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UPARUPAKAS IN ODISHAN NRUTYADHYAYAS

KEY WORDS: Uparupaka, Abhinavabharati Nrutya, Nrutyadhaya, Odissi Dance

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ABSTRACT

If we trace the origin of Sanskrit drama, it is the descendant of folk dance. Nritya depicts the beautiful rhythmic moment of limbs. With the development of time, it changed into facial expressions with musical compositions. Hence uparupaka is in between nrutya & natya. Uparupaka gave birth to rupaka & gradually Sanskrit drama & dance with visual, auditory & aesthetic feelings. Drama is further divided into lasya, erotic sentiment & tandava, and heroic sentiment. Bharata Natya presents rasa whereas rupakas are a whole treatment of the emotion, body, voice & expression. Avinavagupta in his Abhinavabharati referred like dombika, prasthanana, silpaka, bhanka etc. Dhanika also refers followed by Bhoja who invented 12 types of uparupakas, which are the shades of classical dance. Bhoja initiates kavya, chitra kavya & gitikavya like Gitagovinda. These were presented in Lord Jagannath temple in course of time. After the 17th century, Odisha poets composed Radha-Krishna rasa leela themes.

INTRODUCTION

Sanskrit drama is purely a dance drama. It had its origin in the folk dances; it sought materials for its development from different dances. Sanskrit drama reached the perfect form called rupaka after covering several stages of development like nr tta, nrutya, and uparupaka. Nr tta, the prototype of Sanskrit drama, is noted for its beautiful rhythmic movements of limbs. Nr tta later developed into nrutya in which expression of emotion was dominant. The movement of the limbs of the former (nr tta) gave way to the facial expression in the latter (nrutya). Nrutya, in due course, gave rise to the uparupaka, which is also called musical composition (nrutya prabandha). Song, speech, and dance were equally important in the uparupaka wherein emotions were expressed through the eyes of the actor who interpreted sentiment. It was the uparupaka which further developed into the full-fledged rupaka interpreting sentiment. Hence, the uparupaka marked the transition stage between the nrutya and natya. The timely innovations made in the plot, characters, speech, and sentiment of uparupakas must have risen to create rupakas or natya.

Ancient rhetoricians considered the uparupaka as a byproduct of two rupakas. But uparupaka is the precursor of the rupaka and not a byproduct. Sanskrit drama originated and developed from dance. It adopted different dances for enhancing the beauty of the spectacular (drshya), the audible (shravya), and the aesthetic (ranjana) aspects of a drama. Dances are also incorporated for enhancing the universalization and delight of a drama. Lasya incited erotic sentiment in a drama; tandava enhanced the heroic sentiment in it. Both kinds of nrutya and nr tta were included in a drama to express the several moods of the hero or the heroine with several emotions.

Bharata in his Natyashastra demarcates uparupakas presenting rasa without any accessories; it presents only a fragment of bhava. Rupakas present a whole entertainment. The presentation of the uparupakas was always natyadharmi. This kind of representation can be seen in the solo dances like Odissi and other classical dances, where aharya-abhinaya and vachika-abhinaya are engaged in a subtle way. After Bharata, texts devoted to music always discussed uparupakas, providing them a different status altogether. Later rhetoricians gave a few examples such as totaka, sattaka, and natika as full of dance and music.

Abhinavagupta in his Abhinavabharati referred forms like dombika, prasthanana, silpaka, bhanaka independent of rupakas. Another rhetorician, Dhanika, also refers to dancing of many uparupakas. The first regular work on uparupakas is

seen in Shringara Prakasha of Bhoja, who quotes twelve types of uparupakas as shigadita, durmallika, prasthanana, kavya, bhana, bhanika, goshti, hallisaka, nartanaka, prekshanaka, rasaka, and natyarasaka. This list depicts performances that developed after Bharata.

Uparupakas show the confluence of local culture with classical forms. Dr. V. Raghavan names these as nrutya-prabandhas. Uparupaka Srigaditam according to Bhoja's Shringara Prakasha presents a heroine from a respectable family complaining about her husband to her sakti. This scene strikes abhinaya of a classical dance form of India. In Odisha such compositions are abundant.

METHODOLOGY

The present study has been carried out entirely through secondary sources without any fieldwork. The methodology primarily involves a descriptive, analytical, and interpretative approach based on extensive literature review. The data and information have been collected from a wide range of scholarly materials such as books, research journals, articles, and authentic treatises on Sanskrit drama, Odishan dance, and aesthetics.

The analysis is rooted in classical texts including Natyashastra of Bharata, Abhinavabharati of Abhinavagupta, Shringara Prakasha of Bhoja, Sangita Narayana, and Abhinaya Chandrika. References have also been drawn from modern critical studies by scholars such as V. Raghavan, R. Chaini, F. Richmond, and others whose works provide essential insights into the evolution and classification of uparupakas within Indian dramaturgy.

The methodology follows a comparative textual framework to trace the interrelations between nr tta, nrutya, uparupaka, and natya, emphasizing the Odishan context where classical and local traditions have intermingled. Through systematic review and synthesis of existing literature, the study aims to reconstruct the conceptual development of uparupakas as reflected in Odishan Nrutyadhaya and temple-oriented performance traditions.

Evolution and Classification of Uparupakas in Odishan Nrutyadhayas

Bhoja refers to divisions of poetry, which apply to uparupakas; the divisions are:

- a) Kavya, where the whole emotions are told in one story, full of song and dance, set in one raga.
- b) Chitrakavya, where the story is interpreted by gestures sung in many ragas.

