

# **TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA**

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**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I certify that the thesis, TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA, is an original work done by me under the supervision of Professor Brijendra Narain Sinha, Professor, Department of Hindi, University of Hyderabad. I also certify that the thesis or part thereof has not been submitted for any other Degree or Diploma of any other University / Institute.



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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA, submitted by Dr. PRADEEP KUMAR, for the DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THEATRE ARTS to the UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD, is based on the results of studies carried out by him under my guidance and supervision. This thesis either in part or wholly has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or diploma.

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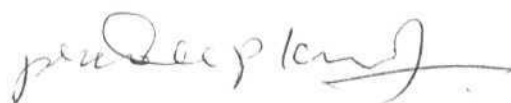
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My grateful thanks are also due to Head of the Department, Dean of the Faculty, for providing the facilities to complete my study.

My sincere thanks are due to the Registrar, Osmania University, for the encouragement given for pursuing this study.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'pradeep kumar', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hyderabad

(Dr. PRADEEP KUMAR)





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# INTRODUCTION

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### INTRODUCTION

Maharashtra is very popular for folk art forms. The people of the villages, while their day-to-day works, such as agricultural works, driving carts, while harvesting, while ploughing the fields, while breaking stones, while going to functions in groups, in the premises of Temples, at religious functions, these folk art forms are being performed.

In the soil of Maharashtra, there are seventy per cent of artistes were born and they are well versed in one field or the other. During the period between thirteenth century and seventeenth century, a number of Saints took birth in Maharashtra. They were not only saints but were also good poets. Their main intention was to develop the society through their literature. One such main Saint was Namdev.

The poetry of the Saints was also used in the folk art forms. Traditional Tamasha was also one of the important folk art forms during that period. This folk form was well received by the Peshwa Kings as well as by common folk.

The traditional Tamasha folk form, to entertain the common people, the Tamasha kalavans were performing this art form since the period of Peshwas till today. The Tamasha companies (phads) are not amateur companies and are famous by way of their Professionalisation. With the aid from Government and from the villagers, these Tamasha Phads are giving performances and attracting the hearts of the people.

The people of various professions of Maharashtra are participating as artists in the Tamasha form. The Tamasha performed by these people is called "Khel Tamasha." The literature for these Khel Tamashas are being gathered from the famous Shahirs and from the educated people. The writers of the scripts are almost from upper castes like Brahmins.

Before the form of Tamasha, "Gondhal" was the very famous form. This Gondhal form was very popular in the States of Karnataka and Maharashtra. This form was being performed during the festive occasions. The presenter of the form is called "Gondhali." The prayer of Devi is the main theme. The instruments used in this form are Tun-tune, Tak, Kanjira and Sambai. The devotees of Shiv and Parvathi are called Gondhals. Gondhal is one of the very ancient traditional

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art forms. The stories of Gondhal were connected with devils. The word Gondhal is derived with the mixing of two words "Gan" and "Dal" (Gan + Dal = (iondhal). The description of (iondhal) can be seen in most of the poetry written by Saints.

(iondhal is much more ancient than Tamasha. The style of singing in (iondhal) was being adopted by Tamasha form. The traditional instruments used in Tamasha are also identical with those of (iondhal).

Vaghya Murali Ka Jagaran like (iondhal), this form is also a famous form of Tamasha. This is the description of the prayers of the deity Khandoba. The marriage of the girl, who was born with the blessings of Khandoba, was being performed with that deity Khandoba himself. The girl wears a nine yard saree, kumkum on her forehead, a kerchief in her hand, and dances by exhibiting her left palm to the audience and dances with the co-artiste. Vaghya

Tamasha form took the character of Murali from Jagaran and changed the character into a dancer in Tamasha. The facial expressions and other things were also adopted by the Tamasha form from Jagaran. Tamasha lavnis and the songs of Jagaran are almost identical.

"Lalit" is the other form which inspired the Tamasha. The Lalit form is the combination of various village types. From these village types, some parts were taken and being presented. The social and village affairs were being discussed by those characters in this form.

The other folk art form of Maharashtra is "Dashavatar," which can be found mostly in the Konkan area. This Dashavatar form resembles the Yakshagana form. In Dashavatar, the story moves between the present and the past. Likewise, in Tamasha also, the same trend is being followed.

In addition to the above forms, there are a number of other folk forms that prevail in Maharashtra. They are Dhandar, Sogi-bhajan-bharud, Bahurupi Khel, Kalgi-tura, Sawal-Jawab and Jhagda, Aikeev, Nachatya Lavni (entertainment lavni) — all these are discussed in detail in the forthcoming chapters.

Before proceeding to write this thesis, I have visited several villages of Maharashtra for the collection of material, for the past three years. While doing field-work, I had to go to very interior villages also. Kolhapur, Satara, Karad, Meeraj and Pune are the towns where I met

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several Tamasha Companies The Aryabhushan Tamasha Company of Pune provided me with some very useful information

The interior village, Narayangaon, which is one hundred kilometres from Pune, where I met Chandrakant Dhawlapurkar Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal and gathered information from its proprietor, manager and other artists

I visited the places during summer season During this season, about fifty companies of Tamasha assemble in Narayangaon village every year The people from various villages visit these companies here and book the companies for their performances in various villages

I stayed with all the Tamasha Phads in Narayangaon and gathered valuable information from all the above mentioned fifty odd companies

As I am a Stage Artist and have introduced myself as a stage artist to them, I received special treatment and they have treated me as a guest and provided me due hospitality such as food and living accommodation in their tents Though the food they provided was very simple, the way of their warm approach and the affection they showed towards me was very good

While the performances were on, I have observed the scenic design, lighting arrangements, orchestra stage set-up, makeup styles, costumes, etc very carefully

During my stay, I have visited Babu Saheb Jintikar's house in Pune The family members of Babu Saheb welcomed me and presented the writings of Jintikar *Vag Natya* and *Shahiracha Raja Natak* are the books I received as presentation from them These two books were of much help in my research

Further, with the co-operation of Dr Krishna Kirvale, Lecturer in Marathi, Department of Marathi, Pune University, I have gathered the literature related to traditional Tamasha though we were unknown to each other, by my introduction as a teacher of Osmania University, he spent his valuable time and also arranged transport and he too accompanied me This shows his greatness He presented me a book, *Ambedkari Shahiri: Ek Shodh*, written by him Through this book also, I gathered valuable information on Tamasha

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Sri Jadhav Natya Samsar, Costume Supplier of Drama and Tamasha, near Datta Mandir, Budhwarpet, Pune, have also provided me with valuable information related to the costume and makeup used in Tamasha

A number of Tamasha artists gather everyday at Bharatha Natya Mandir and at Bal Gandharva Natya Mandir. I had the opportunity of gathering information from the artists who gathered at the above two places also. There is a Tamasha Contractor by name Mr. Pradeep, who is with Bal Gandharva Natya Mandir, also provided me with some information on Tamasha.

A senior retired Professor of Marathi of Osmania University, Professor Maya Sirdesai, who is a well-experienced Lok Natya writer of Maharashtra (who is presently residing at Barkatpura area in Hyderabad) also gave guidance in my writing this thesis. Dr. Shobha Deshmukh, Head, Department of Marathi, Osmania University, and Dr. Vilas Deshpande, Department of Physics, Osmania University, helped me in solving the language problem. In case I found difficulty in getting the meaning of some of the Marathi words, I took their help and solved the problem.

For the early completion of my thesis, through his ample experience in folklore forms, Professor Brijendra Narain Sinha gave guidance in proceeding to write the thesis by supervising me as a Guide. He supported me in all ways through his knowledge of various folk art forms such as Tamasha, etc. His narration of folk forms are very attractive. He used to give advice, immediately, on which I was approaching him for guidance.

Retired Professor M. Radhakrishna Sarma, Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology of Osmania University, and Professor Isaac Sequeira, Ex-Dean, Faculty of Arts, Osmania University, were the pathfinders in the Tamasha Research Methodology.

With the help and co-operation of all these, I have completed my research work successfully. I have done justice to my research work, to the best of my knowledge. Even if I have omitted anything in Tamasha, those points will be rectified and will be included while publishing my thesis in the form of a book.

With the information of Tamasha experts, the interviews with Tamasha Kalavanthas, the field work done in Maharashtra, the information gathered through libraries and from well wishers,

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I have completed the table work of my thesis. I gave full concentration in my thesis mainly on the performance part rather than the literary part. After completion of my table work, I have divided my thesis into seven chapters. I have tried my level best to write each chapter precisely.

In the First Chapter, I have discussed about the Indian Traditional and Folk Theatre.

The traditional and folk theatre of India has not been discussed from the historical point of view and there is no mention of these forms in most of the Sanskrit works. I have discussed from this point of view also.

The comparison of Western and Indian Folk forms, and the criticism of these Indian Folk forms by Western scholars have also been discussed.

The influence of Traditional folk forms on contemporary Theatre Productions, and the making use of these traditional forms as the source in contemporary theatre for the success of the Production is also been discussed.

The contemporary theatre people are misusing the Traditional and Folk forms by using these forms in their productions without having any knowledge of these forms, thereby diluting the original forms. The success of some of the producers/directors of contemporary theatre by using these traditional folk forms in a proper way has also been discussed. The performances will be a flop if the folk forms are used blindly without having grass root knowledge and on the other hand, if these forms are used by creating atmosphere, etc. and with good knowledge of these forms, then the plays will be a great success. I discussed these with examples.

The practice of traditional folk theatre, the conventions of speech, actor-audience relationship in traditional theatre is also discussed by me in detail in this chapter.

Traditional theatre is "Actor's Theatre." The importance of an actor in the traditional theatre has also been discussed.

At the end, the steps to be taken for the development of these traditional folk forms has also been discussed in detail.

In the Second Chapter, the various folk art forms related to Tamasha have been discussed. The important folk art forms of these various types are — Gondhal, Vaghya Murali Ka Jagaran, Dashavatar, Dhandar, Bahurupi Khel, Kalgi-tura, Sawal-Jawab and Zagda, Aikeev, Nachatya

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Lavni (entertainment lavni), Lalit, etc. These forms were discussed in detail and written in the chapter

All the items like origin, performance, style of production, occasion of performance, verse style, music style, type of musical instruments used, of all the above forms have been discussed, and the style of adoption of all these forms in Tamasha is also discussed in detail

In addition, proper references, examples, related xerox copies of photographs, etc. are also included in the chapter

Almost all the origin of Tamasha from other folk forms can be known from this chapter. Moreover, the birth of Tamasha can be seen from the other above mentioned folk forms

Important references are shown at the end of the chapter

In the Third Chapter, discussion regarding the origin of Tamasha Theatre is held. The birth of the Tamasha word, whether the word is an Indian one or a migrated one is being discussed in this chapter in detail. Moreover, the traditional Tamasha Theatre of the Peshwa Period, the structure of Tamasha before the Bhakti period is also discussed and included in this chapter

The changeover of Tamasha from traditional Tamasha into modern Tamasha, the particulars of which are also given in this chapter

At the end of this chapter also, the important references have been given. Xerox copies of photographs related to the subject have also been enclosed

In the Fourth Chapter, the infrastructure of Modern Tamasha Phads have been discussed in detail. For the organisation of a Tamasha Phad, the required number of technical staff (backstage crew), the items that are essential for the performance have been discussed in this chapter. Most importantly, I have discussed on the subject like Tamasha Phad, Owner of Tamasha Phad, duties of manager, duties of backstage crew like stage designer, electrician, stage incharge, duties of the musicians and their responsibilities have been discussed

Tent is the very important property for the Modern Tamasha Phad. The tent used by the Tamasha Phad resembles that of a circus tent. The discussion of the tent is held in detail



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Further, the erection of the stage, green room, booking counters, proprietor and manager's rooms, kitchen, lighting equipment, sound system and propaganda and transportation used by Tamasha Phads during their performances at various places have been discussed in detail.

In the Fifth Chapter, I have discussed about the production styles of Tamasha. In modern Vag Natya, as discussed earlier, there is an inspiration of Maharashtrian folk forms. There is an inspiration of Modern Theatre which has also been discussed. The inspiration of Parsi Theatre, the inspiration of Hindi Cinema also on modern Vag Natya, have been discussed in detail in this chapter.

In Modern Tamasha also, the traditional forms like Gan, Goulan, Batavani, Lavani, Mujra are the same as in the traditional Tamasha. From this angle also, I have discussed it in detail. Besides these traditional forms, a new form, "Farce," which is used in modern Vag Natya, has also been discussed.

The Vag Natya story-based drama which follows the (Jan, Goulan, Lavani, which is almost the concluding part of Tamasha, is also included in this chapter.

The items and literature that are present in Vag Natya are discussed by giving examples. The musical instruments that are used in Vag Natya such as Dholki, Halgi (Daph), Tutune, Tal, Mridang were also discussed in detail.

Khandesh Tamasha, Vayedesh Tamasha (Marathwada and Vidarbha regions) have also been discussed in this chapter.

The "Mausi" character which was introduced in modern Tamasha is also discussed in detail by giving examples.

In the Sixth Chapter, discussion regarding the lifestyle of Tamasha Kalavants, Shahirs, Proprietors and backstage crew is held.

In this discussion, importantly, my focus was on their native place, education, their economical and social background, present lifestyle and their future sources.

Most of the Kalavants are from the villages only. Once they enter into a Tamasha Phad as Kalavants, they become addict to this form and they almost dedicate their entire life to the Tamasha performances. It is not easy for them to come out of this profession and even if they do

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so, they return back very soon, because of their involvement and association with the Tamasha form

In Maharashtra, there are about four to five hundred Tamasha Phads in vogue. Most of them are found in Marathwada, Vidarbha, Khandesh and Western Maharashtra areas.

The names of some of the famous Tamasha Associations with their addresses are given in this chapter.

The names of some of the famous and most popular Tamasha Kalavants along with their addresses are also given.

Further, the names of famous Tamashigirs, Singers, famous Songadias, Shahirs, both past and present, are also given in this chapter.

As part of my field work, I met different Tamasha Phads, Tamasha Kalavants, Shahirs and others and held interviews with most of them. One of the interviews which I took is mentioned in this chapter.

Also, I have included the interview of Dadu Indurkar, famous Tamasha artist, by the famous playwright Vijay Tendulkar, in this chapter, which was published in the *National Centre for Performing Arts Quarterly Journal*, Vol 2, No 4, December 1973.

In the Seventh Chapter, I have discussed regarding Tamasha and other folk forms of India like the famous folk form of Bengal — Yatra, — and also discussed regarding the famous touring folk theatre of Andhra Pradesh — Surabhi Theatre.

After the Seventh Chapter, I gave a brief conclusion of my thesis.

I have collected a number of Vag Natyas during my field work and am annexing some of the Vag Natyas at the end of my thesis.

The books which I read, the books I used to understand with the help of others, for my translation of material from those books, the books which I referred for the collection of valuable information and the standard and recognised journals which I referred for writing this thesis have been mentioned in the Bibliography.



# CHAPTER - I

## **INDIAN TRADITIONAL AND FOLK THEATRE**



## 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, Sagarinandi, 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.

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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."

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)."



### 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."<sup>14</sup>

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."<sup>15</sup>

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

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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.”<sup>6</sup>

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. *Ghasiram Kotwal*, *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.”<sup>7</sup>



### 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



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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., Mumbaiya 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

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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.

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- 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.<sup>11</sup>

### 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

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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,

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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."<sup>13</sup>

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

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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.<sup>14</sup>

### 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.

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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."

### 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" <sup>16</sup> (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

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and the delivery of dramatic speech. Repetition, superimposition, simultaneous speaking and alternation of the speech between the character and the chorus are sonic 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.<sup>17</sup>

In almost all the folk theatre forms of all languages in India, the forms have chorus. Inst 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."<sup>18</sup>

### 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



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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."<sup>19</sup>

### 1.8 — 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 "Terukoothu," 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

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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<sup>120</sup>

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.

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## CHAPTER - II

# **TRADITIONAL FOLK FORMS OF MAHARASHTRA**



## II. TRADITIONAL FOLK ART FORMS OF MAHARASHTRA

### 2.0— INTRODUCTION

Tamasha," a Natyakala folk form, is a very popular form in Maharashtra. The traditional folk forms in Maharashtra are identical to one another. Historically also, Tamasha Theatre has adopted several art forms. Though it has adopted several art forms, it retained its individuality in several ways. Gondhal, Vaghya Murali Ka Jagaran, Lalit, Dashavatar, Dhandar were the traditional art forms of Maharashtra as well as folk art forms of Maharashtra in olden days. These art forms connected with spirituality and also entertained the public. These forms grabbed the attention of the public through their good presentation and through their language. The forms were very famous and gained popularity with the public. The dance form of Vaghya Murali, the presentation of story in Gondhal attracts the public. Lalit is a form connected with Bhajans. Dashavatar is an art form which is a mixture of dance, song and story presentation. All the above forms are an integral part of Tamasha. But the spirituality shown in other forms could not appear in Tamasha, hence showing some sort of variety.

In Tamasha, to show a spiritual sense, they have created two characters – Gan and Goulam. Tamasha form was started in the villages and were performed during the fairs and festival seasons. Tamasha form was formed by adopting various folk art forms of Maharashtra. Tamasha has its own recognition in the society like other forms of Maharashtra. The main cause for the popularity of Tamasha is that it has all the Rasas in the presentation such as *hasya rasa*, etc.

### 2.1 — GONDHAL

#### 2.1.1 — ORIGIN

This art form is very popular in the States of Karnataka and Maharashtra. During festive occasions in houses like marriages, Upanayanas etc., this art form is being enacted. The presenter of Gondhal is called "Gondhali."

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"The prayers of Devi is the main theme in Gondhal. Tulja Bhavani, Renuka Devi's prayer or the ancestral deity of the owner of the house where the occasion is going on takes place at the beginning. Gondhal uses Tuntune, Tak, Kanjira, Sambal instruments and sing the prayers and dance to the tune of the instruments. Gondhal comprises of two parts. Gan + dal = Gondhal. is the derivation of the word. The group of devotees of Shiva and Parvathi is also called Gondhal, or Ganadal. Godal is a word which is also in common use. Gondhal's law of presentation is connected with devils (bhootas). The expressions on the faces of the presenters coincide with the acts of devils. Some say that the root of Gondhal is related to the stories of Jagadamba and Parasuram. Gondhal is one of the very ancient traditional art forms. Dasopant wrote a book titled *Geetarnav*, in which there is a mention of Gondhal."<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1.2 — PREACHINGS OF SAINTS

The description of Gondhal also appears in the preachings of saints as follows

"The golden conch (shell) blows on Tuesdays and the drums are also played. This is the kingdom of Mata Ambika. The crown made of pearls is on the head of Mata and thousands of devotees are pouring in to have darshan. There are nine lakh worth of pearls in the ornaments worn on the hair of Mata. Nathni (nose ring). Law and order is very good in the kingdom of the King called Kadamba (Raja).

The description of King Kadamba can be seen in the Gondhal songs in the areas of Tuljapur. Shinde Bedekar writes — During the period between 538-600 A.D. there was a war between Raja Kccrti Varma and Raja Kadamba in which Kadamba was the winner. By this it is known that during sixth century itself there was a mention of Tuljadevi. In *Sangeet Ratnakar*, Maahanubhav Pant's *Shishupala Vadh*, *Rukmini Swayamvar* also there is a mention of Gondhal art form."<sup>2</sup>

### 2.1.3 — GONDHAL PERFORMANCE

"There are two parts in the performance. The first part is called "poorvang" and the second part is "uttarang." In poorvang, the prayers of the deity is held and the participants together (Gan) sing songs. They sing Bhajans of various deities. In the uttarang, they present the characters of mythological stories in Gondhal. Gondhal is a traditional form of one sect and hence the most

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important thing is the prayer of their deity. They install an idol of the deity on a small cot, by covering new cloth and put the idol on rice. Kumkum and haldi is also served. Plantain trees are placed to decorate the cot on the four sides of the cot. Nut and beetle leaves are kept on rice. Nut is treated as Lord Ganesha. A kalash with water is kept on the rice on which a coconut is placed. An oil lamp is placed on one side and prayers will be held.

This is the method of performing worship of all the instruments. After worship, the persons who gathered have their dinner and start Gondhal proceedings. All the performers invite the deities of the particular village to witness the Gondhal performance. After this, the Gondhali sings a song

Kolhapurchi Lakshmi — Gondhala ye  
Baycechi Ganapati — Gondhala ye  
Tuljapurchi Bhavani — Gondhala ye  
Dharthi maate — Gondhala ye  
Shahile shahile — Gondhala ye<sup>4</sup> (Marathi)

Come — Kolhapuri Lakshmi to listen to Gondhali  
Also come Ganesha to listen to Gondhali  
Tuljapuri Bhavani you too come to listen to Gondhali  
Mata Bhoodevi you also come to listen to Gondhali  
And all other deities — all of you are also invited to listen to Gondhali

After inviting all the deities, the participants say:

"He Kay jhalan Bhagatraj?"  
"He Gondhal jhala, Ambadai Ambadai"  
"Aaj Gondhal kuthe kuthe jhala"  
"Tuljapun, Mahuri, Maha maha thikani"  
"Bhaktane kay ichhele"  
"Dhan, dravy, de mulbaal de"  
"Dile ase karaa mag"<sup>5</sup> (Marathi),



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What is this happening Bhagat Raj?

Gondhal performance is going on here Bhavani<sup>1</sup>

Anywhere else happened such Gondhal performances?

In Tuljapur etc. places, the Gondhal performances took place

What are the wishes of the devotees?

Money, peace and welfare of their families<sup>1</sup>

Then let us (we, the performers) *recommend* their wishes to the  
deities for fulfilment

After this, they sing a song (gan).

Morya Ganapati re Ganaraja!

Kitce vinavu tula maharaja!

Tchatees koti dev devata!

Sarv aadhi gananayak!

Tujha dhak tinhi takla!

Dila sarap tu chandralla!

Shanbhar koti gan jamle!

Mayinya Aangni yecte ramle!

Peer paigambar hi ramie!

Kitee vinavu tula maharaja! <sup>6</sup> (Marathi)

Ganesh, O Ganesh! I pray to you at the beginning of thirty three crore deities<sup>1</sup> You are very famous in all the three worlds! Crores of devotees are drowned in your bhakti by their prayers!

