ragas; it

can be said as one of the ancient signs of Odissi Sangita tradition. Because till now the 'Ragas' are written in the carya literature, still in vogue in Odisha. There 'Carya Gitis' with the mention of Raga are the first and foremost writings of Odisha. The great musical 'Kavya' Gitagovinda is considered as the post musical creation of Carya literature. Jayadev named the Raga and Tala in the beginning of lyric. At places, he wrote the process of the Raga. Although Jayadev is the pride of India, Odisha as his motherland deserved the glory and greatness. It can be hardly exaggerated if it is said his creation is the most valuable contribution of the musical tradition of Odisha to the Indian music.

From a very ancient time, the dance and music found its spiritual home in the caves, temples and holy institutions. In Odisha, a festival or ceremony remains incomplete bereft of dance and music. Thus, there is an unbroken tradition of dance and music in this eastern state since very ancient period of its history. Jainism said to be the earliest state religion of Odisha. The famous Jagannath temple built sometime after 1112 A.D. by Chola Ganga Deva of the Ganga dynasty. A number of dancing damsels are set to have been appointed for the services of the deity. This tradition is still maintained. They are called 'Maharis'. One of the witness dance sculptures in 'Bhogamandapa' the Jagamohana the Mukhasala and the Bada Deula and it is surrounding shrines built by his successors among Ganga and Gajapati dynasty.

The great poet of Odisha Sri Jayadeva wrote Gita Govinda in simple but lucid Sanskrit. In order to make people hear about the lilas (activities) or to make the drink the nectar of Krishna Lila Jayadeva wrote it in 12 Raga Ragini like Mangalagurjari, Malava, Basanta, Ramakeri etc. Consequently, people could sing them according to rhythm and preach the greatness of singing art of Odisha. Gita Govinda has spread all over India. By the time of Upendra Bhanja, the 12 Raga Raginis of Jayadeva had changed into hundreds of them. Being a part of the rich culture of Odisha, its music is also as much charming and colorful. Odissi music is more two thousand five hundred years old and comprises a number of categories. Of these, the five broad ones are Tribal Music, Folk music, Light Music, Light-Classical Music and Classical Music. Anyone who is trying to understand the culture of Odisha must take into account its music, which essentially forms a part of its legacy.

It is the most developed and systematized form among all the varieties of Odishan music existing now-a-days. Mostly it is performed in shape of Raga-Ksydrageeta-Prabandha-Gana, a form of Indian classical music evolved by the celebrated poet-singer Sri Jayadev. Jayadev ushered a new era in the history of Indian Classical music, which can be rightly identified as Jayadev music. The ingredients of the classical music like Raga-Tala-Geeta and Chhanda of Jayadev was introduced in the services of temple of Lord Jagannath and was accepted as temple music of Odisha. The evolution of Odissi music owes a lot to Jayadev and his composition the "Geeta Govinda". Later theorizing of Odissi music, however, has largely been a refinement of the region-centric groundwork laid by Kalicharan Pattanayak and his associates—despite the fertile theoretical possibilities of, for example, placing Odissi music within a wider field of courtly and devotional song practices that are found throughout Asia, Europe, and beyond.

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