Under this, Gitagovinda is the exemplary giti kavya. This

valuable kavya by Sri Jayadeva has many imitations in Odia. Another uparupaka worth mentioning is the Goshthi Rasaka of poet Dindima. This work is also known as Piyusha Lahari; this was composed as a prologue to the great work Gitagovinda. Here, the main theme is the Rasa of Lord Krishna. Another uparupaka is Utsahavati Rupakam or Bhakti Vaibhava Natakam by Dindima Jivadevacharya. All the uparupakas were staged in the precincts of Lord Jagannatha temple.

These Uparupakas inspired Odishan poets of Vaishnavism after the 17th century to compose Radha-Krishna themes. All these compositions were based on ragas. Vernacular poets also followed this trend. Odishan treatises on music and dance gave different strata of classification without any elaborations. In Sangita Narayana, an authority on music, classical forms are mentioned which are uparupakas — perhaps prevalent in those days. They are:

1. Natika
2. Prakaranika
3. Bhanika
4. Hasika
5. Viyogini
6. Dimika
7. Utshavati
8. Chitra
9. Jugupsita
10. Vichitra

The author mentions sixteen types of rupakas, categorized under Deshi (local). Again, he gives twelve kinds of natta; under this category, he repeats the same set of names. The author proceeds to say that the Alamkara Shastras have all the characteristics of the uparupaka divisions.

Abhinaya Darpana Prakasha does not indulge in the uparupaka division; it only gives divisions like dances performed by men under the natya as:

1. Tandava
2. Nari Nrutya
3. Jangadi
4. Dhumatta
5. Bandha

Another variety mentioned is:

1. Lasya
2. Rasa
3. Vilasa
4. Hallisaka
5. Bhramari
6. Prerani
7. Chitra

These classifications show that the uparupakas have come to form a total metamorphosis, but when analyzed, it can be found that the basic elements of uparupakas are retained.

Abhinaya Chandrika, an Odishan text, gives altogether a different kind of classification. The author divides dance forms of Odisha. He divides dance forms into Tandava and Lasya on one hand, and the Lasya is again divided into Yugma and Yauvata. Under the Yauvata division come many folk forms. Medha is a form where the dancer covers his face, chest, and stomach with wooden legs, hands, etc. Canchuputa is another form where dancers wear big beaks and paint themselves in unnatural ways. Prerani is a form where dancers perform bhramaris with jumps; this is recorded in Abhinaya Chandrika. Such forms find place in Abhinaya Chandrika.

Thus, the Vernacular Variety of Dances Explained in the Later Odishan Treatises are:

- a) Adaptation of older forms
- b) Slight variations are done
- c) Sometimes the forms are nomenclature only
- d) Totally new forms are explained

It definitely shows the development of rupakas from

uparupakas. These uparupakas set a trend showing its blend with the local forms. A confluence of local culture with classical form began to form uparupakas. From these uparupakas classical forms evolved and started to gain individuality. Dr. V. Raghavan names these as nrutya-prabandhas.

We can cite an example from Visvanath Kaviraja's Sahityadarpana and Bhoja's Shringara Prakasha — it is Srigaditam. This particular uparupaka is said to show love in separation. Kaviraja explains it as a heroine from a respectable family complaining about her husband to her sakhī. Bhoja explains kavya and chitra kavya, these are not types of poetry but divisions of uparupakas. The definitions of these are as follows:

- a) If there is one story full of song and dance set to one raga, it is classified as kavya.
- b) In chitrakavya there will be varied ragas interpreted by gestures; this seems to be a dance form.

Under the division of chitrakavya we can include Odia giti kavya — the Gitagovinda. After the composition of Gitagovinda came numerous imitations. Gajapati Ananga Bhimadeva made singing and dancing of Gitagovinda compulsory. Gitagovinda can also thus be categorized under uparupaka. Now we can study a few uparupakas of Odisha:

Gosthi: Under this category is Gosthi Rasaka of poet Dindima. This poem is also known as Piyusha Lahari. This is supposed to be composed as a prologue to the Gitagovindam. This drama was staged in the precincts of Jagannath temple, Puri. This author also composed another uparupaka with the subject of Rasalila known as Vaishnavamruta. This composition can be placed in 1525–1535 CE; play Vaishnavamruta can be placed under the variety Hallisaka.

Nartanaka: Under this uparupaka we can place Ushavati Rupakam or Bhakti Vaibhava Natakam composed by Dindima Jivadeva. In this Kashtha Nrutya is highlighted. Here an attempt is made to prove the excellence and bliss attained by the devotees of the Lord.

The study of Uparupakas within Odishan Nrutyadhaya highlights a rare aesthetic junction where the textual heritage of Natyashastra meets the performative practices of regional devotional art. The Odishan examples, particularly those aligned with the Gitagovinda tradition, demonstrate how Uparupakas acted as vehicles for bhakti rasa — transforming sacred narratives into structured dramatic compositions. Unlike the pan-Indian evolution of rupaka, Odisha's uparupakas retained a distinct ritual context, deeply integrated into temple performance, and served as cultural templates that eventually shaped Odissi dance's narrative abhinaya tradition.

CONCLUSION

It definitely shows the development of rupakas from uparupakas. These uparupakas set a trend showing their blend with the local forms. A confluence of local culture with classical form began to form uparupakas. From these uparupakas, classical forms evolved and started to gain individuality. Dr. V. Raghavan names these as nrutya-prabandhas.

The study reveals that uparupakas served as the artistic bridge between nrutya and natya, synthesizing musical, gestural, and dramatic elements into cohesive compositions. The Odishan examples — such as Gitagovinda and the Vaishnavite rasa traditions — demonstrate how local devotional performance evolved into a refined classical form, sustaining both ritual purpose and aesthetic delight. Through this evolution, uparupakas not only preserved the foundational principles of Bharata's Natyashastra but also localized them, shaping Odisha's distinctive Nrutyadhaya tradition that continues to influence its classical arts even today.

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