Peer, paigambars have also become your devotees! How many requests could I make, O Ganesha!

In this manner, the description of all types of varnas are held and then begin the prayers of Tuljabhavani and Renukadevi.

Poorvang ends with these prayers.

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### 2.1.4 -- UTTARANG (second part)

The story begins in this part. Dance, drama and music mingle with each other during the presentation of the story. These stories are mainly based on mythological stories. *veera rasa*, *Sringara rasa*, *adbhuta* and *hasya rasas* are the main *rasas* in the storytelling. Harishchandra-Taramati, Renuka, Jamadagni, Parasuram, Shravanbal are some of the stories. At the end of the presentation, the prayer of the deity is held. Some Gondhal stories are creative ones such as *Veersen*, *Champusen*, *Jayarani*, *Panch Phoolan ki Katha*, etc. All these are creative stories. The presentation style is of a special type, mainly in dance. They take the help of prose and poetry in their presentation through dance. The main Gondhal storyteller is called Nayak" and other accompanying artists are called Gondhal or Gondhali.

### 2.1.5 — COSTUME OF GONDHAL NAYAK

Gondhals wear very loose shirts from shoulder to feet which touches earth. A cloth is tied to the waist. Necklaces made of shells are worn around the neck, and kumkum and haldi adorn the foreheads. This is the type of dress worn by the Gondhal storytellers. There is a close resemblance between the Nayak of Gondhal and the Sardar of Tamasha form.<sup>7</sup>

The Gondhal presentation is a mixture of prose and poetry. There is also a close resemblance between the presentation of stories in Gondhal form and in Tamasha art form.

Gondhal is a very ancient form when compared to that of Tamasha. The style of singing in Gondhal was adopted by the Tamasha form. Moreover, the traditional instruments used in Gondhal and Tamasha are also identical —• they are tuntune, Tak and Kanjira.

## 2.2 -- VAGHYA MURALI CHE JAGARAN

### 2.2.0 • INTRODUCTION

Like Gondhal, Vaghy Murali che Jagaran is also a traditional art form of a certain sect. Like Gondhal, Tamasha has also adopted several forms from Vaghy Murali.

Vaghy Murali is the description of the worship of deity Khandoba. All communities of people of Maharashtra worship Lord Khandoba. He has different names such as Martand, Movvar

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Karunakar, Mailar and Khandoba. Khandoba was very popular during the eleventh century. Khandoba temples are situated in Jejuri, Pali, Mansuli, Mylarhng and Nagdurg. Every year, fairs are held on a grand scale.<sup>8</sup>

### 2.2.1 – MALLARI MAHATYAM

It is written in a Sanskrit book *Mallari Mahatyam* during 1260-1640 A.D. that Lord Shiva took the incarnation of Khandoba to kill the rakshasas by name Mani and Mal.

There is a tradition in Maharashtra that after the worship of Khandoba and with the grace of Khandoba, if anyone gave birth to a male child he is named as Vagha and if a female child is born, she is named as Murali.

The Vaghas and Muralis are left in society and they have to spend their whole life in the devotion of Lord Khandoba. Vaghya treats himself as the obedient dog of Khandoba and always barks like a dog.<sup>9</sup>

### 2.2.2 – THE COSTUME OF VAGHYA

Yellow coloured dress and a bag made of tiger skin is always hung on his shoulders, in which he always keeps kumkum and haldi (he calls these as Bhandar). A bell, shell (conch), damaru (drum), and trishul are the other things that he possesses. He enacts different characters by playing Khanjeri instruments during Jagarans (nightouts) on various special occasions.<sup>10</sup>

### 2.2.3 – MURALI

The marriage of the girl, who took birth with the blessings of Khandoba, is held with Khandoba himself. She wears a nine yard saree, with kumkum and haldi on her forehead, a handkerchief on her right hand, a bell tied to the kerchief. During the performance, she exhibits her left palm to the audience and dances with Vaghya."

This type of dance can also be seen in Tamasha art form

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### 2.2.4 — JAGARAN (procedure)

First, they **clean** the earth and then decorate with rangoli. In between the rangoli, a cloth is spread and is decorated with wheat, rice, haldi and kumkum. This type of decoration is called Gadi-bharni. Then, the silver idol of Lord Khandoba is placed in the centre. Kumkum and haldi play the key role in the worship or performance of pooja. Haldi and kumkum are spread after the prayer. In Jagaran also we have two parts poorvang and uttarang. In poorvang, all the artists (gan) sing songs together, and in uttarang prayers are held. Before the Jagaran, there is a jugalbandi in between Vaghya and Murali; the competition of song and dance between them is very interesting. Comedy is a part of Jagaran songs. Different types of songs are sung. Mahalsabanu's love songs, Odujbua Nagpurkar, Dagdubawa sali Silorkar are some of the writers of Vaghya Murali songs. The songs mainly depict the village culture.<sup>12</sup>

Tamasha and Murali presentations are same and identical.

Tamasha form adopted the Murali character as it is from Jagaran form and converted the character into a dancer in the Tamasha form. Moreover, the Tamasha form adopted the facial gestures and other things of Murali as it is from Jagaran. Different songs of Jagaran and lavni songs of Tamasha are identical and same. Therefore, the Tamasha and Vaghya Murali che Jagaran forms coincide with each other.

## 2.3 --- DASHAVATAR

### 2.3.0 — INTRODUCTION

Dashavatar is also called Mela. This is a dance form connected to a particular sect, and it is also a traditional form. This form can mostly be seen in Maharashtra's Konkan area. This art form resembles the Yakshagana form. Jalna, Rajapur, Malvan, Vermurli villages and the surrounding areas are very popular in presenting the Dashavatar form. Dashavatar performances are held during the rituals, festivals and fairs. The Mandalis (companies) that perform Dashavatari forms are:

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Parsikar Dashavatari Mandal

Mochmadkar Dashavatari Mandal

Balwalkar Dashavatari Mandal

Aajgaonkar Dashavatari Mandal <sup>13</sup>

The arrangements begin from the morning itself. The stage is set with coconut leaves. A juloos (procession) of the idol of the Devi is held. When the procession reaches the temple premises, the Dashavatari Lokmurti ritual begins.

### 2.3.1 — POORVANG

Dashavatari traditional art form is presented in two parts — the first part is poorvang and the second part is uttarang. In poorvang, first the character of Lord Ganesha, then the priest, then Lord Saraswathi enter. Then the character of Shankasur enter onto the stage. Shankasur, the rakshas, steals the Vedas from Brahmadeva. Brahmadeva kills Shankasura and regains the Vedas. The Shankasur and the priest characters create comedy, and the comedy created by these characters resembles the comedy of Songadia (comedian) in the Tamasha form <sup>14</sup>

Poorvang ends here.

### 2.3.2 — UTTARANG

In uttarang, they start a story — Navnath, Kathasar, Bhagavan, etc. are some of the stories from which they choose some incidents. Characters who are sitting among the audience prior to the start of the performance start coming onto the stage from the middle of the audience. Storytelling in Dashavatar is very precise and simple in language. Dashavatari performance thereby attracts audience very quickly. <sup>15</sup>

### 2.3.3 — ORIGIN

Originally, Dashavatari is a Southern art form, but it had its journey from South to Konkan area and settled there. Vishnudas Bhawe, a Marathi writer of Sangli writes that he started Dashavatari dramas in Marathi after witnessing the original South Indian Dashavatari dramas.

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Tamasha form has adopted the same plot from Dashavatari. Dashavatari's main subject is of a mythological base. Hence, Dashavatari has become an inspiration to Tamasha troupes and they took up mythological-based subjects in their presentations.

In Dashavatari, the story runs between the present and the past. In Tamasha also, the plot is similar. In Dashavatar, the story is under the control of the Sutradhar. So also in Tamasha, the story is under the overall control of the Sardar.

### 2.4 — DHANDAR

#### 2.4.0 — INTRODUCTION

This traditional folk art form can be seen in Maharashtra, mostly in Marathwada, Khandesh and Vidarbha regions,

This is also a traditional folk art form very popular in those regions. There are ten to twelve members in the group to present Dhandar. They took small incidents to begin their performances. They use Dhol, Shigada, Halgi, Jhaj instruments for singing songs. As this is a traditional drama, they give importance to prayer-worship. The worship is performed to Mahadev, Mesamai, Posamai in Marathwada region; Khandoba, Yathamma, Dhakamma in Vidarbha region. A piece of Devakumbha tree is placed in the centre of the stage and worship is held. Then the Dhandar group begins their programme. There are two parts in Dhandar. One is Dhandarneeth and the other one is Dhandar. In Dhandarneeth, they narrate the story of God through singing, whereas in Dhandar all the artists form a circle and start dancing. In olden days, in Telugu Yakshagana, Dhandak was the name of a Chandassu (prosody). This is why Dhandar is similar with Dhandak of Yakshagana, and therefore this is being treated as a part of Yakshagana."

#### 2.4.1 — POORVANG

There are two parts in the presentation of Dhandar. Poorvang (the first part) begins with prayers. After prayer, the Sutradhara and Vidushak (comedian) come onto the stage. In Gondhal and in Jagaran also, they pray to Lord Shankar and the Dhandari enter the stage. They consider that God is present there and they start dancing. During the dance, Lord Ganesha enters, then

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Hanuman enters, dancing to the tune of dholak. The character of Hanuman creates comedy by kicking players of the musical instruments on the stage with his weapon (Gadha). After that the eleventh avatar enters the stage and they start playing jokes on Dashavatars.

### 2.4.2 — UTTAR ANGI

The second part of Dhandar depicts social, historical, fantasy and mythological subjects.

### 2.4.3 — COSTUMES

Costumes are very rich in Dhandari dances. Ganes and Goulans sing songs to the tune of tuntune with the rhythm of dholki. The dancers dance accordingly, which is very colourful and attractive. The names of some Dhandar dramas — Chandra Deepak ka Vanavas, Bhai Bahen ka khoon, Sajauni ka Vanvas — are some of the stories on which they stage performances. Humour is interjected in between, but most of the stories are based on Karuna rasa.

## 2.5 — SOGI, BHAJAN, BHARUD

### 2.5.0 — INTRODUCTION

This art form is very popular in West and South Maharashtra regions. Kirtan, Lalit, Bharud — the combination of these three forms is the result of the form Sogi, Bhajan, Bharud. The traditionalists of Varkari and Datta communities perform this form by way of bhajans. Song, dance and drama are part of this art form. Humour also exists in this form. The subject is mythological and social. A number of saints of Maharashtra wrote Bharud literature.

### 2.5.1 — BHARUD PERFORMANCE

Bharud is presented in villages during spiritual meetings, fairs and festivals. At the beginning of the Bharud performance, they sing bhajans. After this, they take small incidents and create characters. The characters are very near and dear to social life. "Shankara Parvathi Yatra" in mythology; "Paduka Pattabhisheka" "Seeta Apaharan" of Ramayan, Satyavan-Savitri, Radha-Krishna Samvad; Lakshmi-Saraswathi Samvad; Rama-Ravan war, etc. are the mythology-based

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subjects used. First the Sutradhar narrates the story and the other artists accompany him. The Sutradhar entertains the audience through dialogues and the other artists through their costume and dance. The dialogue delivery is very simple. The language used is very simple and the main intention of the artists is to entertain the common general public. There are no rules and regulations in the presentation of this form. The artists are at their liberty and direct themselves and give presentations. The same type of liberty is given to the artists of Tamasha form also. This is one of the reasons for the adoption of this Sogi, Bhajan, Bharud form in Tamasha theatre.<sup>18</sup>

### 2.5.2 — SATIRE

Satire was the most popular form of verse composition. The form of verse devoted to satire was called *Bharud* (which literally means a long-winded tale), and the saint-poet *Lvknath* is noted for the universality of his satire in this genre. His targets were the village *patil* (headman) and his shrewish wife, the moneylender and his wife, and diverse other village officials. These *bharuds* truly reflected the life of the villages in Maharashtra four or five centuries ago.

### 2.6 — BAHURUPI KUKI

#### 2.6.0 — INTRODUCTION

Tamasha art form has adopted some of the forms from Bahurupi. Bahurupi artists are very poor and also illiterate. It is very difficult to make both ends meet for them. They have to move from one place to other for their livelihood. They portray different types of characters and entertain the public. They have no principles or rules for the performances of the art form. They go according to the taste and desire of the villagers. Bahurupi khel is called by various names in different places in India. Bahurupgyaru in Karnataka, Rayaran in Khandesh, Rayadar in Marathwada. One man enacts different types of roles and hence the name Bahurupi. The artist renders the dialogues of the characters, as many characters as he enacts. In addition to the dialogue he also acts, with facial expressions changing from one role to another as the character demands. In olden days, the Bahurupi actors were engaged as spies by the kings.<sup>20</sup>



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### 2.6.1 — BAHURUPI PERFORMANCE

In Santh literature of Maharashtra we can see the Bahurupi subjects. The presenter of Bahurupi gives performances by the roadsides and at crossroads, where four roads meet, during the daytime. After the performance, the presenter goes to the house of the landlord and gives performance and receives alms or awards from the landlord. Bahurupi creates humour by way of dialogues which entertain the public. Rama, Krishna, Shankar, Hanuman are some of the characters the Bahurupi enacts for the entertainment of the public. Sometimes they also enact the roles of women characters. Bahurupi actors have very long curly hair. The Bahurupi performers have costumes of their own and also the ornaments required for the performance of various characters. Their acting style is medium and melodramatic, movement of body is more in this form. The Bahurupi actor dances as well as sings songs. Before the presentation of the story, the Bahurupis sing a song. The following is one of the very famous Bahurupi songs.

Lagnala chala tumhi lagnala chala  
Salubai, Kalubai, Malubai  
Lagnala chala, tumi lagnala chala  
Lekar badha ravaabala navracha ravankla  
Sasra deva valchalneela lagnacha chala  
Jevayala keli chikarvalachi khichdi  
Todi lavayela dagdachi vadi  
Jevayala keli paraana poli  
Mithayevji shivdachi poll jevalaya chala  
Hit kay jevaycha nahaaya  
Tikhatyc khayacha nahaayc  
Tumi Aiyabigar chalayacha nahin  
Lagnala chala tumhi lagnala chala <sup>71</sup> (Marathi)

Come, let us go to the marriage — come all of you — Salubhai, Kalibai, Malubai  
Come let us go to the marriage — come all of you.  
Tie the children to the pole, take husband along with you to cough.

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Keep father-in-law in the lawns and come to the marriage  
Khichdi and buttermilk are there to eat and drink  
Sweets and strong sweets are there to eat  
Sweet bread is also prepared to eat  
There is dust of the nose without salt to eat  
Come — come to eat  
There is nothing to eat here  
There is nothing to eat there.  
But no need of fasting  
Your presence is a must  
Come let us go to the marriage — come all of you

### 2.6.2 — DIALOGUES

Bahurupi performers prepare dialogues of their own and create humour. They also criticise the leaders and other evil things of society through their dialogues. They create humour through exaggerated dialogues. They hypnotise the audience by narrating the wonderful things and impossible things. This type of comedy form has also been adopted by the Tamasha form.

In Tamasha form also, they create humour through exaggerated dialogues. This is almost the true copy of Bahurupi form. The Bahurupi actors are prevalent now in the surrounding areas of Pune, Sangli and Kolhapur. Their way of living is very poor. There is no permanent place for them to stay and hence it is not possible for their children to go to schools and hence almost all of them are illiterate. They have no permanent property etc. of their own.

### 2.7— KALGI-TURA

#### 2.7.0 — INTRODUCTION

This is the oldest traditional art form of singing songs. Kalg-tura has two parts — part one is Kalg and the second part is tura.

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The Kalgi part is called Shakti and the Tura part is called Shiva. The poets of Kalgi are called Mahasresths. The Tura poets are called Brahmashresths. Kalgi and tura are two parts of the poems. An ornament worn on the turban is also called Kalgi-tura. This Kalgi-tura is more popular in Karnataka than in Maharashtra. Kalgi-tura songs are also sung by women in Karnataka since olden days, but women are prohibited from singing Kalgi-tura songs in Maharashtra.

### 2.7.1 — KALGI-TURA PERFORMANCE

Kalgi-tura performers meet in the village centre after having their dinner. They make their own arrangements for seating. Before beginning the performance, the leader of one group Pradhan Shahir comes forward and two other artists accompany him. Pradhan Shahir holds Dappu and starts singing the song by beating the dappu instrument. The accompanying artists play tunes. In this way, the Kalgi-tura programme begins. The Gan sings the song first and afterwards the Goulani sings. Women sing the songs accompanied by Lavni dances. The performer of Lavni dance wears a nine yard saree, gold ornaments, tie ghungrus to the legs which weigh one and a half kilograms for each leg, and perform the Lavni dance rhythmically.<sup>12</sup>

In Maharashtra, all folk forms begin with the singing of songs by Gans. So also in Kalgi-tura, Gan sings the songs first. Kalgi-tura lavni is adopted in Tamasha and is used occasionally. Tamasha artists like Pathe Bapu Rao were Kalgi lavni singers in their beginning stages.

### 2.7.2 — KALGI-TURA POETRY

Kalgi-tura poetry related to Goulans were most popular in Maharashtra. In this poetry, the singing of Goulans exists. This tradition can be seen in West Maharashtra, Khandesh and in Marathwada. In Goulani, the description of romance between Radha and Krishna is described, which is very popular. All the Saints -- Gnaneshwar, Tukaram, Namdev etc. wrote Goulani Kalgi-tura bhakti literature. Kalgi-tura can be treated as the first form of Tamasha and later on the Tamasha has been developed. Kalgi-tura teams question each other and this questioning depends on the talent of the particular parties. Kalgi-tura poetry and Tamasha literature have a very close resemblance. Traditional forms of Tamasha were the inventions of Kalgi-tura poetry.

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In Kalgi-tura lavni, there are two parts — one is spiritual (bhakti) and the other is story-based lavni

### 2.73 — SAWAL-JAWAB AND JHAGDA

In this form, the Kalgi side Shahir and Tura side Shahir question and answer each other. The questioning is called Puran and the answering is called Tika. The questions and answers of Kalgi-tura are as follows;

Shankache gane daphavar lavan nishan  
Ankush tura bandh jariche keyde bhashan  
Shabd ukaalna mudi halkan hairan  
Chukle akshar volkhu aayecna  
Ani aana kasec kalaina  
Subh asubh kahi samjhe na<sup>23</sup> (Marathi)

The song of questions are playing on Daph  
A small feather is on the head and what is its proud?<sup>7</sup>  
Not understanding anything but only moving its head  
Wrong words cannot be understandable (traceable)  
Why are you not understanding now?<sup>7</sup>  
The difference between good and evil is not understandable

The quarrel begins with these type of questions between Kalgi and Tura teams. This type of question-answer sessions are also prevalent in Tamasha form. Tamasha form has adopted this art form from Kalgi-tura Shahirs. There are no rules and regulations in the writing of Kalgi-tura and the Shahirs have total liberty in writing Kalgi-tura songs.

### 2.7.4 — KALGI-TURA LITERATURE

Some examples on Kalgi-tura writings are — Sulochana's name is given as the daughter of a saint; Hanuman's marriage with a monkey by name Kesari, what is the weight of the earth?; how much of water is there in the sea?; what is the height of Meru Parvat (mountain)?<sup>7</sup> These are some

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of the questions. The language used by Shahirs was symbolic and the answers to the questions are also based on principles.

For example

Question	Answer
Mul Prakriti	Adimaya
Teen Tatwa	Mann - buddhi - ahankar
Teen Shareer	Sthool - Sookshma - Karan
Teen Nadiyan	Ida, Pigla, Susubhna
Aur-Matruka	Akar, Ukar, Makar, Adhaomkar
Char Soonya	Ardha soonya, Madhya soonya, Urdhva soonya, Neh soonya <sup>74</sup>

In addition to these fourteen chakras, about ninety two knights (warriors) and many other questions exist,

This type of Sawal-Jawab form was adopted by Tamasha. The presentation style of Sawal-Jawab was adopted by Tamasha as it is from the original form and is presented in the same form

This form, Sawal-Jawab, can be accepted as the prematured form of Tamasha

### 2.8— AIKEEV (PLOT)

#### 2.8.0 — INTRODUCTION

Entertainment was created through Lavni — spiritual-based songs. The development of this have a plot. The plot is called Aikeev. The plots of Aikeev were based on social and mythological subjects. The important Aikeev plots were -•- Chandravali ki lavni, Kaliyug ki lavni, Kashibai ki lavni, Lav-Kush, Hanuman ki Shadi, etc. Sometimes they perform farce to create humour.

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### 2.8.1 – AIKEEV LAVNI PERFORMANCE STYLE

The Lavnis are performed in Aikeev type for about three hours. The performance and development of the plot is dramatic and the characterisation is very descriptive and attractive. The style of presentation is colourful and beautiful and hence the form attracts the audiences well.<sup>25</sup>

Shahir Ramachandra Gangaram's "Kashibai ki lavni" is very popular in Maharashtra. In addition to this, "Station Master ki lavni," "Pativrata ki lavni," etc. are also performed in Aikeev style. Shahir Kashinath Martand's "Kaliyug ki lavni" was being performed in Aikeev style throughout Maharashtra which was very popular in those days.<sup>26</sup>

The beginning of Aikeev lavni is similar to the Vag lavni style of Tamasha form. The main theme in Shahir lavnis were based on shringara rasa and hence the form attracts the public very easily. The lavnis are very symbolic in nature. The narration of women's physique from head to toe is the important part of lavnis. Lavni shahirs became very popular and gained name and fame through this type of narration.

### 2.8.2 — AIKEEV LITERATURE

Shahir Umababu's "Mohana Batau" is an Aikeev literature in which the shahir has narrated not only the physical beauty of Mohana Rani but also the internal sense of beauty. He has described the beauty of Mohana Rani very romantically. The shahirs not only describe the physical beauty of women but also describe the internal beauty which is not visible to the eye. The narration is in simple language and in between the narration, the shahirs use idioms and popular sayings here and there.<sup>27</sup>

Mandir gheli palangi besli joda jamla  
Vichar ck jhala sang bhog bhidvala  
Wudvina rang garag rahila jiji (Marathi)

Stepped into the temple and both the minds mingled  
The thinking (thoughts) of both the minds also became same  
After that they united each other.

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I had the opportunity of witnessing **the** lavni "Kaliyug ki lavni" which was performed for four hours. They **narrate the** story along with lavni. The presentation style of storytelling was through dialogues, through dramatisation which was very attractive. Tamasha actors have adopted almost the same Aikeev form literature. Aikeev lavnis are of serious type. Humour and entertainment lavnis are found in Nachatya lavnis.

### 283 -- NACHATYA LAVNI (ENTERTAINMENT LAVNI)

The famous Shahir, Dasgunji, wrote this lavni which is based on humour. This lavni was written in free style as can be seen in Tamasha.

For example:

Sola singar, bathies nakhre  
striyan ang! basic  
Vastar stricha anth lagena  
Brahmadi ka phasic  
Sadhu santh keertan varnithi deyi  
puraav asle  
Balees nakhtyachi naar sangna sarc  
lok hasne lage (Marathi)

Sixteen types of makeup, and thirty two styles are there in the body of women

No one has understood woman's mind, even Brahmadeva till now

Saints have narrated this

People in the world began to laugh when they started narrating

the thirty two styles of women.

The important and famous folk art forms like Gondhal, Vaghya Murali ka Jagaran, Lalit, Dashavatar, Dhandar, Sogi-Bhajan-Bharud, Bahurupi-khel, Kalgi-tura, Sawal-Jawab and Jhagda, Aikeev, Nachatya lavni, which are prevalent in Maharashtra have been discussed in detail. The presentation style, lavni style, style of songs, music, dramatic element of all the above folk art forms have been adopted by Tamasha form in one way or the other.

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The mixture of all the above folk art forms is the result of the present Tamasha form. The modern Tamasha Vag Natya is also the combination of all the above folk art forms.

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# CHAPTER - III

## **ORIGIN OF TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE**

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



### III. ORIGIN OF TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE

#### 3.0 — INTRODUCTION

Although some form or the other of a folk theatre rooted in the rural soil has existed in Maharashtra for the last seven centuries, it is not clear exactly at what stage the Tamasha as we know it today had its first distinct beginnings. The work of the Marathi saint-poets, spread between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries, is replete with references to a variety of forms of folk entertainment. Indeed, saint-poets like Eknath and Namdev have themselves made extensive contributions to the verse compositions which were utilised for this entertainment.<sup>1</sup>

These entertainments were presented by itinerant professional troupes and subsidised by the village authorities. Certain hereditary professions, such as those of the barber, the dhobi, the potter, and the oil miller, also annually presented a performance characterised by song, dance and mimicry. In what was called the *Khel-Tamasha* (*Khel* means "play"), the various assignments on and off stage were given traditionally to members of particular professions. The barber, for instance, would be in charge of make up; the butcher, a Muslim, would play the *dholki* (a percussion instrument resembling the *mridangam*); the carpenter would play the *daf* (a kind of drum), and among those who supplied verse compositions would be the Brahmins of the village.<sup>2</sup>

#### 3.1 — WHEN AND HOW?

The folk art form which is called Lok Natya these days (previously known as Tamasha) is a traditional folk art form.

Today Tamasha is being known as Lok Natya. There is a difference between Tamasha and Lok Natya. There is a difference in their presentation style. Villagers of Maharashtra have not recognised Tamasha as Lok Natya. The present form of Lok Natya is the traditionally continuing form of Tamasha. The name "Lok Natya" came into existence during the late 1970s. The cultured and educated society named the Tamasha form as Lok Natya, but the traditional rural people still treat this form by its old name. All the Tamasha companies are prefixed by Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal and this has become a tradition. In rural areas of Maharashtra, the dance type of folk forms which are performed on stage are also known as Lok Natya.<sup>3</sup>

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### 3.2 — ORIGIN OF THE WORD TAMASHA

The word Tamasha is derived through mixing of two words — Tam + Asha = Tamasha. The form Tamasha was a very blamed form in those olden days. High cultured and upper caste people never used to witness the form and treated witnessing the form as a sin. Hearing the sound of the instrument tuntune and dholki was also treated as a sin by the women of some upper castes.

### 3.3 — ORIGIN OF THE WORD TAMASHA IN MARATHI LANGUAGE

Tamasha (masculine gender), Drushya (vision), Pradarshan (enactment), Manoranjan ka dekhva (to witness the entertainment), Samarambh (beginning), Gammath (fun), Majedar drushya (interesting features), Kusthi (wrestling), Ladai (fighting), Natak (drama).

In Turkistan, the word Tamasha is a well known and famous word. Marathi language has borrowed this word from Urdu and the meaning has also been changed in Marathi. Tamasha in Marathi means "a specialised performance which is the mixture of dance, different types of roles by girls, participation of ladies, singing of lavnis, etc."<sup>5</sup>

The main objective of this form was to entertain the rural folk. The meaning of the word Tamasha has come from Tamashgir. The meaning of the word Tamasha in Urdu and Persian languages is "entertainment, wonderful scening."

In the dictionary of Indian languages (Bharatiya Kosh), the meaning of Tamasha is given as "an Arabic word — Darshaneeya drushya — visualised scenes."

The writer of Tamasha form is known as Shahir, which is also an Arabic word. Some intellectuals feel that this art form Tamasha was begun during the reign of Adil Shahi, thereby the form was known as Tamasha and the writers of these forms are known as Shahirs; both are Urdu words and the impact of Urdu is more on Tamasha form. "Gammath," a part of Tamasha, is also an Urdu word. This form Gammath was well received and appreciated by the kings, high cultured people and also by the common folk. Gammath has become Khel Tamasha in the later periods. Perhaps this Tamasha form has entered into Maharashtra with the entry of Muslim rulers. During the thirteenth century (1290 A.D.), Santh Gnaneshwar gave a mention of this form in his literature. During the period of the development of drama, Gondhal, Lalit and Swang were the famous folk art forms.<sup>6</sup>

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According to an old man connected to a Tamasha Company

"Tamasha is a Parsi word. This word came to Northern India with the entry of Muslims. In those days, merchants from Arabia used to visit India for their business and they might have seen this form and would have named the form as Tamasha, for the first time."

Though the Indians are familiar with this word, the same is not in common use

As per the writings of the twelfth century, it can be known that the Lok Natyas which were performed during fairs and festivals were called as Gammath. After that period, the name Gammath has been changed into Khel Tamasha.

There were two folk forms — Gondhal and Jagaran, from which the present form Tamasha has been evolved. Why because in Gondhal form also, the artists sing songs for entertainment, create humorous scenes by asking questions. The same trend was followed in Tamasha also. Further, in Tamasha the performers sing Lavni songs and girls dance in different types to entertain village folk. This is nothing but the tradition of Gondhal. In this way, it can be seen that the Tamasha form is a very old one.<sup>8</sup>

There is a mention of Tamasha in the book *Gadha Saptasathi*, in which in the ninth story it was mentioned about Ranga bhoomi and Purva rang. The dance, dramas performed on stages were of the descriptions of the then society. There was also mention of participation of women in the performances. By this book, it can be known that women were actively participating in playing roles in those days itself.<sup>9</sup>

After the entry of Muslim culture into Maharashtra, the whole trend of the form has changed and this name Tamasha was also given by them.

According to Sri Lakshman Maha Jadhav, the author of the book *Marathi Rangbhoomichi Jadan Ghadan*, "the meaning of Tamasha is the performance of different characters, to perform puppetry, circus feats, singing lavnis and dances by girls etc."<sup>10</sup>

According to Marathi Viswa Kosh, "the origin of the word Tamasha is from Urdu and migrated to Marathi and can be had from the beginning of Muslim rule in South India in 13th and 14th centuries A.D."

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In the book *Eknathke Ek Bharood* (art form), there is a mention of Tamasha in a line "bade bade Tamasha dekhe."

Some Tamasha performers say that this Tamasha form was taken from Holi festivals which were in vogue during the times of Shivaji. There is a tradition of worshipping Gods during the days Holi festival in the whole nights, which is still in existence, and to entertain the devotees, they used to perform dances. The same tradition is being followed since the period of Shivaji till todate.

There is a community Mahar and Mang. The children of these communities are asked to give performances on these days. Even after the festival season, the children of these communities continued to give performances for their livelihood. After some time, girls have occupied the places of boys and began giving the performances.<sup>12</sup>

Tamasha form might have had its origin by this way.

### 3.4 — TAMASHA DURING THE PERIOD OF PEESHWAS

There is no historical data accurately known to date but in Maharashtra it is believed that Tamasha was started during the period of Peshwas. By this, it can be known that this art form has began in the seventh century A.D.<sup>13</sup>

According to Namdev,

Tamasha was started between the period from 1689 and 1707 A.D. During this period, Muslim soldiers entered into the soil of Maharashtra and occupied several places. These soldiers who left their homes long ago were feeling lonely and bored and they needed some sort of entertainment. So they invited the local artists and arranged to give performances for the soldiers. The main item was the Nayakin ka natch (the dance of the heroine) and this type of dance might have developed into Tamasha form. But there is no documentary proof for this argument. But one thing is sure, that the Tamasha form has its birth from the ancient traditional folk forms of Maharashtra, why because there is more similarity of the olden folk forms in Tamasha.<sup>14</sup>

During the festivals, different types of folk forms were being presented in Maharashtra and Karnataka States. They are called "Radha Natch" in Maharashtra and "Radhan Aya" in the State of Karnataka. In this Radha Natch, the dance is performed in accordance to the tunes of dolak

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and the songs. It is said that on witnessing this type of dance, the Peeshwa kings have encouraged the Tamasha form.

On interviewing the Tamasha Company organisers, it was told that the Tamasha form was introduced during the period of Peeshwas.

“Nachya Ponyacha Tamasha.”<sup>15</sup>

Tamasha during the period of Peeshwas was also being started with the prayers of Cian. The prayers were on Lord Ganesha and on other Devi, Devatas. After prayers, Radha-Krishna love songs were being sung by Goulani, i.e., by the women singers. After that different styles of Lavnis were sung to entertain Peeshwas. Lavnis contain a theme and story.

The following names were given to the characters during the period of Peeshwas in Tamasha form.

Sardar (kudari) (Sutradhara), Songadia (comedian), Natchya (dancers), Dholkia (drummer), Surne (singer). Like this, there were only limited artists who took part in the performance of Tamasha. All these characters form a Tamasha group. Shahir Parasuram's Phad was very famous during the period of Peeshwas. There were thirteen artists in that Phad.<sup>16</sup>

The popular Shahirs (poets) of Tamasha during the period of Peeshwas were Bhaginaji Bhad, Parasuram Sagan Bhau, Anand Padi, and Ramjoshi.

This type of Tamasha companies were mostly located in Kolhapuri area.

The Tamasha artists were giving priority to entertain Peeshwas rather than the common people. Almost all, they were treated as Asthana Kalakars (artists who were appointed in palaces by kings). The Tamasha artists of Peeshwas period were having their livelihood, safety and all sorts of facilities through Peeshwas. The present day Tamasha artists are roamers, they move from one village to another for their livelihood by giving performances.<sup>17</sup>

### 3.5 — TAMASHA STRUCTURE

Villages are the heart of India. There are more villages than towns and cities in our country. The common people of villages perform the folk art forms. Those who do not give any of the performances enjoy themselves by witnessing these performances.

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The villagers do hard work throughout the day and while taking rest during the evenings or in the nights, they gather in the middle of the village and witness the performances and forget their tiredness.

On the occasion of festivals, fairs, while working in the fields, while driving their carts, while bringing water by women folk, at the time of births, at the time of marriages, on the occasion of death, various types of folk songs are being sung on different occasions. In addition, at the time of fairs of the village deities, these folk songs are sung and dances performed<sup>18</sup>

In Maharashtra, in almost all the villages, the festivals and fairs of village deities are occasionally being held. In these fairs, villagers participate with enthusiasm. The head of the village forms a committee, with the help of governments, and conducts the festivals. The finances for the conduct of these festivals are collected depending on the status of the villagers and the festivals are organised very richly. At the site of the festival or worship, to entertain the devotees, the heads of the village arrange cultural programmes. Importantly, they prefer to arrange Tamasha programmes.

The village heads go to the Tamasha parties, pay advance to the Tamasha organisers and fix the programmes in advance. The Tamasha parties arrange their performance requirements as decided by the village head such as the nature of Tamasha to be performed, duration etc and participate in the festivals. Moreover, Tamasha performances are being conducted to entertain the villagers.<sup>19</sup>

Tamasha companies visit various villages and as per the wish of the villagers decide the subject and arrange to give the performances. They charge between ten to thirty thousand rupees per show. As the form Tamasha stands first in entertaining the village folk, it has popularity among common folk.<sup>20</sup>

Like Gondhal, Vaghya Murali che Jagaran, Dashavatar, Dhandar, Kalgi-tura etc, Tamasha also can be divided into two parts — poorvang and uttarang. In poorvang, gan, goulan and batavani's meeting is held. In uttarang, Vag Natya is being performed. Indian traditional art forms begin with the prayers of God, like that in Tamasha also, the prayer of Lord Shankara is held at the beginning (Gan and Lavni).



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### 3.6 - KHANDANI TAMASHA

The Tamasha artists prospered well during the period of Peeshwas, socially as well as economically. In Rajasthan, the Rajput kings used to appoint Chandra Varadai and some other artists as their Asthana Vidwans, like that Peeshwa kings also appointed Tamasha artists in their Asthanas. With the change of Maharashtra rule, the kingdom of Peeshwas also came to an end. Almost all the Peeshwa kingdoms came to an end and this effected the Tamasha artists. It has become necessary for the artists to come over to society and give performances for their livelihood. However, as a needbase, they have adjusted to the new style of life and started giving performances to the common folk. **This** type of Tamasha was called Khandani Tamasha. In other words, the tradition of Tamasha took birth from then only.<sup>21</sup>

The first performance of this kind (Khandani Tamasha) was given by Umababu Sawaljakar, Patthe Bapurao, Bhaupakkad, Heeru Sanu, Shiva Sabha, Kaulapurkar, Dagdubaba Sali Shirolkar, Bhau Bapu Naraingaonkar, Rama Kumbhar Vardhan Gadkar, Bapurao Kupwadkar, Naik Kemrikar, Bapurao Purankar, Sawla Aurangapurkar, Nana Dhulwadikar, Pandurang Kurkumbhkar, Namdev Lavlekar, Shankar Ausarika, Tukaram Khedkar, etc.<sup>22</sup>

After the beginning of Khandani parampara of Tamasha and after going into public, the form has gained popularity. To attract audience, Tamasha phad organisers have mixed various folk forms available in Maharashtra and performed the Tamasha with new vigour. Comedy was given most importance in the Tamasha. Cheap and vulgar (double meaning) dialogues were also used and for this purpose they have created a role — Songadia — to entertain the audience.

A number of Kalavants enacted the role of Songadia (comedian) since the Khandani Tamasha was born and have become very famous and gained popularity. The main artists who performed the role of Songadia were Dadu Indurika, Kalu-Balu, Datta Mahadeek, Vitchal Weldode. These names have become very popular among the common folk. In addition to these, Danoba Tambe, Vithabhai Naraingaonkar, Haribhau Ancheerka, Rasulbhai Pinjari also gained popularity in enacting the role of Songadia in the entire Maharashtra.<sup>23</sup>

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### 3.7 - TAMASHA AFTER THE FALL OF THE PEESHIWA DYNASTY

Tamasha form has changed its form during the coming years. In the beginning there were only ten or twelve artists taking part in the performances of which only two or three were lady performers. The subject was mostly based on mythological or historical events. As the Tamasha artists became very poor after the fall of the Peeshwas Dynasty, the costume and make up that was used by them also became very poor and of cheap quality. They were using bullock carts as the mode of transport to move from one village to another to give performances. There was no safety for their lives and were living under self protection. They were having very meagre income through the productions, even though the Khandani Tamasha artists continued their performances and for doing justice to their profession and developed the form Tamasha.<sup>24</sup>

The number of performers have increased manifold in the Tamasha Phad in the coming generations. During its beginning periods of Tamasha, the performances were being given by the downtrodden people, but later on all corners of people began giving the performances. In the beginning days of Tamasha, the audience of Tamasha were treated as unwanted persons by the upper caste people, and Brahmins made it a rule not to witness the Tamasha performances. Like Brahmins, women of other communities were also prohibited from even going to the places where the Tamasha performances were going on. With the change of time, all types of society people of Maharashtra began treating Tamasha with high standards. During fairs, the Tamasha Phads were being invited to give performances. It is to be noticed that the number of Tamasha phads which were very limited in the beginning have increased manifold these days. After gaining popularity, the income of the phads have also increased.

The Tamasha phads have procured several modern things for their comfort. Buses for the Kalavanths, lorries, trucks for lifting stage materials, jeeps for their publicity, cars for the use of owners of the phads.

As the financial position of the Tamasha phad owners became sound, they have begun imitating movies. They started copying the setting, musical instruments, orchestra, costumes mainly of ladies from movies. Circus type of tents were being maintained which can accommodate about three thousand audience at a time.

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### 3.8 — TEXT OF MODERN VAG NATYA (TAMASHA)

The text used was poetic in traditional Tamasha but in Vag Natya (modern Tamasha), the text has been converted into prose form. This change has brought more dramatic elements in Tamasha performances. They have adopted the dramatic elements unknowingly. Besides this, modern dance, modern music, modern scenic design, special effects, sound techniques etc. have also been adopted in modern Vag Natya.<sup>25</sup>

Prior to 1950, there was a tradition of Sardar in Tamasha but from 1950 onwards, the tradition of Sardar has vanished totally. In modern Vag Natya, after the introduction of prose in texts, a lady by name Pavla joined the Tamasha. "Mausi" was the character that was portrayed by that lady and the role has gained more popularity.<sup>26</sup>

From then onwards, all the phads have started introducing this type of role in their performances.

### 3.9 — INFLUENCE OF CINEMA ON TAMASHA

Cinema in India was started in 1913. The initial stages of cinema was of mookie type without sound and dialogues. Though there was no sound and dialogue in them, the Indians gave preference to cinema. By that time, the traditional Tamasha was there in many parts of Maharashtra. But there was no effect of mookie cinemas on the Tamasha phads. The Tamasha phads have adopted only the costumes from those cinemas then. In 1932, the cinema started with sound. After the invention of talkie cinema, songs, dialogues and other types of special effects were started to be used in cinemas. With the change of cinema from mookie to talkie, there was a change in Tamasha phads also. Traditional Tamasha has changed into Vag Natya (modern Tamasha).<sup>27</sup>

Like movies, the modern Tamasha organisers also started singing songs, dancing, adopting cinema music and developing their own songs based on cinematic rhythms, in their Tamasha performances. The acting styles were also changed and the artists started imitating cine actors. Though they have adopted movie styles, they often use the mixture or combination of olden traditional forms like Gondhal, Dhandar, Vaghya Murali che Jagaran, Dashavatar etc. to give their performances. By mixing all the olden folk forms, the Tamasha has lost its originality.



The **Kalavanths** had full freedom in acting during their performances in olden Maharashtrian folk forms but later on, after the introduction of modern Tamasha, some limitations were fixed to Kalavanths in their acting. They have to act as per the directions of the particular phad director. Though the Kalavanths in olden days had full freedom in their acting they used to take their elder artists' suggestions required in creating and development of their roles.

### 3.10— BAN ON TAMASHA

After Independence, at the time of the then Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Sri Kher, received a number of complaints from all sections of society about the increased vulgarity that was being used in Tamasha and after going through these complaints and after finding the reality, he has imposed a ban on the performances of Tamasha. After the imposition of ban, all the Tamasha phad owners were distressed and became nervous and helpless. By that time, several hundreds of Tamasha phads were giving performances. By this ban, thousands of kalavanths became unemployed. As the kalavanths were not aware of any other work except performing Tamasha, they became helpless and had to struggle for their livelihood. The imposition of ban not only threw the kalavanths onto the roads but it also had an effect on their families.<sup>29</sup>

After seeing the condition of the kalavanths, some of the well wishers, senior phad organisers, senior artists have appealed to the government to lift the ban, keeping in view the poor condition of the **Kalavanths**. The persons who took active participation in the lifting of ban were Obasahib Mujumdar, Bapusahib Jintikar, Popatlal Saha, Ahmed Seth Tambe etc. who tried their maximum to lift the ban on Tamasha.<sup>30</sup>

In April 1949, a Maha Sabha was held on Tamasha at Aryabhushan Theatre in which all the Tamasha people (Tamashgirs) assembled. The senior Tamashgirs stressed the need of lifting the ban on Tamasha. After the Mahasabha, all the participants have passed a resolution for lifting the ban and to save the Tamasha Kalavanths.<sup>31</sup>

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### 3.11 — TAMASHA SUDHAR SAMITHI

After the Maha Sabha at Aryabhushan Theatre in 1940, Balasaheb Kher formed a Samithi called "Tamasha Sudhar Samithi." Datto Vaman Potdar was its President. The other members of the Samithi were N. R. Pathak, Mama Warekar, Sopandev Choudary, G. L. Thokal etc.<sup>32</sup>

The members of Tamasha Sudhar Samithi have framed some rules, regulations, aims and objectives that are to be followed while performing the Tamasha. The aims and objectives are -

- 1 The heroine of the Tamasha should not sit in front of the gate for the purpose of publicity
- 2 Vulgar and double meaning songs and dialogues should be removed from the performances
- 3 Vulgar and double meaning dialogues should be removed
- 4 Vag Natya (modern Tamasha) should be censored by the Censor Committee, before presentation.
5. Audience are prohibited from touching the heroines, women characters while giving any rewards or money.<sup>33</sup>

All the Tamasha phads have accepted the rules and regulations, aims and objectives that were framed by the Tamasha Sudhar Samithi and have promised to keep their word. The members of the Samithi submitted these rules and aims to the government and after going through all these carefully, the government lifted the ban on Tamasha. Sri Morarji Desai, the then Home Minister of Maharashtra, also played a key role in lifting the ban on Tamasha.

After enforcing the rules of Tamasha Sudhar Samithi, the Tamasha phad organisers have faced great difficulties in giving performances. Because of non availability of vulgarity and other vulgar dialogues, the audience were creating problems during the performances and the phad organisers were facing trouble in controlling these audience.

The Vag Natyas produced after 1953, the complete script of which should have been sent to the Censor Board and after scrutiny, the Board was giving a certificate for the performances. After the introduction of the above rules and because of censorship, the Tamasha phad organisers have made a number of changes in their production. Like this, Vag Natya came under the purview of the Censor Board. The independence of Tamasha phad organisers and the Kalavanthas came to a standstill.<sup>34</sup>

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After the introduction of censorship on Tamasha, the permission of the area Tahsildar and the local police personnel was made compulsory before the performance of Tamasha. The written permission of the owner of the site where the Tamasha is being performed was also made compulsory.<sup>35</sup>

### 3.12 - • DEVELOPMENT OF TAMASHA

After 1953, Tamasha phad organisers were following the rules and regulations framed by the Tamasha Sudhar Samithi scrupulously and were searching for various ways of attracting the public.

Shahir Baburao Poonekar started the methods followed in movies such as music, song, design and have written the scripts accordingly for the performance of Vag Natya. The number of members of phads have gone up manifold from five to six members before that. Though the Tamasha has developed in many ways, they have been following the old traditions and that is the reason for the popularity among village folk. As they are following the olden traditions in Vag Natya and hence Vag Natya is also called Tamasha, otherwise the name Tamasha might have vanished from the scene. The traditional Tamasha forms of Maharashtra are of two kinds. One is Khandesh Tamasha (Dhule and Jalgaon areas) and the other is Vayedesh Tamasha (Marathwada and Vidarbha areas).

### 3.13 — KHANDESH TAMASHA

This form is very popular in the areas of Jalgaon, Dhulia to Khandesh. In this type of Tamasha, at the beginning of the performance, there is a tradition of singing by a group of seven gans. In the end they present Vag Natya. The speciality in Khandesh Tamasha is that the Lavni is in the form of verse and the dialogues are of prose form.<sup>36</sup>

The works of this Khandesh Tamasha can also be available in Hindi. There is also a difference in the use of musical instruments in Khandesh Tamasha.

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### 314 — VAYEDESH TAMASHA

In Khandesh Tamasha, seven members (gans) sing the song at the beginning whereas in Vayedesh Tamasha only five gans participate in the singing. The raga, tala and pallavi of this Tamasha is very systematic. Though the artists are not trained in classical music, they sing very well. This type of Vayedesh Tamasha is prevalent in Western zones of Maharashtra only.<sup>17</sup>

The presentation of text is in prose and verse form. At the beginning of Vag Natya, the gan sings a song in which the whole of the meaning of the Vag Natya is being explained. Moreover, in between the Vag Natya, they present colourful lavni dances. These lavnis are called "Takni Lavnis." In Vayedesh traditional Tamasha, Gan, Goulani, Batavani (farce), Vag Natya and all such elements exist.

The social life of both the Khandesh Tamasha artists and that of Vayedesh Tamasha artists is almost identical.

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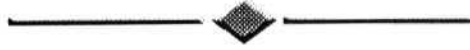
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## CHAPTER - IV

# **INFRASTRUCTURE OF TAMASHA PHAD**



#### IV. INFRASTRUCTURE OF TAMASHA PHAD

##### 4.1 — TAMASHA PHAD

In Paramparik Tamasha, the performers of Tamasha are called Tamasha Phads. Some others call this as Paramparik Tamasha Lok Natya Mandal. In Marathi language "phad" means "a group" or "a company." For the performance of any drama, a group is required. For that group, infrastructure is needed. Then only a play can be performed successfully. For the staging of a performance, many have to work on the stage and off the stage, like the scenic designer, lighting specialist, costume designer, make up in-charge, carpenters, electricians, helpers, floor assistants, lighting assistants, green room in-charge, etc. Like this on the stage, well trained and experienced actors and actresses are essential. To look after all these people needs a producer and for the performance of the play, a director, to look after the stage activities a Stage Manager, musicians, choreographers, publicity in-charge, transportation in-charge, etc. are also needed. In this manner, for staging a Tamasha, the same infrastructure required for the modern theatre is needed. When I visited Naraingaon village of Pune district as part of my field work, I met about fifty Tamasha phads. The Tamasha phads which I met and observed that some of the phads are having very much infrastructure and some of the phads have very less infrastructure. The infrastructure of a phad depends on the owner of the phads. If the owner is a rich man, he provides upto date stage equipment, acquires a big size tent, trucks for transport. Jeeps for propaganda will also be more. Imported audio system will be there. Maintenance, advances and payments to the artists are very promptly made by these owners. They have complete orchestra with latest musical instruments.<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, for the Tamasha Lok Natya Mandal which has less infrastructure, the recognition to these phads among the public is also very less. The small Tamasha phad owner will have limited musical instruments as compared to the big phads. Hence, those who work in small sized phads, the salaries of the backstage crew, i.e., manager, scenic designer, carpenter, painter, electrician, lighting in-charge, etc. is also less when compared to the big Tamasha phads. The

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owners of the small Tamasha phads do all the work related to the performance themselves. As already mentioned above, phad means "a group." All these group members live together, cooperate with each other. There is politeness in their talk, decency in their activities. Though the kalavants and backstage crew are illiterates, they behave with the audience and with their co-workers in the phad very politely. The great thing in these artists is that they utter double meaning dialogues in the Tamasha performance but in their real life, their talking is very decent. They appreciate others. The owners of the phad do not harass their kalavants or other crew members of their phad.

### 4.1.1 — OWNER OF THE TAMASHA PHAD

The owner of the Tamasha phad is naturally a very rich man who is well conversant with Tamasha Shaheer. He can also play the dholki, tuntune and dapp, which are the main musical instruments in Tamasha production. He also knows the rhythms of lavni songs and also is the director of Tamasha company.

The owner of the Tamasha phad not only directs the forms but in case of necessity, also enacts the roles, that too of different characters. He knows the techniques of scenic design of Tamasha production. He is also an expert in make up who knows all types of make up for different types of Tamasha productions, viz., social, mythological and farce productions. He also can have knowledge in lighting and electronic equipment.<sup>2</sup>

### 4.1.2 — MANAGER OF THE TAMASHA PHAD

The Manager of a Tamasha phad is the complete in-charge of the company. One has to approach the manager for fixing Tamasha programmes at their villages and the manager has every right to fix the programme and the rates for the Tamasha performances. Maintenance of vehicles, Tamasha tent, stage equipment, lighting equipment, propaganda equipment also come under his purview. Arranging food and other facilities also comes under the duties of the Manager. Taking Tamasha Vag Natya scripts to Bombay Censor Board for censorship is also being looked after by the Manager. Liaison with Area Tehsildars and local Police authorities for staging performances

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is also the duty of the Manager of the phad. To settle payments to the artists, sanctioning advances, marketing and maintenance of accounts of the Tamasha phad is also looked after by the Manager. He has to give permission to start the performance by ringing the bell.<sup>3</sup>

The Managers of Tamasha phads are not highly educated but they know reading and writing.

The Managers of these Tamasha phads are themselves artists and also take part in the performances in case of necessity.

### 4.13 PROPRIETOR AND MANAGER'S ROOM

On the back left side of the main dais, Green Room is arranged. On the right side of the back of the dais, a room is arranged with the help of tents to be used by the proprietor and the manager. This is called Proprietor and Manager's Room. There is a carpet spread on the floor in the manager's room. On the carpet, cotton bed and round shaped pillows are kept. The boxes of valuable items are preserved in that room, and the iron cash box is also kept in that room.

The owner and the manager accommodate themselves in that room at the time of the performance.

The visitors who come for Tamasha show bookings meet and consult the owner in that room, pay advance to him and fix the Tamasha performances at their villages.

One office boy is always engaged in the so-called proprietor's room to supply water and tea to the visitors throughout the day.

### 4.14 — BOOKING COUNTERS

Almost all the modern Tamasha companies have their own vehicles of various models. They arrange booking counters, preferably in vehicles itself. Those Tamasha phads which do not have vehicles arrange tent type booking counters. For both tent type booking counter and for booking counters arranged in vehicles also, a man is kept outside the counters for protection.

There are about five hundred Tamasha companies are in vogue in Maharashtra. In all these companies, the rate of tickets ranges between seven to ten rupees. The Tamasha

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performances are not shown free of cost. Free passes are issued to Very Important Persons (VIPs) only and are not issued to common people.

Tamasha phad organisers are very polite persons. They adjust themselves, if anyone create problems in the tent.

Booking Clerks are usually very close relatives of the company owners.

### 4.2 — INFRASTRUCTURE

As per my experience with the Tamasha phad, what I observed is that the Tamasha phad can be divided as under:

- a) Stage equipment
- b) Lighting equipment
- c) Audio equipment
- d) Scenic Design equipment
- e) Green Room equipment
- 0 Audience area furniture
- g) Tamasha Tent
- h) Transportation
- i) Propaganda equipment
- j) Modern Musical Instruments
- k) Cooking materials (vessels etc.) (Kitchenware)

#### 4.2.1 — STAGE EQUIPMENT

For erecting a stage, they use 4' x 4' V-shaped angular wooden pieces. For small dais they use 16 such pieces and for big dais they use 20 pieces. On these V-shaped pieces they spread wooden sheets. For this purpose, they generally use soft wood. Because it is easy to fix and remove nails on this soft wood.<sup>4</sup>

There are two types of stages used by Tamasha phads. The small companies use 25 x 25 feet measurement stage for their performances. The big companies with more artists use 30 x 30

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feet stage. 4 x 4 feet v-shaped angular wooden pieces ("reptar," in Tamasha language, a technical word) about 16 for small stage and about 20 for big stages are used for support to the stage. On these V-shaped pieces, wooden sheets are arranged to make the dais. On the four sides of the dais, four poles of ten feet height are placed. There are no side wings. Backdrops are fixed to the poles in accordance with the performance requirements. The backdrops are operated with the help of pulleys. The dais is decorated with curtains of various colours.<sup>5</sup>

After the stage is arranged, lights, sound system is fixed at suitable places. The dais almost resembles that of modern theatre proscenium stage.

### 4.2.1.1 — STAGE IN-CHARGE

The Stage Incharge looks after the requirements of the stage, scenic design, lighting, scenery, backdrops and sound system. He has to provide all facilities and properties that are required for the play while changing the scenes from the beginning of the play to the end of the play. The stage incharge have to give directions of exit and entries to the kalavanth (Tamasha artists) and also supply the required props to the kalavanth as per the characters demand.<sup>6</sup>

In Tamasha phads, Stage Incharge perform the duties but he is not treated and is not called as Stage Incharge, but they call him helper.

In some of the Tamasha phads, the Manager of the phad himself acts as the Stage Incharge.

The Stage Incharge is also a kalavanth and can perform the roles in case of necessity.

### 4.2.2 — LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

In modern drama, they are using different types of lighting equipment in their performances. Through lighting, the modern theatre has advanced much faster. For the success of a play, one third of the credit goes to lighting. Though the play is of mythological, historical, folk or social type, for all these performances, lighting is very very important. It cannot be possible for the staging of a play without proper lighting equipment. In the olden days when there was no electricity, the organisers were performing the plays with the use of oil lamps, mashals (torches)

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and later on with the help of petromax lights. With the advancement of technology, and with the invention of electricity and the availability of this facility in India, it has become a boon to these theatre people. The practitioners of modern theatre, for the usage of lighting equipment are following Western countries but the Tamasha phad organisers are adopting the techniques that were being used by modern theatre people.

Tamasha companies give much importance for lighting in their performances. In the ground where the performance is being organised, they take all precautions to fill the ground with light. Decorative lights are arranged on the tents and on the front gate. [specially a number of lights are being arranged on the dais. Halogen lights, flood lights, footlights, strobe lights, spotlights, etc. are also arranged. These lights range between 0.5 KV and 2.5 KV.]

At the beginning of farce item and at the time of modern vag natya item, while singing songs, while dancing, a number of disco lights are also being used. Village folk are impressed with these lights and feel that they have entered into another world – Disney Land.

To arrange these lights and to maintain electrical equipment, there will be an electrician appointed in the phad. The Tamasha phads do not depend on the supply of electricity by government. In every Tamasha phad, they own four to six power generators. They maintain trucks to transport these generators. In Tamasha production, they create different types of wonders with the use of lighting. Thunder scenes, fire scenes, sunshine, sunset, moon etc. are created with the help of lighting.

For fast moving scenes, chasing and in fighting scenes, they use strobe lights thereby making the scenes impressive.

In the usage of lighting system, it can be said that Tamasha theatre has crossed the modern drama theatre by all means. The Tamasha phad owners own all the lighting equipment including dimmers, keyboards and generators.

The owner of the Tamasha phad by competing with each other, procure latest lighting equipment. Before purchasing this lighting equipment, they visit various drama theatres situated in Pune and Bombay and observe the lighting equipments that were being used in those theatres and prepare a budget for the purchase of lighting equipment. These equipment is being purchased



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by them from Bombay. If anything is not available in Bombay, they procure them from Delhi also

### 4 2 2 1 - ELECTRICIAN

Electrician is the key person for the Tamasha production. Without an electrician, modern Tamasha productions cannot take place. The duties of an Electrician are that he has to install lights on the stage, backstage work wherever temporary green rooms are located. Lighting for audience in and outside the tent, near the booking counters. Audio equipment is also to be installed by the electrician on the stage. Checking the amplifier, mike system from time to time, managing the scene-by-scene lighting through keyboard, providing emergency lighting during power failure, operating generators wherever there is no electricity, operation of dimmer boards, keeping the equipment up to date are the main duties of the Electrician.<sup>8</sup>

The Electrician is also an artist who also can play all types of roles in case of emergency

The Electricians take training from others in sound and lighting of latest techniques from time to time and most of them are illiterate persons.

### 4 2 3 — AUDIO EQUIPMENT

In a traditional Tamasha phad, a hundred years or even fifty years ago, there were no audio equipment available for them. The actors used to utter the dialogues and sing songs very loudly to enable the farthest audience to hear them. The songs and the dialogues of the kalavants were reaching the audience in those days as there were very limited audience. During the period of peeshwa also, there was no electronic sound system. The kalavants were limited to the royal family only and entertaining the palace people and the sound of the kalavants was sufficient in those days. But later on the Tamasha had become into modern vag natya, and the introduction of modern electronic equipment and the changeover of mookie cinema into talkie cinema, the Indian theatre people used to utilise the sound equipment. The Tamasha phads inspired by the talkie movies began copying the movie styles and began using the modern sound equipment in their productions. By my research experience, what I observed was that the Tamasha phads treat the

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sound system as an important element. **I think** that **if** the sound system fails for any reason, they may not continue the performance. Almost all the Tamasha phad organisers have been using the modern sound equipment to a great extent and the situation has arisen that they cannot even perform the show without the equipment.

The Tamasha phads which I visited and the thing which struck me was that the Tamasha phads with little infrastructure also were in possession of modern sound equipment. The very big Tamasha phad owner of Naraingaon, Chandrakant Dhawalpurikar, was in possession of different mike systems, amplifiers, different types of cable systems. This type of rich audio system may not even be available in much developed drama companies.

Like ground tent, green rooms, kitchen, booking counters, sound system, they use powerful amplifiers. Acoustic mikes are being used. Different types of sound boxes, loudspeakers are in use. Tape recorders and record players are also being used.

As far as possible, the Sound In-charge arranges the mikes to the grid rod on the stage. The mikes catch the sound of even low voices, from all corners of the stage, very well. Generally, they do not use standing mikes on the stage. To improve clarity of sound, the Tamasha phads are using imported sure mikes nowadays. These sure mikes catch very small noises also and the farthest audience also receive the sound with good clarity. There will not be any resound produced by these mikes.

Cassettes, record players of good quality are used in these Tamasha performances by the Tamasha phads.

### 4.2.4 — SCENIC DESIGN EQUIPMENT

Scenic design is a must for almost all the play productions. The production without scenic design looks like something poor. Before staging a play, the scenic designer goes through the script or listens to the script. The number of acts and the scenes are being noted down by him. He prepares notes for each act and scene and after that he draws sketches scenewise. The required quantity of wood for the scenes and the type of backdrops and the scenery on those backdrops are being carefully thought and written in his notes. After that, with the help of the carpenter, painter,



assistant designers, helpers, he prepares the required scenes. In Tamasha phads also, there is one such designer (though he is not called a scenic designer) <sup>9</sup>

#### 4.2.4.1 — SCENIC DESIGNER OF TAMASHA THEATRE

Like modern theatre groups, Tamasha phads also engage Scenic Designers for their performances. The duties of these Scenic Designers are to plan designs for a particular production. Scenic designs are in the form of cut-outs, backdrops, side wings, different type of box sets, fantasy settings, sets for mythological plays, etc.

The scenic designers of Tamasha phads are uneducated. Nowadays, the Scenic Designers are imitating movie set designs. Tamasha settings are very crude with less decency and are being prepared according to the tastes of the village folk.

There is no name given to these designers as Scenic Designers by the Tamasha phads but they call them as Set Makers but these people do all the duties of a scenic designer, as in the cine field by imitating the cinema techniques. The scenic designers of Tamasha phads visit Bombay Cine Studios to watch the scenic design techniques to use them in their Tamasha productions. The scenic designers also know acting and in case of necessity they also enact the roles in Tamasha.

The scenic designers also know carpentry and painting works.

#### 4.2.5 — GREEN ROOMS

On the backside of the dais, they arrange small tents and are used for the purpose of green rooms. There are two portions in these green rooms. In one portion, women artists do their make up and the other portion is used by male artists for their make up.

There are no facilities available like modern drama proscenium theatre in Tamasha theatre green rooms. They put bulbs here and there in one corner of the tent and in the other corner they arrange one or two KV halogen lights. Chairs, tables and mirrors are not available for their make up purposes. They sit on mats and with the material of their own, they do self make up.

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All the kalavanths after enacting their characters on the stage, come to the so-called green room and sleep on the mat where they had their make up

There is facility of water and tea available in the green rooms and there are no bathrooms attached to these green rooms

There is no equipment in these green rooms which need special mention. There are big iron or wooden trunks in which they keep hand props, costumes, make up materials. They fix the lights to the poles which are used for the support to the tent

All the kalavanths will have their own trunks in which they keep their personal effects and their personal costumes. On two sides of the green room, they spread mats and keep these trunks on them, both men and women separately. Make up kit is being kept individually by all the kalavanths. On watching these green rooms, it will be understood that how poor they are. The green rooms erected with the help of tents will protect kalavanths from sun, rain and wind. As the kalavanths are roamers, and hence they treat these green rooms as good ones and adjust themselves to the atmosphere, satisfy themselves to the conditions and give their performances. The sleeping on the mats in the green room after the performance and after sunrise getting ready to move to another village for their performance is their daily routine work and has become their habit.

### 4.2.6 — FURNITURE

As used in the theatre companies, the Tamasha phad organisers also use some furniture. The furniture used in proprietor-cum-manager's room are folding chairs, tables etc. For the use of stage props also some furniture is required on the dais, for example, they need thrones etc. for historical dramas. Like this, the furniture is needed for creating office room, family settings on the stage. They need chairs for the orchestra men, table for keeping instruments, stools for the booking clerks, and special chairs to be arranged for the purpose of VIPs to witness the show on one side. In addition they need different types of stools, chairs, tables which are being used for the plays from time to time. The minimum furniture that a phad possesses will be of one lorry load. On par with big phads, the small Tamasha phads also use furniture according to their needs.

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The furniture used by these people is made up of ordinary wood. They do not have costly furniture. Decorative and curved type furniture is not at all used by the phads. As far as possible they purchase this furniture from local markets only. They do not give much importance to furniture and sometimes they even manage without furniture also. When they do not have chairs for VIPs, they spread a white cloth and put round pillows. As most of the performances are held in the villages, they make arrangements for the audience to sit on mats, but sometimes the audience used to sit on the earth itself. They use the furniture on the dais for stage design and during daytime it is used for other purposes. Almost all the furniture is of folding type which facilitates them to pack easily and loading also becomes very easy.

### 4.2.7 — TAMASHA TENT

Like Circus companies, Tamasha organisers also arrange a big tent in the ground. Before erection of the tent, they clean the ground free from stones, thorns and make the ground flat. The Tamasha organisers will not perform the play by the sides of drainage nallas or at unpleasant places. They select a place with all facilities and erect the tent in the ground like circus model.

The width of the tent is	125 feet
The length of the tent is	125 feet
Compound wall (with cloth)	10 pieces
("Kanat" in Marathi)	
and a gate with door.	

The accommodation (seating) of the tent is about three thousand audience. Some tents even accommodate between three to ten thousand audience also which depends upon the financial status of the phad. A carpet is spread on the ground to enable the audience to sit. The tent is erected with the help of bamboo poles and with ropes.<sup>10</sup>

Some of the Tamasha phads give their performances without tents also. The Tamasha phads with tents make it compulsory buying tickets but for the Tamasha phads who perform without using tents, this ticketing system does not suit. First of all, the atmosphere could not be created without the usage of tents. Tents are used as weather proof and they protect the

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



kalavanths from sun, rain and wind. Audience feel themselves safe. The owner of the Tamasha phad can have control over audience when he uses the tent. As per my opinion, instead of performing Tamasha in open air it is better to perform Tamasha by using tents why because when the performance is on, the actors on the dais are immersed in their moods. When the tents are used, they put off the lights on the side of audience and the lights are on only on the dais and hence the atmosphere is very good, whereas in the open air, the concentration of the actors diverts because of the unwanted air from all sides, sound pollution and other obstructions also arise, by which the quality of the production weakens. If tents are not used, there is possibility of disturbances for the performance by outside people (other than audience) who may throw stones, etc. onto the dais which disturbs the concentration of actors.

By this way, the actors will have no protection in open air theatre. The organisers will not have control over audience. As there is only one door if tent is used and the entry and exit of the audience will be from that door only, whereas in open air theatre it is not possible. For actors, there is an entrance and exit place on the back of the dais into the green room and they will not have any link with outsiders and hence have protection, if tent is used. As the performance of Tamasha goes on throughout the night, the protection is very much needed for both actors as well as for the audience. Hence, the professional Tamasha phad organisers use tents as far as possible. Though the cost of tent is more, they procure tents by way of raising loans or by other means. During fairs, festive occasions, in the performances booked by the villages, the organisers avoid using tents and they perform the shows free (without sale of tickets) as they are contract shows.

### 4.2.8 — TRANSPORTATION

After the downfall of peeshwas, the tamashgirs have spread to all corners. They have established Tamasha phads individually and started giving performances by appointing five to ten kalavanths. It is a very difficult task to move from one village to another by walking and giving performances. As per my opinion as a research scholar, the Tamasha phads are in possession of large equipment, costumes, hand props, personal luggage of each kalavanth, and it is not an easy task of carrying all these items from one place to another. During those periods there was no transport facility.

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That is why they buy bullock carts, load their luggage in those carts and move from one place to another to give performances. From time to time, the number of Tamasha phads have increased and after the invasion of India by Britishers, modern transport facilities also came into existence, but still the tamashgirs depend upon bullock carts even in recent times

The Tamasha phads of those days have no permanent place to stay, they have no address of their passage, and the place where they used to stay in a village was their place of living for that day. The earnings of their whole life was being kept in those bullock carts. The Tamasha equipment which was in the bullock cart was their property. Bullock cart itself was their house. With this type of transportation, the path of paramparik Tamasha moved forward. After the eighteenth century, even though the facility of bus, lorry, was available, the reason for the use of bullock carts by the Tamasha phad was their poverty and that the maintenance cost of bullock carts was very low. All the Tamasha phad workers were from villages and all of them were well trained in maintaining bullock carts for their transportation purposes. In one word, it was a journey without spending money. The paramparik Tamasha which stepped into the twentieth century became the Modern Vag Natya.

Nowadays, all the Tamasha companies are having their own modern transport facilities. Without these modern transportation facilities, they cannot move from one place to another so quickly for giving their performances in far off places in these days. To carry stage equipment, to carry tents and other material, at least two lorries are essential for every company. Even the smallest Tamasha company is also owning two lorries.

For the transport of artists, buses are also arranged with good seating comforts. Jeeps are used for propaganda purposes. Moreover, the financially sound owners of Tamasha phads are even maintaining cars for their personal use. Drivers and cleaners are appointed for all the vehicles. They appoint the drivers who have knowledge in mechanism and who are technically fit.

As far as possible, the minor repairs of the vehicles are done by themselves. After the programme, these drivers and cleaners help in the dismantling of the sets and loading them in the lorries.

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### 4.2.9 — PROPAGANDA EQUIPMENT

During olden days, the paramparik Tamasha people, for the propaganda of their performance, had to struggle a lot because in those days they did not have modern equipment, sound system for this purpose. Even the facility of distribution of pamphlets were also not there during those days. But nowadays, the propaganda has become very simple and they give publicity in as many villages as they can by moving in jeeps and can return back by evening. But in those days, giving publicity in one village itself was a very difficult task. The Tamasha phad men reaches the village and by playing dholki and daph praising the Tamasha production which they were going to perform, and moving round the village, by doing so at different places. On hearing the announcement, the people who were interested in the Tamasha performances used to go to witness the performances.<sup>11</sup>

During the twentieth century, the propaganda style of modern Tamasha has changed substantially and they have started imitating and following the cinema propaganda styles, and they have succeeded in this modern propaganda media.

Almost all the modern Tamasha companies depend on propaganda. They have financial sources for their propaganda. They decorate the jeeps colourfully, by using cut outs, by fixing clarity audio system and moving in the villages from one street to another, where the performance is being performed, by uttering humourous and impressive dialogues and by playing lavni song cassettes, they go on moving and give their publicity. They even go to nearby villages also for their propaganda in addition to the village where the performance is arranged.

By this, the name of the play, venue, time, the name of the company, the details of the artists are known to the villagers clearly.

There is another method also being used in their propaganda. While the jeep is moving in the streets of the village and at the same time, one of the members pastes posters on the walls. They even distribute pamphlets. The particulars of Tamasha, time and venue are shown in the pamphlets and in the posters. This is another method of propaganda being followed by Tamasha companies.



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Sound system is very important for propaganda. They use modern amplifiers, acoustic mikes, loudspeakers, record players, cassette players, etc. for the effective propaganda.

The financially sound Tamasha phad organisers make their propaganda through newspapers also, but this type of propaganda is very rarely seen.

In olden days, they were making propaganda by using daphs. By playing daphs, they move from one street to another, announce the name of the Tamasha performance, venue and time of the performance, for the convenience of the people who are interested in witnessing Tamasha performances.

### 4.2.10— MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

In olden days, in paramparik Tamasha, mainly dholki, daph (halgi), tuntune, jhanjar, tal and chal like musical instruments were being used. Not only in Tamasha but even in other traditional folk forms — in the Gondhal, Vaghya Murali, Dashavatar, Bharud, Lalit, Lavni of Maharashtra also, the above instruments were being used. During the twentieth century, most probably after the Second World War, the structure of paramparik Tamasha has changed substantially. The imitation of cinema by kalavanths, the decrease in the number of paramparik Tamasha shahirs, the dilution of traditional music with the influence of cinema music, due to the liking of modern music by the audience, brought major changes in paramparik Tamasha. To attract audience, the Tamasha phad organisers have started using modern musical instruments. After the introduction of modern musical instruments, the style of Tamasha performance has also changed. In Tamasha performance, after gan, goulán, they have introduced a new item by name "Farce" with these modern instruments.<sup>12</sup>

Farce is full of cinema music. Even after the introduction of so many modern musical instruments in Tamasha, the place of traditional musical instruments is intact even today.

There are four traditional musical instruments used in Tamasha. They are dholki, dapp, tuntune and tal. The user of these four instruments do not undergo any training in any of the traditional music schools but they are trained by the old Tamasha performers. The musicians use their instruments according to raga, tana and pallavi.

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The Tamasha phads conduct musical (jugalbandi) competitions among the artists and prizes are awarded to the winners. Tamasha dancers dance according to the rhythm of the dholki and dapp, and cannot sing without the use of tuntune, Dholki, daap musicians play all types of music irrespective of its form. Whether it is folk or modern, they play the instrument according to the situation. The sound of these instruments are very melodious and attract the folk.

Without these instruments Tamasha performance is a handicapped one. There is no possibility of singing of lavni and dancing. Therefore, these instruments are treated as the backbones of the Tamasha performances.

### 4.2.10.1 — TRADITIONAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN TAMASHA

#### DHOLKI

Dholki is an instrument of about two feet in length, one foot of surface, covered on both sides with a radius of eight inches with leather. The metal used is soft wood, covered by leather.

The makers of Dholki instruments are spread over in Pune and in different parts of Maharashtra and the Tamasha phad owners go and buy them from those places.

The cost of each dholki ranges between five hundred and one thousand rupees.

#### DAPHI

Daph is a famous musical instrument in Indian traditional music. The name of daph varies in different parts of the country, like "Dappu" in Andhra Pradesh, "Dapli" in Uttar Pradesh, "Dapda" in Madhya Pradesh, and "Dapp" in Tamasha Phads of Maharashtra.

Dapp is a round-shaped instrument of about twelve inches in radius which is made of soft wood and with pure leather.

The dapp used in Tamasha performances is different from other rhythmic instruments.

Makers of these dapps are found all over India. The cost of the dapp ranges between two hundred and five hundred rupees each.

Dapp and tuntune are used in the type of folk music like Pawada and Lavni. The daph consists of an open circular frame covered on one side with skin. This dapp is held in the left

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



hand and played with the fingers of the right hand and by a thin stick held in the fingers of the left hand. The pitch of daph is rather sharp. (Such a flat and circular drum is seen in the sculptures of early and medieval periods)

### TUNTUNE

The tuntune is a one-stringed instrument. It is a hollow cylindrical vessel made of wood. A bamboo stick is fixed to its outer side. The bottom of the vessel is covered with a skin. The metal string tied to a small piece of stick passes through the centre of the skin. It is fastened to a peg on the top. The string is plucked with a small piece of stick held in the right hand. Tuntune provides drone and also rhythm. (An instrument similar to tuntune appears in a Badami sculpture of the seventh or eighth century A.D.)

Tuntune instruments are manufactured locally by themselves only. Based on tuntune, the songs in Tamasha are sung by the singers.

Though there are a number of modern musical instruments used in Tamasha plays, the use of tuntune is made compulsory. "This is the symbolic instrument of Tamasha Vag Natya."

### JHANGER (CHALL)

Jhangers are made of Bell metal. Without jhanger, the performance of lavni dance is not possible.

Each lavni dancer ties about hundred jhangers to their feet. They weigh about one kilogram. Through these jhangers, they synchronise steps and rhythm of dance. The jhangers are tied to a rope, making them readymade for quick use.

The cost of hundred jhangers is about two hundred rupees.

## 4.2.10.2 — MUSICIANS OF MODERN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN TAMASHA PRODUCTION

Nowadays, the owners of Tamasha phads are making use of the modern musical instruments that are used by modern orchestra teams. In modern orchestra, jazz, drums, congo, bongo, accordion, guitar, violin, synthesizer, flute, chall, harmonium, tabla and jhanger, etc. are commonly used.

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



The musicians of modern equipment musicians of Tamasha phads are not at all trained in those instruments, but they play the instruments by imitating film songs <sup>14</sup>

The musicians start playing the instruments two hours before the beginning of Vag Natya. The musicians are competent of playing two instruments at a time. These musicians supply background music to Vag Natya.

The musicians rehearse during the daytime for their evening performances. If they feel that a particular song or tune is difficult to play, they use film cassettes and play by imitating the film music. There is no perfection in their music. They play music effectively to attract mobs to witness Vag Natya.

The players of these modern musical instruments are educated upto tenth standard.

### 4.2.11 • KITCHEN ROOM AND DINING HALL

Green room is situated on the back side of the stage. On a side of the green room, a kitchen room is built with the help of a tent. On the other side of the kitchen room, they leave some open place where the members of the phad have their meals.

The incharge of the kitchen room is called Achari. The Achari will have assistants (cooks) and cleaners of vessels. Cooking is done throughout the night.

Kalavanths, as per their convenience take their dinner at different timings. At the beginning of their role, or after completion of their role, or after the completion of the performance, or before going to sleep, like this the kalavanths have their dinner at different timings.

They prepare vegetarian food specially dal bhakri (jawaar bread) with chutney. This is the staple food of village folk.

The kitchen room is covered with the compound wall of the tent (kanath) and the kalavanths have privacy in this room and this room is away from the audience. Visitors audience are not allowed in this room and they themselves do not come to this side.

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



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# CHAPTER - V

## **PROCESS OF TAMASHA PERFORMANCE**



## V. PROCESS OF TAMASHA PERFORMANCE

### 5.0 — PROCESS OF REHEARSALS

The organiser of Tamasha phad, stage manager, assistant stage manager, musicians, artists (kalavanthas) are assembled at one place and the script which they are going to practice are discussed deeply. After discussions, step by step Vag Natya story is narrated. Cian, goulam, lavni, batavani, farce are common to all the vag natyas in Tamasha and hence there is no discussion held on these items. Only the discussions on the vag (story plot) will be held.

### 5.1 — TRY-OUTS

After discussion on the script, the Tamasha phad organiser who is also the director of the performance, decides casting (decided which artists should perform which role and distributes the roles among the artists). The decision of the director is final.<sup>2</sup>

### 5.2 — SITTING REHEARSALS

After the selection of characters in try-outs, for dialogue portion of the characters, a person is being appointed. As most of the actors are illiterates who do not know to read, the artists learn the dialogues by heart by repeating the person who tells the character's dialogues. Though the artists are illiterates, they grasp the dialogue very quickly. The artists do not waste their time and always, even while eating and while doing other works also, they do this work of learning the dialogues by heart. The full script is taught within the period of fifteen days.<sup>3</sup>

### 5.3 — STANDING REHEARSALS

In standing rehearsals, the director, as in traditional theatre, make blockings, movements, improvisation, melodrama, etc. and these are taught to the artists. In addition to this, as the artists themselves were well experienced, they perform in melodramatic style or in cinematic style, and get ready for the performances. Almost all the actors in modern Vag Natya have adopted the styles of movies/cinema.<sup>4</sup>

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



After getting ready for the final performance, they fix a date and venue for the performance. The owner of the phad visits the place of performance in advance and completes all the formalities such as obtaining permission from the local authorities for the staging of the performance on that particular day. After that, they give propaganda by moving in jeeps, pasting posters and by distributing pamphlets. The entire company reaches the place of performance two days in advance and make arrangements such as erecting the tent, dais, decoration, etc.

### 5.4 — PROCESS OF PERFORMANCE

As in the traditional Tamasha, in modern Vag Natya also they follow the same tradition. Half an hour before, the Daph and Dholki players start playing the instruments and after that the Gan enter the dais chanting prayers of Lord Ganesha.<sup>5</sup>

### 5.5 — GAN IN TAMASHA

Gan means Ganesha, the son of Lord Shankara. The other name of Ganesha is Vighneshwara. That is why in the beginning of the performance, they do prayers of God Vighneshwara and start traditional Tamasha. From the seventh century onwards, most of the poets have introduced the prayers of Lord Ganesha in Tamasha. In the oldest traditional Tamasha, "Rukmini Swayamvar," its Shahir Narendra has started with the prayer of Lord Ganesha only. In the Tamasha forms of the Peeshwa kingdom also, the Ganesha Vandana was prevalent before the beginning of the Tamasha. The Kuladaiva (ancestral deity) of Peeshwas was Ganesha and this might be the reason for the beginning of the Tamasha performances with the prayers of Ganesha. It is said that the tradition of worshipping Ganesha is there since time immemorial.<sup>6</sup>

In Maharashtra's oldest traditional folk forms, Vaghya Murali che Jagaran, Bharud also, the prayer of Ganesha was done before the performances. The common people of Maharashtra worship Ganesha as their deity. Ganesha is the presenter of wisdom, who shows the real path of life and is a very powerful God. It is the belief and trust of all, that a work started with the worship of Ganesha will end fruitfully.



## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



The scripts of Tamasha are also of Maharashtra culture, the artists bound to the tradition and hence begin their performances with the prayer of Lord Ganesha. This tradition of worshipping Ganesha is done by the Sardar along with his co-artists with the help of musical instruments like dholki, tuntune, tal, halgi and sing the lavni on Ganesha ((Jan ki Lavni) <sup>7</sup>

An example of Lavni of Peeshwa kingdom

Sri Vakramund Ganapati, Ganadhipati tujhi je sthuthi  
Nar dishee dince karti, Me nar nirvindh  
Prapanchi jegi vicharchi  
Mastaki mumut mojal te dolak vishal  
Tayavar vyaal karprati mikhe  
Pectavarn vastr kaseshi kasheele bakhe  
Kudle mee makra kruti sravani talpathi  
Farsha kur hothi mandin kar rakhe  
Chowshasth kalacha lekha konaana kale  
Chowdha vidhicha sindhu prabal haa  
Swanand nabhicha indu adal haa  
Lagna lacch tyarupi, naam sachhipi  
Bhav achhipi jadmud uccharati.<sup>8</sup> (Marathi)

Sri Vakramunda Ganesha — You are the greatest of all the Gods and hence all worship you first. Four sides (all corners) of people worship you. All the people in the world utter your name. The crown on your head is looking very beautiful and your trunk is very long and wide. The clothes that you wear are very colourful and very beautiful. The ear-rings are in the shape of crocodile and are shining bright. No one has knowledge of all the sixty four kalas except you. You are the Guru (teacher) of fourteen Vidyas. Your place in the world is stable and no one can remove or replace that. Your position is very revered and more powerful than the position of Indra of Akasas. On looking at you (your shape), people forget all their sorrows.

The other lavnis related to Lord Ganesha were written by Heenaji Bhal, Ramjoshi, Patte Bapurao, etc. Shahirs.

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



Though the tradition of worshipping Ganesha in Tamasha is a very old one, it is said that this tradition is adopted from the folk form of Gondhal. The traditional Gan writings and traditional singing styles have changed rapidly. The gan songs of the Peeshwa period and the post-Independence gan songs have much difference. In modern Vag Natya, after the formation of Tamasha Sudhar Samithi, they have also followed the traditional (Jan songs, as well as modern songs

### 5.6— GOULAN (GOPIKAS)

After the beginning of the performance, after completion of the worship of Lord Ganesha, the Goulans enter the stage. Goulans means Gopikas. In Tamasha, though the Goulans are Gopikas (milkmaids), they are mythological characters. These characters are Radha (a dancer), her friends (chelikattelu), Mausī (Aunt), and in male roles Krishna, his friends (sakhas), Pendya (Songadia), Chandrawal, etc."

The scene in Tamasha begins like this:

The Gan exit from one side of the stage after the prayer of Ganesha and from the other side of the wings, the Mausī character, followed by Radha and her friends with milk pots on their heads going towards Mathura for selling milk. Radha and other sakhi dancers swing and walk rhythmically. Mausī also walks with steps like them and leads the other dancers. Musicians with dholki, tuntune, tal, halgi play instruments rhythmically. The dholki instrumentalist then moves towards these ladies forcefully by playing dholki very loudly. Then all the goulans enter onto the stage by showing their backs.<sup>10</sup>

Then Krishna and his friends stop the passage of these ladies midway. Then Radha comes to Krishna by folding her hands and requesting Krishna to leave them to go to Mathura Nagari. Still Krishna does not listen and then the other Gopikas also follow Radha and come to Krishna to entreat him. They request him to kindly let them go to Mathura to sell milk and curd and to stop delaying them. At the end, Mausī also requests Krishna to leave them to go. On observing the condition of the Gopikas, Krishna allows them to go. Then Mausī, Radha and the other Goulans

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



sings songs and dance, move towards Mathura, with the potfuls of milk and curd on their heads  
These types of stories are found in traditional Tamasha as well as in modern Vag Natya "

In addition, the Tamashgirs wrote various other types of stories to be presented by their  
Goulans from time to time

According to traditional Tamasha, the Goulan is of five types

1. Bazaar Goulan (Bazarchi Goulan)
2. Goulans with self introduction of Sri Krishna
3. Goulans on various types of mischievous plays of Sri Krishna
4. Goulans of Humbleness.

### 5.6.1 — BAZAAR GOULAN (BAZARCHI GOULAN)

The following is the script of Patte Bapurao, in which the description of the beauty of Goulans  
and the style in which they sell milk and curd was shown

That karooni maat bharoni, dhya dyage sagalya shiree  
Aage jaoon madhurchya bazaari  
Solaa hazaracha mohra, tyamadhyc Radha goulan kharccd  
Chandraval dusrec Indrachi parec  
Handyavar ghada, ghadcyavar tadyaa chi ghagri  
Dahi dhyage dahi koncc dudhachi aakri.<sup>12</sup> (Marathi)

Friends, fill the pots with milk and start moving to Bazar  
Friends, come, let us move to Mathura  
Out of sixteen thousand girls, only Radha is the real Goulan  
Radha is looking like a Devakanya  
By keeping pots over pots and a copper bowl on the top of them  
and start moving  
Curd! Curd! Here is curd for sale

The Goulans dance accordingly to the above script.

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The prose form script is as follows to which the Goulans dance

Goulan                      Move ladies  
Other Goulan              Move - Move  
Other Goulan:            Are the arrangements over<sup>7</sup> The path is very far  
Another Goulan:        We have to go to the bazars of Mathura. We are all young girls and the mischievous Krishna might be sitting midway. Hence, we should take one wise and sharp woman to lead us  
Goulan:                    Then, let us ask our Mausi to accompany us  
Other Goulan              Then wait, I will call her --- Mausi. Mausi  
Mausi                      Girls<sup>1</sup> Here I come! Here I come!  
Goulan:                    Mausi, what are you doing alone at home<sup>7</sup>  
Mausi                      Pasting ash  
Goulan:                    Pasting ash? To what?<sup>7</sup>  
Mausi:                      Pasting ash to vessels  
Goulan:                    When did you repeat this word?<sup>7</sup>  
Goulan:                    Oh, Mausi! You must come!  
Mausi:                      Yes, I will come. I observed the hurry of you people and then heard your call and here I am. But in this hurry, I myself sat on the pan instead of putting the bread on it.  
Goulan:                    Mausi, then you might have burns  
Mausi                      Ha, all was burnt out and turned into coal. Arce, today there is a fair at Mathura. Are your arrangements over?<sup>7</sup>  
Chandravala:            My arrangements are over  
Mausi:                      O, Chandravala<sup>1</sup> What did you take for sale today?<sup>7</sup>  
Chandravala:            I took a very fair thing for sale  
Mausi:                      What do you mean by fair? What is such a thing?<sup>7</sup>  
Chandravala:            I took Basundi.  
Mausi:                      Let it be. What did you wear today?<sup>7</sup>  
Chandravala:            I am wearing black Chandrakala dress  
Mausi:                      Good. Then what ornaments did you wear around your neck?<sup>7</sup>

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- Chandravala: I am wearing Mangalsutra around my neck  
Mausi: Of your husband'  
Chandravala: Yes.  
Mausi: What is on your forehead?  
Chandravala: I put kumkum of my husband on my forehead  
Mausi: Eh you, come here! What things are you bringing for sale?  
Goulani 2: I took my milk  
Mausi: Aye, you of torned clothes. Who will buy your milk?  
Goulani 2: Aye mausi, my milk means — the milk of my cows and buffaloes, which means my milk.  
Mausi: Oh yes, they are your milk.<sup>13</sup>

The above conversation was of prose type between the Goulans in Tamasha. The above conversation was taken from the audio recorded programme of Vithabai Naraingaonkar at Tuijapur.

In prose Tamasha, all the incidents are described through dialogues. There should not be any settings on the stage as described in the dialogues. They do not keep pots etc. on their heads. Everything they enact is through mime. The audience grasp the scene very quickly because of their actions and understand the scene very well. The Goulans mesmerise the audience by their acting. It is almost a fantasy they create through their dialogue and through mime action in Tamasha.<sup>14</sup>

### 5.6.2 — KRISHNACHA KHODIA SANGNARI GOULAN (The Goulani showing the mischievous type of plays of Sri Krishna)

Until the period of the Peeshwas, the Shahirs of Tamasha wrote plays on the acts of Sri Krishna such as Krishna teasing, and other mischievous plays with Gopikas. The Gopikas complain to Yasoda, mother of Krishna, about his mischievous acts played with them.

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### Example:

Jaathote Yamuna kadan  
Tikhun aala Krishna dahun  
Chari mayichya padalaala  
Krishna ga bhar rasyala  
Bale hovun kadali kal  
Dena kela raan mola, dena traas murlivala  
Tya ga bhar rasyala <sup>15</sup> (Marathi)

I was going through the bank of River Yamuna  
Then Krishna appeared in front of me, then he held my saree's end  
I forcibly pulled my saree but he still caught hold of my saree  
How much he troubles me, your son, this Krishna  
That too in the middle of the road  
(Raghuveer Khedkar with Kantabai Satarkar Lok Natyacha Tamasha Mandal. Samamner, Ahmednagar dt.)

The above Goulan was also written in prose as follows

Goulan: Arce, you could not come to the last week's bazar. Then the black Krishna teased us.  
Mausi: Arce, teased? What did he do then?  
Goulan: Mausi, he tore my blouse.  
Mausi: Chandravala, in what way did Krishna tease you?  
Chandravala: He tore my new saree.  
Mausi: What did he do to you?  
Goulan 2: He broke my pot.  
Mausi: It does not look like that to me.  
Goulan 2: Arce, Mausi. He broke my milk pot. <sup>16</sup>

The Goulans which were in prose form were in dialogues and contain humour and have a dramatic element in them and the dialogues attract audience. Almost all the audience feel hypnotised in this scene.

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(The above prose Goulam was taken from Raghuveer Khedkar with Kantabai Satarkar Lok Natyacha Tamasha Mandal, Tuljapur, from the audio recorded programme)

### 5 6 3 — KRISHNACHA OALKHICHI GOULAM (Goulans on the self introduction of Sri Krishna)

Krishna and Pandya (Songadia) attack the Gopikas on their way to Mathura. Goulam and Krishna were unknown to each other at that moment. Then Krishna introduces himself to the Gopikas. This introduction is in the form of philosophy. This philosophical type of introduction is by way of play and song:

Mee ga Nand Yashodecha bal bal Krishna  
Mathurecha Kamsacha kal kal Krishna  
Agasur mariage, Bhagasun Chirlage  
Baragaon agni gilaala ge jal jal Krishna  
Yamuna doha chedu gela, Kaliyala mardan kela  
Nachvile tya veli tinhi taal taal Krishna  
Gouliyacha gayi rakitya, Jarasandh chiroon takila  
Padvachc ghode hakaali, mal mal Krishna.<sup>17</sup> (Marathi)

I am Nandaraja and Yashoda's beloved Krishna.  
I am Krishna, the killer of Kamsa of Mathura.  
I was the killer of Agasur, the rakshas (devil)  
I was the saver of twelve villages from fire  
I am Krishna, who played on the head of the serpent Kaliya in the River Yamuna.  
I have saved the cows of Gopikas and killed Jarasandha.  
I am that Krishna, who was the rider of the horses of Pancha Pandavas.

These verses were taken from mythological-based stories.

The structure of Krishna has changed in Tamasha form from time to time. Helping Pandavas during the Kurukshetra war, helping Draupadi (Draupadi Vastrapaharanam), killing of various devils by Krishna are some of them. The Tamasha phads instead of wearing the original costume of the mythological character of Krishna, wear modern day costume to the character.

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



The audience have accepted this type of costume to the mythological character. They did not oppose Krishna wearing torn shirt or something else, but they have enjoyed the role. At the time of entry of Krishna onto the stage, the comedy between Songadia and Mausi characters is very humorous and interesting.

### Example

Songadia: Mausi<sup>1</sup> Arc you a male or a female?

Mausi: I am a female

Songadia: Then, how do you have a beard and moustache<sup>7</sup>

Mausi: Because I am like my father (resemblance with my father)<sup>18</sup>

Like this, the dialogues continue between the two characters and they create comedy

Ganpath V. Mane Chinchnikar wrote a Tamasha in which there is a Goulani scene through which we have the description of God's omnipresent form:

Krishna: I am present everywhere, here, there, on the bank of the river, in the stones

Mausi: Arc you present in the trees also<sup>7</sup>

Krishna: Yes, in the trees also

Mausi: In the railway station?

Krishna: Yes, there also.

Mausi: Are you there in the sky also<sup>7</sup>

Krishna: Yes, up in the sky also.

Mausi: On the bridge?

Krishna: There also.

Mausi: Then ok, you stay everywhere but do not stay on earth.<sup>19</sup>

### 5.6.4 — GOULANIGHYA OADKHICHI GOULAN (The self introduction of Goulans)

After the introduction of Krishna himself, and after the scene of humorous dialogues between Mausi and Songadia and also with Krishna, the Goulans introduce themselves to Krishna.



## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



Example.

I am Radha. I am a Goulan.

You won't get my alms, Govinda.

Like this, Chandraval, Radha, Gopika give their introduction to Krishna in poetic form. Afterwards, the introduction will be performed in the form of prose also.<sup>20</sup>

The Goulans entreat Krishna by saying that they came under his protection and plead to him to give them way to go to Mathura.

### 5.6.5 — VINAVNEECHI GOULAN (Goulans of Humbleness)

After the introduction of Krishna, all the Goulans come under his protection and say that they are ready to give whatever Krishna needs and pleads him to leave them to go to Mathura to sell milk and curd.

Example.

O, the lover of my mind! My mind is running towards you!

Innocent Radha became mad.

(some groups of Gopikas come)

I forgot to bring my saree and blouse and fell in trouble.

Another example of this Goulan is:

Rukmini's husband and Devaki's son do not stop our way every time. We are coming from the bazar after selling our milk and curd. Please forget what has happened in the morning when we were going to Mathura and allow us to leave for our homes now and we are ready to give you whatever you want from us.<sup>21</sup>

In this way, the prose and poetic forms of Goulans were introduced in Tamasha. At the beginning of traditional Tamasha, Goulans were introduced to focus spirituality. The audience were feeling spiritualness by witnessing the Goulans, but later on a number of Tamasha Shahirs have changed the trend of Goulans and have diluted the spiritual-mindedness of Goulans and for the sake of creating humour, and to make that particular scene romantic, they have created dialogues filled with full of fantasy and introduced the element of farce in the scenes of Goulans and made the

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scenes of Goulans as a mere cheap comedy. The main intention of the Shahirs have moved towards creating humour and to entertain the audience and thereby they lost the spiritual sense in the scenes. Audience also have accepted such a drastic change.

### 5.7 — “MAUSI” CHARACTER IN TAMASHA

There cannot exist such a character of 'Mausi' in the mythological stories of India. The Mausi character was introduced in Tamasha during later days. In male characters, Songadia, the comedian with his unusual style of acting, with double meaning dialogues, create humour and make the audience laugh. Likewise, in female characters, there were no female comedians in traditional Tamasha. Mausi character was recognised as lady comedian. This character follows Radha and her friends in the costume of an old wise woman. The Mausi also plays the role of their protector. The role of Mausi was being enacted by male character artists.<sup>22</sup>

The dialogues of Mausi were very loud, said with speed, and full of humour. There were no rules or boundaries for the dialogues of Mausi. The audience laugh at every dialogue of Mausi. In Tamasha of the Peeshwa period, this type of Mausi character was not in vogue. It might have been introduced in Tamasha during 1985-90 period. There was a character in the Keertan of Sri Krishna by name 'Badal' and this same character has been converted into 'Mausi' in Tamasha.<sup>23</sup>

It is said that this character of Mausi might have been borrowed from the literature of Bengal.

### 5.8 — LAVNI

#### 5.8.1 — TRADITIONAL LAVNI

In Maharashtra, for the entertainment of the society, a number of art forms have come into existence. Lavni is one such art form. As there are more villages in Maharashtra and the villagers conduct fairs, festivals and religious functions very occasionally. During such occasions, for the public who participate in those fairs, different types of programmes were performed to entertain the public. Lavni performances were the main attraction in such occasions.

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Lavni first came into existence during the sixteenth century. The important thing in Lavni is the description of beauty, romanticism, description of separation, description of hero-heroine's romantic fights and their reunion, and various such subjects. The main thing that can be seen in all the above Lavnis is romance. Hence people began thinking that Lavni means the romantic description of hero and heroine. But this is not true. The Lavnis were written on philosophical, social and mythological subjects also.<sup>24</sup>

In social lavis, the day-to-day incidents that were happening in society were described. Lavnis on communal riots, that were created by anti-social elements were also being written. A number of lavis on comedy can also be seen.<sup>25</sup>

During the time of the fall of the Peeshwas kingdom, the development of Lavni had begun. Dance, drama, music, singing, acting and all the four types of abhinayas were to be seen in the lavis of those days. During the time of Peeshwas, the lavni Shahirs had good respect in society. The livelihood of Shahirs were being looked after by the Peeshwas. The Shahirs also enjoyed all the facilities and benefits that were being availed of by the other employees working in the palace.<sup>26</sup>

The famous Shahirs of the Peeshwa period were Shahir Ramjoshi, Shahir Ponaji Bhada, Shahir Parasuram, Shahir Sagan Bhau, Shahir Ananda Padi, etc.

After the downfall of the Peeshwas, a number of Shahirs wrote Lavis. The main and important of those Shahirs were: Shahir Dagdu Sali Shirolkar, Shahir Bhau Pakkad, Shahir Patte Babu Rao.

The supporting instruments (musical) that accompany the lavni song were kade (ring), dholki, tal, tuntune, kanjira, etc.

The lavis of Maharashtra were divided into three parts by the Shahirs. Part one is Shahiri Lavni (poet's lavni). Part two is Baitkeechi lavni (singing lavni by sitting). Part three is Tamasha chi Lavni (lavni of Tamasha).<sup>27</sup>

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### 5 8 2 — SHAHIRI LAVNI (Poet's Lavni)

With the help of folk musical instruments like dappu, kada, dholki, tal, tuntune, kanjira, through physical movements, and through costumes and make up, the lavni is sung. The expressions given in this lavni are of cool mindedness. This type of presentation of lavni is called Shahiri Lavni.<sup>28</sup>

At the time of the Lavni performance, the musicians cannot cross their boundaries. Sawal-Jawab is also a part of Shahiri Lavni. Moreover, philosophical and mythological lavnis are also being sung.

### 5 8.3 — BAITKICHI LAVNI (Lavnis being sung by sitting)

Lavni is actually a part of the folk form. Lavni singers are not trained anywhere in classical music but are trained themselves. The Baitkichi Lavni singers sing different ragas of classical music in their lavni presentations. While singing lavni, tabla, harmonium were played rhythmically. The tumri of North Indian style is similar to that of Baitkichi lavni form. A total of thirty five ragas are being sung by the lavni singers.<sup>29</sup>

The facial expressions of the lavni singers give the whole meaning of lavni. The lavnis are mainly being sung in the ragas of Rag Yamun, Rag Jhijoti, Rag Pilu, etc. While singing the lavnis, in addition to facial expressions, the movement of eyes, the expression through hands, the stylish way of sitting, the expressions of male and female viewing each other are also expressed very well in the lavni performance.<sup>30</sup>

### 5 8 4 — TAMASHACHI LAVNI (Lavni in Tamasha)

In this type of lavni also, dholki, tuntune, gada, halgi, tal, jhanjar, mungru etc. musical instruments are being accompanied through which Rag Jogya, Rag Yamun etc. ragas were being used for singing Tamasha lavnis. In this lavni, in addition to music, two singers sing the last sentences of the lavni in a very high pitch with great care. In this lavni, the lady dancer, Songadia, Sardar sings the lavni song with the coordination and with the help of music, were being sung. This type of lavni is called Tamashachi Lavni.<sup>31</sup>

In this lavni, the verse form is first uttered and then prose form is also explained through acting with expressions. This lavni is of three types: Bale Ghati, Junnari, and Chakkad.

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In Bale Ghati style, the romantic moods are being expressed. In this, there are two characters — one male dancer and one female dancer will take part. Romantic subjects were being taken and expressed through dancing. In the olden traditional Tamasha, male actors used to play the female roles for dancing. Boys of seventeen and eighteen year old were being engaged to dance. The boys were trained in classical dance forms. The costume of the boys were like that of ladies.<sup>32</sup>

### 5.8.5 — COSTUME AND ORNAMENTS

The dancers wear a nine-yard saree, silk blouse, colourful pearl necklace, ear-rings, colourful flower garlands on their heads, rich make up, bangles on both hands, ghungurus on both legs and colourful make up (parani) to both legs and palms.<sup>33</sup>

### 5.9 — BATAVANI (COMEDY, ENTERTAINMENT AND FARCE)

In Batavani, there are small stories. They dramatise the stories and make it colourful. They divide the dramatic form into scenes and then improvise the scenes. This Batavani is performed after Can, Goulam and Lavni. The speciality of Batavani is that they interpret the true into false and the false things into true; thereby, comedy is created. The duration of this performance is about half an hour to one hour. This form is almost the adoption of English dramas.<sup>34</sup>

It is said that this form came from English literature to Marathi in 1856. Actually, no one is aware of how this farce entered into Marathi literature.

Shahir Patte Bapurao wrote a farce titled "Sasu Jamaiyacha Farce" and introduced it in Tamasha, and from then only the farce has come to everybody's notice. Likewise in Dagdubaba Sali Sirolkar's "Saha Gosavyacha Farce," there is a farce about male and female. By this farce also, Tamasha performers and the audience of Tamasha form in Maharashtra came to know about farce. Farce itself is Batavani.<sup>35</sup>

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### 5.9.1 — BATAVANI IN MODERN TAMASHA

There are mainly **two** characters who take part in Batavani. They are Tatya and Bapu. Both the characters come onto the stage and create a scene from Batavani story. They present the scene humorously.

Example:

Bapu: Aree, Tatya! There is the smell of education coming here

Tatya: What kind?

Bapu: This is the City of Education — Pune. This Pune is the motherland of Education. That is why the smell of education is coming from here.<sup>36</sup>

(This is a kind of humorous scene being presented on Pune city)

### 5.10 — STRUCTURE OF TAMASHA

As discussed in previous chapters, Gan, Goulán, Lavni, Batavani are the integral parts of Tamasha. The most important part, in addition to the above, is Vag. Vag means story/plot.

In Tamasha performance, there are two parts — one is poorvang and the other is uttarang. In poorvang, gan, goulán, lavni and batavani are performed, and in uttarang vag is performed.<sup>37</sup>

'Mohana Batau,' a kind of Vag Natya, was first presented in the form of verse. In the coming years, the structure of Vag has changed from verse to prose form. Vag means "a flowing stream."<sup>38</sup>

In the Marathi dictionary, the meaning of the word Vag is given as 'a group.' In *Gadha Saptasathi* also, the meaning of Vag was given as 'a group.' Vag is the concluding part of Tamasha. The very first Vag Natya was being written by Uma Bapu during the period between 1850-60. The name of the Vag Natya was "Mohana Batau."<sup>39</sup>

In 1853, Shahir Sagan Bhau wrote a Lavni Vag named 'Kasturicha Sugandha' (the fragrance of Kasturi). In 1843, Sri Vishnudas Bhavé wrote 'Seetha Swayamvar,' a play in Marathi. It is said that he wrote this play with the inspiration of these Vags. Between 1778-1844, Shahir Parasuram wrote 'Pativrata Khun' (the symbol of Pativrata), a lavni of Vag. This lavni almost has resemblance with the lavnis of the Peeshwa period. The unfortunate thing is that the script of the above lavni is not available at present.<sup>40</sup>

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The Vag Natyas, in its beginning stages, were in poetic form. The famous Vags were "Mohana Batau," "Sursenacha Vag," etc.

As discussed in the earlier chapters, in traditional Tamasha, (Jan, Goulan, Lavni) are presented through song, dance and music. But there is less of acting in them. After the introduction of Vag only, the acting part has increased in Tamasha. In traditional Tamasha, the subjects were mainly mythological and tales were based on folk.

'Rajwadi Vag' is an example of folk tale. 'Raja Bhoj,' 'Raja Harishchandra' are examples of mythological-based Tamasha subjects.

In traditional Tamasha, the characters — Sardar, Suruthe (companion), Dholakia (player of dholki), and Songadia (comedian) were the main characters. Tamasha performance was first started with the Vag Lavni. Equal time was being allotted for both dialogue part and for lavni part. That is why the total duration of the vag performances ranged between three to four hours. In these performances, the lavni was in written form. The Lavni Shahirs were there but there were no dialogue writers in prose form then. But the Kalavanths (artists), with their intelligence and depending on the situation, were uttering prose dialogues. In other words, they were improvising the dialogues individually.<sup>41</sup>

### 5.10.1 — THE IMPORTANT VAG; NATYA PARTS IN TRADITIONAL TAMASHA

With the introduction of Vag Natya in Tamasha, the Shahirs of Vag started writing Vag scripts on various subjects. They wrote on deities, on kings, on village folk, on the characters of developed society. On going carefully through these, the Vag Natya can be divided into four parts.

- (1) Mythological Vag
- (2) Historical Vag
- (3) Vag based on folk tales
- (4) Social Vag

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A number of Vag Natyas were written based on the above four forms. Given below are some of the Vags of four forms of Vag.

### I. Mythological Vag (Pauranic Vag)

1. Raja Harischandra
2. Raja Siriyal
3. Bhakta Pundalik
4. Santh Tukaram
5. Santh Namdev
6. Santh Chokamela
7. Santh Rohitdas

### II. Historical Vag (Ithihasik Vag)

1. Hee Jhunj Murar Bajichi (A takkar Murar bajiki)
2. Maharashtra Jhukta Nahi (Maharashtra should not bow)
3. Raja Shambhu Agnipetta (Firesome anger of King Shambhu)
4. Afzal Khan cha Vadh (The killing of Afzal Khan)
5. Santaji Dhorpade
6. Umaji Maik.

### III. Vags Based on Folk Tales

1. Goulyachi Rambha (Rambha of Yadava community)
2. Aaich ka Lizz (The heart of mother)
3. Vishacha pela (The bowl of poison)
4. Bhillachi Toli (A group of cats)
5. Dev dete Karm nete (God gives, fate takes out)
6. Thakas Mahatak (Powerful man over weak person)





#### IV Social Vag (Samajik Vag)

- 1 Raktan Nahvali Kunahad (Knife flooded with blood)
- 2 Lagna Adhi Kunk Pusal (The sindur lost before marriage/became widow before marriage)
3. Sasra Sunecha Navra (Father-in-law, the husband of daughter-in-law)
4. Sapadla Hari Nayikicha Ghati (Hari was found in heroine's house)
5. Vedijhali Tujhyasathi (I became mad for you)
6. Rakat Navli Pehli Ratra (Bloodful of first night)
7. Asun Pathishi Shodthe Tula ( I am searching here and there, which is behind me only)
8. Ana sanga bai Ponachi (Now tell, whose woman is she<sup>7</sup>)
9. Ase Pudari Tharkara (Kill such leaders)
10. Anahe Asach Chalayech (Now, this will happen like this only)

Generally, in Vag, the central idea of the Vag is being explained through song. They tempt audience to witness the Vag. In traditional Tamasha, we find two parts. The first part is of a serious nature. In the second part, the subject is entertainment-based. In the subjects of seriousness, truth, God, philosophy etc., things can be seen, whereas in entertainment it is quite opposite and the subject is very light and more to entertain the audience.

#### 510.1.1 — MYTHOLOGICAL VAG (PAURANIC VAG)

The Shahirs wrote Vags in mythology based on the epics like *Ramayan* and *Mahabharata*. The subject moves on philosophy and there are descriptions on dedication and bhakti. These Vags are very sentimental. In Mythological Vag, they take whole or part of the epics for their performance.<sup>42</sup>

Example:

Dagdubaba Sali Thambe Shirolkar's "Raja Harischandra" Vag comes under this category. In this Vag,

there was an effort being made to destroy the truthfulness; the sound slate of Harischandra on Truth, the sale of son and wife for truth, not allowing to do funeral for want of fee, though the

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body was of his own son. regaining his kingdom from the Maharishi by winning the Test of Truth being performed. In this Vag, the sentiment part is more. During the presentation of this Vag, the audience will be influenced by sentiments. Further, the audience begin to weep. Like this, in traditional Tamasha, the mythological Vags are performed which encourages audience.<sup>41</sup>

A number of such other mythological Vags were written which also gained popularity.

The important Vag Natyas of Mythological Vag in Maharashtra are

1. Raja Harischandra
2. Raja Siriyal
3. Bhakta Pundalik
4. Santh Tukaram
5. Santh Namdev
6. Santh Chokamela
7. Santh Rohitdas

### 5.10.1.2 — HISTORICAL VAG;

Like Mythological Vag, the Historical Vags also come into the category of serious natured subjects. Historical Vag entered in Tamasha very late, that is, after the entry of Mythological Vags etc. The stories, incidents based on persons of historical importance were being taken to write the Vag in historical Vags. There is no scope for creativity in Historical Vag narration. The real historical events are the subjects in Historical Vag. There is no chance for exaggeration of events and fantasy in this type of vag.<sup>44</sup>

"Hee Jhunj Murarbajichi," "Umaji Naik," "Panhalghad ka Khaidi" etc. are Historical Vags which were written in traditional Tamasha. Like that, Vithabhai Naraingaonkar's Afzal Khan ka Vadh," in which the Shahir narrated the incidents as it is that took place in history. The dialogues of this Vag were written by taking into consideration the conditions of that time and the language used was also hard. After witnessing the Vag, the illiterate folk also feel as if they are reading history. Seriousness as well as comedy also can be seen in this Vag.<sup>45</sup> The scenic design is very



difficult in this type of Vags, but if care is taken to set the stage related to historical times, the presentation will be very rich. Make up is also very rich in these historical type of vags. They use different type of turbans, the get up of Muslims, different types of hand props such as swords etc. All these are used to attract audience. That is why the Historical Vag has become very famous in Maharashtra and the response from the audience is also very good for this type of Vag.<sup>46</sup>

In Historical Vag, the audience feel that they are looking at a wonder (though the incidents really happened in history). This is also the reason for the popularity of Historical Vag in traditional Tamasha though this type of Vag entered into Tamasha very late.

The most popular Historical Vags of Maharashtra are:

1. I lee Jhunj Murar Bajichi (A takkar Murar bajiki)
2. Maharashtra Jhukta Nahi (Maharashtra should not bow)
3. Raja Shambhu Agnipetta (Firesome anger of King Shambhu)
4. Afzal Khan cha Vadh (The killing of Afzal Khan)
5. Santaji Dhorpade
6. Umaji Maik.<sup>47</sup>

#### 5.10.1.3 — VAGS BASED ON FOLK TALKS

Like mythological and historical vags, the vags based on folk tales also became very popular in Maharashtra. The important thing in this vag is that they contain the beliefs and customs that are being followed in society. Crossing of black cat, hearing the sound of an owl, falling of a lizard on the body etc. beliefs were taken to write these vags and were presented. The incidents are based on those which cannot take place in daily life.<sup>48</sup>

The Shahirs take fantasy-based subjects and choose their incidents from them and create a scene of Vag. Discussions are more in this type of Vag Natya. The relationship between the characters is very good. In the dialogue part also, the dialogues have no meaning in them.

In Marathwada, “Gadwacha lagna” (The marriage of an Ass) was one of the very famous Vags of this type. This is a very fantastic Vag. The central idea of the story of this Vag is — The

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king announces that those who construct a seven storeyed building by using copper will be married to his daughter (i.e., marriage **will** be performed with the princess for whoever constructs the building). A donkey constructs **the** building. Abiding by his word, the king performs the marriage of his daughter with the **donkey**. After the marriage, the donkey becomes a young man. He was a member of Indra sabha, who received a curse and became a donkey. The relief to the curse was the marriage with that **princess**.<sup>49</sup> Like this, fantasy, wonders etc. can be seen in this type of Vag.

In Shahir Patte Bapurao's "Mitharani" Vag also, this type of fantasy and make-believes were described. Maharashtra audience have enjoyed this type of Vag Natya also and make this type of Vag Natya very popular.<sup>50</sup>

A number of Vag Natyas of this kind were written of which the following are very famous

1. Goulyachi Rambha (Rambha of Yadava community)
2. Aaich ka Lizz (The heart of mother)
3. Vishacha pela (The bowl of poison)
4. Bhillachi Toli (A group of cats)
5. Dev dete Karm nete (God gives, fate takes out)
6. Thakas Mahatak (Powerful man over weak person).<sup>51</sup>

These days, the traditional Tamasha in Maharashtra has been changed into modern vag Natya. Some of the Tamasha performances which I witnessed and read are discussed hereunder.

From the Peeshwas period today, Tamasha has changed in all angles, which have been discussed by me in the earlier chapters. But Tamasha, after entering into society by stepping out of Peeshwas Darbars, has become into Vag Natya. The writers of Vag Natya took mythological, social, historical and folk-based subjects and according to the desires of the people, started writing Vag Natya.

Patte Bapurao's "Ratnaghadcha Rangamahala: Gouliyachi Rambha," a historical type folk Vag Natya, has attracted almost all audience, from all corners of Maharashtra.<sup>52</sup>

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Tamasha organisers say that audience used to come from far off places with great interest to witness this Vag Natya. This Vag Natya became very famous among other Vag Natyas and hence the performers of this Vag Natya took it as a prestige and were taking most care in scenic design, lighting, make up, costume, special sound effects, and were performing the Vag colourfully.<sup>53</sup>

The shows were almost showing houseful and packed and the tents were being paced with audience and the performers of this Vag "Ratnaghadcha Rangamahar - Gouliyacha Rambha" were always drawing profits. By discussing this Vag Natya by taking Tamasha elements, this Vag Natya can be divided into six parts — plot, characterisation, diction, atmosphere, aims and objectives, and technical aspects.<sup>54</sup>

### 5 10 1.3.1 — PLOT

In Gouliyacha Rambha Vag Natya, there are seven scenes. The first scene is Raj Durbar scene. In this scene, the conversation between the prince and princess is the main theme. After the death of the king, the responsibility of the nation and the people fell on the shoulders of these two. The marriage of the princess was fixed with the Senapati, Ranamal. After their engagement, the Senapati used to look after all the matters relating to the rule and began harassing the public. The information of this harassment of people by Ranamal is being told by the prince to the princess. At the same moment, Devadas, the village leader, also confirms the news. The princess does not oblige this and says that this is a rumour. Then the village leader says that the Senapati is teaching and harassing Gouliyacha Rambha in the streets.

The second scene is set on the streets. In this, Savakhya, Rambha and Devadas started in the streets and began selling milk and curd. While walking, Rambha sings a *pad*. The meaning of the *pad* is: "It is because I am dressing myself very well and hence all eyes are on me, and the Senapati Ranamal is behind me with his bad views."

The third scene is the market scene. In this, all the milkmaids assemble together, selling milk and curds. Then Senapati Ranamal and Yuvaraj Kishori Singh come there. Ranamal starts teasing Rambha by putting his hands on her and Yuvaraj interferes and stops him, but Senapati

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does not listen. Then begins a fight between Yuvaraj and Senapati in which Senapati is defeated by Yuvaraj. Rambha thanks the prince for saving her from the clutches of Senapati.

The fourth scene again turns to the Rajmahal (palace). In this Senapati Ranamal comes to Rajkumari (princess) and complains to her that the Rajkumar (prince) has teased and tried to molest Rambha in the bazar. The princess questions the prince whether it is true and the prince denies it. Yet, the princess suspects the prince and sentences him to jail.

The fifth scene is again a street scene. In this, Senapati Ranamal and his servant Fukdand were happy over the happenings that the prince is being sentenced to jail. They think that it is not good for them to keep the prince alive even in the jail, and went to the jail and attacked the prince with khanjar. The prince became unconscious and the blood was flowing from his body. The Senapati and his servant think that the prince is dead and flee. While fleeing, they left behind the khanjar (small sword), which is full of blood.

The sixth scene is the jail scene. In this, the princess, the Patil (village leader), Senapati were standing by the side of the prince who was unconscious, in the jail. The Patil sees the khanjar which was left behind and lifts it. Immediately, Senapati enquires about fingerprints on the khanjar and comes to the conclusion that the fingerprints on the khanjar were that of the Patil. All of them accuse the Patil that he assaulted the prince and he is sentenced to jail.

In the seventh scene, Rambha and Mouli were thinking about the reason of Patil's not returning from Rajmahal. By then, the servant of Senapati comes there and informs them about the happenings of Rajmahal. Fukdand tells them that Senapati does not have real love for the princess and loves her for the power only. On hearing this, Rambha and Mouli feel very sad over the happenings.

Senapati Ranamal tried to molest the princess in the Rajmahal and then the prince appears there and rescues her from the hands of Senapati.

Finally they arrest Senapati, sentence him to jail, and then the marriage of the princess is performed with the village head.

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### 5.10.1.3.2 — CHARACTERISATION

In this Vag Natya, prince Kishori Singh, Senapati Ranamal, Savakhya — the husband of Rambha, Patil, the village head, Fukdand, the servant of Senapati, are the important male characters, and in female characters, princess Indumati, and Rambha were the two leading roles

The writer has characterised the role of the prince as hero (Dhirodatta), Senapati as villain, and the village head as the responsible gentleman

The title role character, Rambha, by her beauty and with other things, makes the story move around her. Like this, the princess Indumati's role is presented as a noble and a loyal lady

These characters are taken as historical-based folk characters. Hence, this Vag Natya can be treated as historical-based folk styled Vag Natya.

### 5.10.1.3.3 — DICTION

Diction in this Vag Natya is written in a very simple language which is very easy to understand to the common folk. The dialogues are timely used. Given below is an example

Kishori Singh: Sister, Father has left the responsibility of ruling the country on my shoulders and I think I am fully fit for it. Because of the anger of Ranamal, your marriage is being fixed with him. Full administrative powers related to rule is under his control and I have received several complaints of his misusing the power and harassing the people. I came here for your suggestion in this matter to tackle him

Rajkumari: Brother, you are right. But my marriage should not have been fixed with him. Under any circumstances you should cut short his powers and regain the administration from him. You believe me or not, I have not heard of any complaints against him. I think this is a rumour spread by some people.

Kishori Singh: This is true and not a rumour. You may not be aware of this because most of the time you stay in the palace. If you do not know, I have to take Shamsheer along with me.

Rajkumari: Is there any evidence for this?

(The village leader, Patil, enters from outside)

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Devadas: I praise you, Prince and Princess

Kishori Singh: Come, Patil. After long time in the palace" You are a good friend of my father and the same relationship will continue with me also

Devadas: Prince, there is an important reason for my visit. Gouli's wife, Rambha, is facing troubles with Senapati whose bad sights are on her. And he may try to harass and molest Rambha in the bazars

Kishori Singh: Sister. Now you might have realised the truth<sup>1</sup>

Rajkumari: Brother, you might have bribed this Patil, to utter these words in front of me. But even now I am not sure

Kishori Singh: Sister, you are blind in love with Senapati and not able to realise the truth  
(Kishori Singh leaves and Ranamal enters)

Ranamal: What is the reason for the sad feelings in the face of Rajkuman today"

Rajkumari: I heard the news that you are harassing Gouli Rambha in the streets. I heard this from Devadas. Is this true?<sup>57</sup>

### 5.10.1.3.4 — ATMOSPHERE

The Tamasha phad organisers create atmosphere by taking into consideration the situations written by the writers in the Vag Natya. By witnessing the Vag Natya performance, audience forget themselves and their surroundings and treat them as if they were in the Rajmahal. This is because of the atmosphere being created by the organisers with the help of scenic design, stagecraft, lighting, including historical type of costumes and make up. By using the above-techniques and with latest developments, they create the complete historical atmosphere on the dais.<sup>58</sup>

### 5.10.1.3.5 — AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim and objectives of the Tamasha phad organisers in presenting this type of Tamasha Vag Natya is to entertain the audience with a rare historical type of folk stories. There is a message also being taught through this Vag Natya. Sentiment is also being shown in this Vag Natya.<sup>59</sup>



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### 5.10.1.3.6 — TECHNICAL ASPECTS

The present modern Tamasha, i.e., Lok Natya Tamasha, is only dependent on technical aspects. They are using modern lighting equipment including flood lighting, halogen lights, footlights, spotlights, strobe lights, follow-up lights etc.

Further, in sound system also, they use modern sophisticated equipment. They are using acoustic mikes to maintain clarity and to reach the sound to the far off place, i.e. to the audience who are sitting in the last row.<sup>60</sup>

The Tamasha phad organisers are creating scenes such as war scenes, fire scenes, lightening and other types of wonders on the dais, by using fireworks, firecrackers etc.

Backdrops, moving sets, wire work sets, special effects sets prepared by using wire work, modern music and music effects and even in make up and costume also they have advanced technically.

### 5.11 — SOCIAL VAG (SAMAJIK VAG)

In this type of Vag, there is a wise character who narrates the story to the audience and entertains them. The whole of the story (Vag) depends on his wisdom. The subject of these vags are based on the incidents of present day society. There is scope for reality in this type of vag.

Dagudbaba Sali's "Stree-Purush ka Vag," "Aklecha Vag," "Teen gosticha Ulgada," "Dagalbaj Mitra" are some of the vags of this type. In addition, the writings of Koulapurkar's "Bapache Vag," Arjun Wadlikar's "Naiknicha Rang Mahal," Lakshman Marathwadikar's "Savla Kubhar" were also some of the vags which were famous in Maharashtra.<sup>61</sup>

In addition to the above, the following vags also became very popular in Maharashtra:

1. Raktan Nahvali Kunahad (Knife flooded with blood)
2. Lagna Adhi Kunk Pusal (The sindur lost before marriage/became widow before marriage)
3. Sasra Sunecha Navra (Father-in-law, the husband of daughter-in-law)
4. Sapadla Hari Nayikicha Ghati (Hari was found in heroine's house)
5. Vedijhali Tujhyasathi (I became mad for you)

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



- 6 Rakat Navli Pehli Ratra (Bloodful of first night)
- 7 Asun Pathishi Shodthe Tula ( I am searching here and there, which is behind me only)
- 8 Ana sanga bai Ponachi (Now tell, whose woman is she")
9. Ase Pudari Tharkara (Kill such leaders)
10. Anahe Asach Chalayeche (Now, this will happen like this only) <sup>62</sup>

### 5.12 — LITERARY IMPORTANCE OF VAG

The story, characterisation, entertainment, comedy, plays a very important role in Vag. All the Vag Shahirs took these four items and wrote vags in common language which is attractive to common folk. The culture of the villages of Maharashtra are taken and were described in these Vags. There is an inspiration of local languages, conditions on these Vags. Because of literary importance, lavni, Gan, Goulani and Vag subjects have been attracting the audience <sup>63</sup>

Marathi literature, mainly folklore, are being dramatised by shahirs and moulded by them into the form of Tamasha and according to the situations, use the words in literature, write good dialogues, write lavnis, Gan, Golan etc. All these aspects are being bound in words, and hypnotising audience, which is the literary importance of Vag. In one word, without literature, there is no Vag Natya. Whether the Shahirs are educated or illiterate, they understood the village folk and wrote and are writing vags by maintaining the importance of literature <sup>64</sup>

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



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Maharashtra
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## CHAPTER - VI

# **LIFESTYLE OF TAMASHA KALAVANTHS (ARTISTS)**



## VI. LIFESTYLE OF TAMASHA KALAVANTHS (ARTISTS)

### 60 — INTRODUCTION

The Kalavanth of Tamasha theatre are mostly from the villages. There is employment problem in many of the interior villages. There is no work for the villagers during a greater part of the year. In remote villages, the employment problem is the same for both educated and uneducated people. If anybody gives an opportunity to work, the villagers accept the offer without any hesitation. The main reason is poverty and illiteracy.<sup>1</sup>

The Tamasha organisers, for booking the Kalavanth, visit various villages. Those who have relationship with Tamasha from earlier or who are eager to join the Tamasha phads are generally attracted and they are from the downtrodden classes.

The Vag Natya proprietors book these Kalavanth with payment of rupees six thousand to seven thousand per annum in addition to free food and shelter. The experienced Vag Kalavanth are paid a little more, which will range between rupees ten thousand to twelve thousand per year. During rainy seasons, there are no Tamasha performances and hence, for Tamasha phads, a year means only eight months.<sup>2</sup>

The poorest downtrodden Kalavanth, irrespective of their gender, work as per the directions of the Vag Natya phad owner. The Kalavanth who were in poverty in the past accompany the phad owners with the intention of getting some source of income. The Kalavanth do not even know about the happenings at present and have no chance of thinking of their future life. Their lifestyle is very poor. The Kalavanth who enacts the role of a queen by wearing rich costumes like silk sarees are seen in torn and old sarees in their real lives. The main reason for this is their family problems, family burdens, low wages, and they are unable to do other works because of their dedication to Tamasha are the main reasons of their poverty. The lifestyle of the Tamasha Kalavanth is in a very poor state. The girls are unmarried till a late age, because of their association with Tamasha phads, because of staying away from their homes, the blind dedication of their lives to the Tamasha phads is also the reason for their poverty. There are less than five percent of Tamasha kalavanth who are financially sound. Moreover, one who joins the

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



Tamasha phad becomes an addict to Tamasha Vag and becomes its permanent member. If at all they happen to leave the phad, because of frustration, they return back to the same profession very soon.

The present educated society is enjoying and getting entertainment by witnessing the Tamasha Kalavanth on the stage but the same Kalavanth in their real life, at their leisure periods, during holidays, who wish to move in society, are facing insults and difficulties in the society. Moreover, it is very difficult for them to perform the marriage of their children. To mingle with society, they have to face much difficulties. That is why all the Tamasha kalavanth have formed into a group and are living together<sup>4</sup>

Even today, the children of these kalavanth are uneducated. They have no property of their own, no pensionary benefits in their old age, and hence the lives of the old artists are in drastic condition. By knowing all these things and having no other way to go, the kalavanth work for Tamasha companies and settle permanently in the Tamasha phads as kalavanth. Such kalavanth can be seen in almost all of the Tamasha phads<sup>5</sup>

The Tamasha kalavanth are generous minded people. They give full cooperation to their owners and work with dedication. Though they have several problems, and if they become ill they cannot stop giving performances, because of these reasons, until the completion of their contract, they will not leave a company and are faithful to their owners<sup>6</sup>

The kalavanth who participate in Gan, Goulan, Lavni and also the other workers, musicians, all work with great care to avoid any further consequences and thereby get acclaimed by the audience.

Some of the kalavanth become ill now and then. To them, the Tamasha phad owner provides medical assistance. They fulfill the needs of their dependents by paying advances. There is a majority of Hindus in the Tamasha phads compared to Muslim and Christians, as their participation is very less. Even still, they work unitedly. By following national integration, with love, dedication, they live together. During the times of fairs and festivals, they wear new clothes and enjoy themselves. Depending on the needs of the kalavanth, the phad owner enhances the salaries occasionally<sup>7</sup>



## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



I had the opportunity of meeting some of the kalavanths, technical persons and musicians, during my visit to those Tamasha phads, as part of my field work and on enquiry. I came to know about their lifestyle very closely and very deeply.

### 6.1 -- TAMASHA PHADS AND ASSOCIATIONS OF MAHARASHTRA

There are about five hundred Tamasha phads in Maharashtra. Situated in Dhule and Jalgaon areas in Khandesh and in the southern regions of Maharashtra, i.e., in Marathwada and Vidarbha regions. Day by day, the Tamasha companies entered into all corners of Maharashtra with their cheap popularity.<sup>8</sup>

They present cinematic productions in all styles of Tamasha production like social vag natya, mythological vag natya, historical vag natya, and folk style vag natya.

Most of the artists have separated from the earlier phads and have formed new phads. But these associations are not functioning effectively, and financially also. The owners are getting very low profits, after meeting all types of expenditure and making payments to kalavanths, maintenance of lighting, sound systems, maintenance of transport vehicles, etc.

#### 6.1.1 — ADDRESSES OF TAMASHA ASSOCIATIONS

During my visit to Naraingaon village, Junnar Taluq, Pune District, I met some of the Tamasha Associations there.<sup>8</sup>

The particulars of the Associations which I visited were:-

- 1) Chandrakant Dhawalpurikar  
Lok Natya Tamasha  
Naraingaon Village  
Junnar Taluq  
Pune Dist.

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- 2) V. Ganpathrao Mane Chichneekar  
and Akkatai Karadkar  
Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal  
Centre - 423, Karad  
Dist. Satara
- 3) Smt. Vandana Chahurwadikar  
Bahurangi Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal  
Jatnandur  
Patoda Taluq  
Dist. Beed (Phone 518)
- 4) Malati Inamdar  
D/o Vithabhai Bhau Mang Naraingaonkar  
(recipient of President of India Gold Medal)  
Naraingaon Village  
Junnar Taluq  
Pune Dist. (Phone: 42255)
- 5) M. Ramachandra Wadekar  
Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal
- 6) Smt. Kunda Patil Pimpleekar  
D/o Vag Samrat Jagtap Patil Pimipleekar
- 7) M. Manikrao Outhi Rajurikar  
M. Dadu Jadhav Gunadhkar  
Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal  
Naraingaon Village  
Junnar Taluq  
Pune Dist.

**TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA**



8) Smt. Lata Puneekar

D/o Shri Kondiba Taklikar  
Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal  
Survey No 19, Plot No 4  
Hinghne Home Colony  
Karve Nagar  
Pune

Contact Address: Jai Bhavani Kala Mandir Theatre  
Shivaji Stadium  
Mangalwarpet  
Pune 411002 (Phone 27430)

9) Nrityachandrika Smt. Lata Koulapurkar

Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal  
Naraingaon Village  
Junnar Taluq  
Pune Dist.

10) M. Nivruthi Gaokwad

M. Vinod Samrat Anthony Dosheend Lahwarkar  
Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal (Mumbai)  
Naraingaon Village  
Junnar Taluq  
Pune Dist.

11) M. Bal Alahat Netwadkar

Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal  
Naraingaon Village  
Junnar Taluq  
Pune Dist.

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



- 12) Vag Samragini Smt Nanda Patil Pimpileekar

D/o Jagtap Patil Pimpileekar

Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal

Village - Moshi

Taluq - Haveli

Dist - Pune

- 13) Anand Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal

Sanjay Mahajan Nagar Sevak

Jalgaon Nagar Parishad

Khandesh

- 14) M. Aman Tambe Poonekar

Saraswatibhai Kolhapurkar

Bahurangi Tamasha

Aryabhushan Tamasha Theatre

400, Ganeshpet

Pune 411002 (Phone 27944)

- 15) Kalu-Balu

Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal

Koulapur

Sangli

Kalu-Balu

Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal

Post - Koulapur

Taluq - Meeraj

Dist. - Sangli (Phone 364242)

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



16) Sri Shankarrao V. Mane Chinchneekar

Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal

L. V. Mane Construction

Post - Chinchni

Taluq - Tasgaon

Dist - Sangli

### 6.1.2 — ADDRESSES OF TAMASHA ARTISTS (KALAVANTHS)

In addition to the above associations, the most popular and famous Tamasha theatre artists (Kalavanth) are:-<sup>9</sup>

1) Late Shiva Sambha Koulapurkar

Dist - Koulapur, Sangli

(Contemporary of Kolhapur Shahu Maharaj)

2) Late Rama Nama Lavalekar

Village - Lavala, Dist - Pune

3) Leela Bai Manjrekar

Village: Manjre, Dist. Pune

4) Nagu Bhagu Mali

Village: Nirmudgav, Dist. Pune

5) Rasool Bhai Pinjari

Khandesh

6) Dagdu Amrapurkar

Aurangabad

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



- 7) Namdev Ghivarwadekar  
Aurangabad
- 8) Late Jagtap Patil Pimpileekar  
Village Pimple, Dist Pune (Cine Dancer)
- 9) Nanda Patil Pimplekar, D/o Late Jagtap Patil Pimplekar  
Village Pimple, Dist Pune
- 10) Soubhagyavathi Mandapatikar  
Village Pimple, Dist Pune
- 11) Kunda Patil Pimplekar, D/o Late Jagtap Patil Pimplekar  
Village Pimple, Dist Pune
- 12) Late Shankar Rao Ausrikar  
Village Ausrigaon  
Dist. Pune
- 13) Uma Chandollikar  
Village: Chandoli, Dist Pune

### 6.1.3 — PRESENT - NARAINCIAON TAMASHA PHAD ARTISTS (KALAVANTHS)<sup>10</sup>

- 1) Dathoba Jadhav Dawnikar  
Organiser. Age: 32 years  
Chandrakanth Dhawalpurikar Tamasha Mandal  
Naraingaon Village, Junnar Taluq, Pune Dist.

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



- 2) Thika Bhika Sangveerkar  
Village: Sanghvi, Dist. Duliya
- 3) Shiv Ram Veergaonkar Sahababu Borgaonkar  
Village: Borgaonkar, Tq. Chikodi, Dist. Bolgaon
- 4) Pyaran Karodkar  
Village: Karad, Dist. Satara
- 5) Prabhakar Sindhya Ahnekar  
Bombaywala Servicewala  
Thatwadi, Ghatkopar, Mumbai
- 6) Latha Puneekar  
Village: Karve Nagar, Hingne Kalni, Dist. Pune
- 7) Soubhagyavathi Vandana Chahurwadikar  
Village: Chahurwadi, Dist. Satara
- 8) Manik Rao Authi Rajurikar  
Village: Rajuree, Tq. Junnar, Dist. Pune
- 9) Ramchandra Wadekar  
Village: Manjarwadi, Tq. Junnar, Dist. Pune
- 10) Ganpath V. Mane  
Saha Akthath Karadekar  
Village: Karad, Tq. Junnar, Dist. Pune

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



- 11) Malathi Inamdar Naraingaonkar  
Village Naraingaon, Tq Junnar, Dist Pune
- 12) Raghuveer Khedkar, S/o Tukaram Khedkar  
Village Sangmaner, Dist Ahmednagar
- 13) Nanda Patil Pimplekar  
Village Munshigaon, Tq. Haveli, Dist Pune
- 14) Mangala Bansode Karodikar  
Village Kakhedi, Tq Karad, Dist Satara
- 15) Kalu-Balu (Twins), S/o Shiva Shambhu  
Village Kawalpur, Tq. Meeraj, Dist Sangh
- 16) Latha Kawalapurkar  
Village Kawalapur, Kamgarputhlur, Shivajinagar, Pune
- 17) Manda Kawalapurkar  
Village Hanumanwadi, Tq Haveli, Dist Pune
- 18) Bala Allat Nethwadkar  
Village Nethwad, Tq. Junnar, Dist Pune
- 19) Vinayak Thambe  
Post Shirol, Tq Junnar, Dist Pune



## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



- 20) Anand Rao Mahajan  
Anand Lok Natya Mandal  
Village: Jalgaon, Dist Jalgaon
- 21) Sandhya Mane Solapurkar  
Village: Solapur, Dist Rajwada
- 22) Aman Thambe Punekar  
Saha Saraswathi Bai Kolhapurkar  
H.No.400, Aryabhushan Theatre, Pune
- 23) Hari Bhau Badenagarkar  
Village: Kotugaon, Dist. Ahmednagar
- 24) Pandurang Mule Manjarwadikar  
Village: Naraingaon, Tq. Junnar, Dist. Pune
- 25) Datha Mahadik Punekar  
Village: Bela, Tq. Junnar, Dist. Pune
- 26) Tulsiram Shivram Jadhav  
Chandrakanth Tamasha Mandal  
Naraingaon, Tq. Junnar, Dist. Pune
- 27) Sheik Akhthar, Manager  
Village: Naraongaon, Tq. Junnar, Dist. Pune

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



- 28) Babaan Lalu Dalvi, Manager & Generator Mechanic, Sound System In-charge  
Opp. Police Station  
Village: Naraingaon, Tq. Junnar, Dist. Pune

- 29) Madhukar Seth Mirale  
Tamasha Kalavanth Kalavikas Mandal  
New Hanuman Theatre, Lal Bagh  
VT to Chichpokli Railway Station  
Industrial Estate, Mumbai 400012 (Phone 4411 50)

### 6.1.4 — FAMOUS TAMASHGIRS <sup>11</sup>

- 1) Patthe Bapurao (1890-1920), famous Tamashgir, a teacher to most of the Tamashgirs
- 2) Ranganath Dada Lohar (1910-1920), famous Tamashgir, Khandesh
- 3) Dagdu Sali, Dist. Nagar, famous Tamashgir and Songadia
- 4) Rajdhar Bua Mahanubhav, famous Tamashgir, Khandesh
- 5) Rama Kumbhar Vardhanghadkar, famous Tamashgir in the entire Maharashtra, equal to Patthe Bapurao
- 6) Sawlaram Aurangpurkar, best Songadia, a disciple of Dagdu Sali, Tamashgir equal to Patthe Bapurao
- 7) Bapurao Kupwadkar, a disciple of Patthe Bapurao, famous Tamashgir in South Maharashtra
- 8) Bapurao Punekar, expert Dholki player in South Maharashtra
- 9) Siva, Sambha Koulapurkar (brothers), experts in Table and Harmonium
- 10) Pandurang Kurkumbhkar (a disciple of Patthe Bapurao), famous presenter of Vag in Drama Style and Radio Singer

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



- 11) Namdev Lavlekar (very famous Tamashgir Poet)
- 12) Kashinath Shakatkar (famous Songadia around Pune)
- 13) Shankar Ausareekar (expert dhoiki player in Pune area)
- 14) Gangaram Satarkar (expert in Tamasha music)
- 15) Bhau Bapu Naraingaonkar (a disciple of Patthe Bapurao), very famous in the areas of Kolhapur, Satara and Mumbai
- 16) Damaji Korgaonkar, famous Tamashgir around Pune
- 17) Manohar Godhli (a contemporary of Rama Kumbhar), expert in music
- 18) Nayaku Kamerikar, very famous Tamshgir
- 19) Ganpathrao Patil, talented Tamashgir
- 20) Baburao Kurankar, a disciple of Patthe Bapurao, best singer and actor
- 21) Tukaram Khedkar, famous poet and singer
- 22) Madhav Nagarkar, famous in Mumbai, Satar and Nagar areas in dhoiki playing, Tamashgir and very talented actor
- 23) Dadu Indurikar, very famous Tamashgir in Mumbai area, famous Songadia, recipient of President of India Award for Tamasha

### 6.1.5 — TAMASHGIRS OF NAGPUR & VIDARBHA AREAS <sup>12</sup>

- 1) Bharathi Bua Jhadiwale, Ghazal artist, Vidarbha, Tamashgir, best Songadia, singer and best actor
- 2) Balwantrao Krishnarao Dhuge, dhoiki player

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



- 3) Chandbhai Musalman, Tamashgir, Akola, tried for Hindu-Muslim unity
- 4) Bhikabhai Tamashgir, best dholki player and famous Tamashgir
- 5) Yashwantha Nahvi, presented a number of Tamasha performances in Vidarbha area
- 6) Pipya Mahar, famous Tamashgir
- 7) Bhujaalderkar Mahar, famous Tamashgir
- 8) Rama Tayde Modshee, famous Tamashgir
- 9) Anandrao Patil Cikhhalgaonkar, Ghazal singer and Tamashgir
- 10) Ghushya Rambha Mahar, Ghazal singer
- 11) Thaku Punwalkar, Tamashgir
- 12) Anandswami and Pandari Sitaram Patil, famous Tamashgirs
- 13) Gulabrao, Tamashgir, Amravathi, Dt. Mangrool
- 14) Dastageer, Javleel, Naigaon
- 15) Chighle bua Kale, Pipalgaon, Dt. Buldana

### 6 1 6 — LIST OF FAMOUS SINGERS <sup>13</sup>

- 1) Kausalya Kopargaonkar
- 2) Godavari Puneekar
- 3) Bakula Islampurkar
- 4) Shevantha Jejurikar
- 5) Yashoda Vaikar
- 6) Yamuna Vaikar

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



- 7) Tara Vaikar
- 8) Bhama Pandarpurkar
- 9) Baban Khedkar
- 10) Chandra Punekar
- 11) Leela Manjrekar
- 12) Uttam Targaonkar
- 13) Anasuya Jejurikar
- 14) Changuna Jejurikar
- 15) Pushpa Jejurikar
- 16) Paru Jejurikar
- 17) Tara Khadkikar
- 18) Chabu Nagarkar
- 19) Harna Ghodandikar
- 20) Tara Velapurkar
- 21) Gangubai Mali
- 22) Kalu Bhalerao
- 23) Tarabai Kaldonkar
- 24) Baban Pandarpurkar
- 25) Lalan Jharekar
- 26) Anasuya Khaptekhar
- 27) Saru Satarkar

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



- 28) Kashibai Kouthekar
- 29) Chandraprabha Satarkar
- 30) Anasuya Gadagkar
- 31) Ausa Kolhapurkar
- 32) Sulochana Satarkar
- 33) Gulab Sangmanerkar
- 34) Johra Jadgaonkar
- 35) Kamla Jangaonkar
- 36) Kamla Patardekar
- 37) Kamla Naigaonkar
- 38) Kamal Kopargaonkar

### 6 1 7 —LIST OF FAMOUS SINGERS OF VIDHARBHIA AREA <sup>14</sup>

- 1) Vasantha Jalgaonkar
- 2) Kamla Patroderkar
- 3) Manorama, Sulochana Pathrodkar
- 4) Kamla Selukar
- 5) Meenakshi Gadkar
- 6) Vaaru Kouthekar
- 7) Chabu Shirodkar
- 8) Manorama Jejurikar

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



### 6.1.8 — LIST OF FAMOUS SONG AI DI AS <sup>15</sup>

- 1) Dagdu Sali Sirolu
- 2) Gunaji Aabaji Borude
- 3) Popat Sahebrao Nagarkar
- 4) Baburao Bhairubhonkar
- 5) Anantharao Vithoba Moharkar
- 6) Lakshman Jadhav
- 7) Aanaji Gurav
- 8) Babaji Gurav
- 9) Ankkal Khopcha Thad
- 10) Chotubhan Songadia
- 11) Jayavanth Kukwadkar
- 12) Nana Manwekar
- 13) Shamu Shavaljekar
- 14) Kashinath Naraingaonkar
- 15) Luma Kodalikar
- 16) Dadu Indurikar

### 6.1.9 — LIST OF FAMOUS SHAIIRS AND TAMASHIGIRS <sup>16</sup>

- 1) Tatya Sawaljekar
- 2) Aaba Sawaljekar

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- 3) Patthe Bapurao
- 4) Bhau Phakkad
- 5) Lahri Hyder
- 6) Baburao Kupwadkar
- 7) Eashwara Retrekar
- 8) Shiva Sambha Koulapurkar
- 9) Kambhau Wardhanghadkar
- 10) Shankar Ausareekar
- 11) Shankar Apsingkar
- 12) Nayaku Kamereekar
- 13) Shiva Medekar
- 14) Babu Kouthekar
- 15) Savla Aurangapurkar
- 16) Dada Aurangapurkar
- 17) Raaghu Indurikar
- 18) Kochru Longwadikar
- 19) Gopinath Chambhar
- 20) Eashwara Retrekar
- 21) Sakharām Malekar
- 22) Manohar Gondhali
- 23) Nana Manvekar



## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



- 24) Pandurang **Kalamwadikar**
- 25) Gulabrao Aanewadikar
- 26) Vishnu Gondhali Shिवतarkar
- 27) Sitaram Tendulkar
- 28) Sheku Shiva Ghatnandrekar
- 29) Ananda Umaji Chanolikar
- 30) Savla Mahagaonkar
- 31) Vaidya Mastar
- 32) Divekar Mastar
- 33) Aawasaheb Maruthi Shिवतarkar
- 34) Baburao Punekar
- 35) Lakshman Ganjekar
- 36) Dattoba Sali Shirolkar
- 37) Bhau, Bapu Naraingaonkar
- 38) Bhau Anklekar
- 39) Pandurang Kurkumbhkar
- 40) Damaji Koregaonkar
- 41) Madhav Nagarkar
- 42) Jagtap Pimplekar
- 43) Shivram Tasgaonkar
- 44) Tukaram Khedkar

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



- 45) Manaapa Karaganeekar
- 46) Ramchandra Kohleewale, Nagpur
- 47) Ramji Motghare, Nagpur
- 48) Keshav Dhok
- 49) Venkat Meshray, Nagpur

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Naraingaon Tq Junnar Dt Pune
- 4 ibidem.
- 5 ibidem.
- 6 ibidem
- 7 Dattooba Jadhav Dawrikar Chandrakanth Dhawalpurikar Lok Natya Mandal Naraingaon  
Tq Junnar Dt Pune
8. ibidem.
9. ibidem.
10. ibidem.
11. ibidem.

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



12 *Marathicha Lok Natya Tamashakala am Sahitya* p 1%

13 *ibidem* p 197

14 *ibidem* p 198

15 *ibidem* p. 198

16 *ibidem* p. 199



## CHAPTER - VII

# **TAMASHA AND OTHER FOLK FORMS OF INDIA**



## VII. TAMASHA AND OTHER FOLK FORMS OF INDIA

### 7 0 -- INTRODUCTION

The people of all countries in the world, for their entertainment have created some forms which suit their conditions. The educated urban society like classical forms, similarly rural people like folk forms. Among rural illiterates also, there are poets, performers, and the organisers of the folk forms. That is why the folk theatre became very popular in our country. Most of the population of our country is in rural areas and in villages and they treat these forms as part of their day-to-day engagements.

There is a talk that folk forms with good literature only attract people but this is not true. The totally illiterate also can perform and it is the folk theatre that gives entertainment and comedy to most of the people.

The Tamasha theatre of Maharashtra is also called Lok Natya. This form attracted the people of the State and became the prime attraction of their entertainment. Romantic and comedy-based Tamasha type of folk forms can be seen in every part of our country. The most popular folk forms of such type are Yatra (Jatra), Swang, Nautanki, Veedhi Bhagavatham, etc.

### 7 1 -- NAUTANKI AND TAMASHA

"Nautanki" is a famous folk form of Uttar Pradesh. This Nautanki is a very old traditional folk form of North India. In a Nautanki group, there are at least a minimum of fifty artists. Every Nautanki group will have its own infrastructure. Their performances are based on mythological, historical, social, folk tales, etc. subjects. In Nautanki, dance, music, songs are more. The acting style of this Nautanki form is different. Though the Tamasha production style differs, the performance begins with music so as in Nautanki also the performance starts with music. There is one big drum called 'Nagara' which they play before the beginning of Nautanki. On an open ground, the sound of this Nagara (drum) can be heard to far off distances rhythmically. Like this, in Tamasha, the sound of dholki and daph can be heard to far off places from the open air ground. Thousands of people gather in the grounds to witness the Nautanki performance. In Nautanki, acting part is less compared to music and dance.

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



With its emphasis on music, acting has been completely neglected by Nautanki players. There is no movement of characters who become listless as soon as their singing is over. Even while singing, the emotional rendering is generally sacrificed in an attempt to reach higher notes. Having to play to large open air audiences of thousands, all the subtle nuances are wiped out. This is perhaps sought to be balanced by the vigour of the "Nakkara" (big drum) which is played at the end of each phrase in a song and also in-between the responses of conversing characters. Depending on the talent, skill and virtuosity of the "Nakkara" player, the drum dominates the production as a whole. In an attempt to create an aesthetically valid total impact, the "Nakkara" had to be made to serve the dramatic purpose of the play, subordinating itself to the needs of the moment when necessary. This meant controlling the frequency as well as the duration of interventions by the "Nakkara" player. As a result, the singers became more alive to the need of expressing requisite emotions through their own voices.<sup>1</sup>

The acting style of Nautanki differs with those of other folk forms. The dance, song and in between some acting everything will be done to the beatings of Nagara (drum). Whereas in Tamasha, there is much scope for acting. Like Nautanki, in Tamasha also music, dance and song are there but these will not dominate the acting part of it whereas in Nautanki, music dominates the acting of the artists.

A new acting style had to be evolved which would be in harmony with the characteristic structure and at the same time be easily assimilated by professionals accustomed to just standing around with expressionless faces when they were not singing. I made them freeze in relevant poses while the "Nakkara" was playing in an attempt to create a series of pictures in the *bundi* style of miniature painting which was used as a reference in designing both the costumes and a simple transportable set for this play. With insistence on emotional rendering of the songs, interrelationship of the characters expressed through sustained responses and with the statuesque poses of the living fresco, made significantly elaborate at vital points, a coherent style of acting did seem to emerge, to which mobility was given by Ranga in his different roles.<sup>2</sup>

Nautanki is an old traditional folk form which has more than hundred years of history like Jatra of Bengal.

Dr Awasthi: Mr Alkazi rightly referred to the pressure of new content becoming the determining factor in changing the form and the structure of traditional drama. But it seems to me that for

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



example, now take "Nautanki" which is a similar form like Jatra. Nautanki also for more than hundred years has also communicated, projected new ideas, new themes of social change. But the change in the form really has happened only during the last two decades. Right from the Arva Samaj movement or Swadeshi movement, Nautanki always encouraged social currents. But it seems to me that this devastating change in the form, conventions, structure of the traditional theatre in different regions, both religious or ritualistic or secular theatre, this is because of certain extraneous elements, in Jatra, Nautanki or even Yakshagana.

Like Nautanki, the Tamasha people have also been performing taking social elements as subjects during these days.

Nautanki also uses proscenium-type stage like that of Tamasha. Nautanki uses painted roller curtains in its performances. In Tamasha also, they use painted roller curtains and they use these curtains accordingly whenever the situation requires. It seems that the inspiration of Parsi theatre on these forms of Nautanki and Tamasha because in Parsi theatre also, they use this type of roller curtains.

In Nautanki, a roof should be there over the heads of the singers for the purpose of resounding of their voices. Where there is no such arrangement in an open air, they put some sort of a pandal over their heads. This type of special arrangement is not required in Tamasha performances because Tamasha is not a music-oriented form like that of Nautanki.

The socio-economic problems of both the Nautanki and Tamasha artists are same.

Nautanki was played during pre-independence days, basing on the values of feudalism. This Nautanki was being patronised by this type of people. But after Independence, there has been a change in the style of playing. They started projecting socially liberal and rational values, and succeeded in their efforts even though there was some opposition from a large section of people.

In the case of the professional Nautanki players, the problem was more deeply rooted in the socio-economic milieu of India. Nautanki is played and patronised by people who continue to cling to the feudal values of life even in independent India which professes to move towards modern scientific rationality. Traditional Nautanki plays continue to glorify feudal values. Through change of emphasis, the reoriented version has attempted to project socially liberal and rational

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values. It took considerable time to overcome the resistance of professional actors with a rural background to these changes. Their resistance was stronger in the case of new social values than in the case of politico-economic values. However, they readily entered into the spirit of humanism with universally accepted human values, irrespective of the purposeful selectivity and juxtapositioning of these values. With the technical command over their voices the professional actors succeeded in projecting the values they themselves were not convinced of, with such powerful impact that they evoked enthusiastic response from the sophisticated as well as unsophisticated urban audiences who were deeply moved."

### 7.2 — BHAVAI (GUJARATI FOLK DRAMA) AND TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE

India is a vast country in which there are different regions and different languages existing. There is a culture attached to everybody's life. Like that, there exist various traditional forms at different areas. In Gujarat, a very famous folk drama "Bhavai". To witness this Bhavai folk drama, the village folk as well as the urban audience show very keen interest. Bhavai is the very popular and famous folk form of Gujarat.

As we know, Tamasha is a very famous folk form of Maharashtra. The popularity of Tamasha in the rural and urban areas spread all over the State of Maharashtra, similarly the popularity of Bhavai is spread all over the State of Gujarat irrespective of rural and urban.

Bhavai folk art form is very closely related to the way of life of Indians. In Indian life, spirituality, religion and culture are interrelated.

The concept of art in Indian way of life is a means to an end. The intentions and the purpose were always divine. It is a vehicle to take the artist nearer to God. Some of these art forms acquired over the years secular and social overtones in their content and intentions, retaining the structural characteristics of the original. One such art form is "Bhavai," the folk drama of Gujarat.

The classical forms that are in vogue in India are parallels of folk forms. There exists a traditional theatre to every region, which relates to those conditions. Some forms are classical by nature but which are folk forms. Tamasha theatre of Maharashtra, Nautanki of Uttar Pradesh, Veedhi Natakam of Andhra Pradesh, Terukoothu of Tamil Nadu, Maach of Madhya Pradesh, Swang of Punjab, and Bhavai of Gujarat are some of the examples of this type.



## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



Bhavai is an entertainment-characterised folk form. In this we have dance, drama and dialogues.

Bhavai according to Dr. Sudha Desai (a scholar of traditional art forms) and Shri Uma Shankar Joshi (Chairman, Kendra Sahitya Akademi) originated as a ritual to propitiate "Shakti" (Devi) and later must have developed into a folk form. Dr. Sudha Desai in her thesis presented evidences in support of her theory. Poet Asait, who lived in fourteenth century, is believed to be the father of this tradition. Asait, who belonged to Siddhpur in North Gujarat, is believed to have composed 360 Bhavai *vesh*. Most of the earlier and contemporary Bhavai artists belong to the same region. Nayaks and Bhojaks of Targala community in the initial stages took up Bhavai as a religious ritual but later adopted it as a profession.<sup>6</sup>

Bhavai, till recently, was being performed during Navaratri festival and this form is related to the female deities (Shakti) and even now in the rural parts of Gujarat, people are following this tradition.

Bhavai once was a ritual folk form connected to religion, gradually changed and they are performing all types of subjects like mythological, historical, emotional lives of rural folk and on the subjects of social events. Bhavai, as already mentioned, is the combination of music, dance, drama, romance and farce through which it attracts the rural and urban audience even today.

### 7.2.1 — PERFORMING STYLE OF BHAVAI

In Bhavai performance, the main thing is narration. The characters enter the stage and narrate the subject. There are also songs in between. These songs are very rhythmic and attract the audience. The audience listen to the comedy-based narration with utmost interest like that they show some interest in the melodious songs of Bhavai. After that, based on the plot, drama will also be there. In drama, the main thing is dramatic element. In accordance to the dramatic elements, they perform Bhavai folk drama. The dramas they perform contain independent incidents. In all these incidents, music, dance, humour, mimicry, narration are the parts. In Tamasha also, music, dance, humour, narration, etc. exist. The presentation style of Tamasha differs with that of Bhavai.

The performing style of Tamasha have been discussed in detail in the earlier chapters.

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



Performance of Bhavai combines narration, lyrics and drama. It presents several independent incidents woven together in a pattern. Each of these acts has its own plot and atmosphere. Each act is known as a *vesh* (costume - here the part stands for the whole). Duration of a *vesh* and the number of characters in it, vary. Each performance consists of several such *vesh*. But there is no fixed number of *vesh* to a performance. It largely depends on the repertoire of the troupe and the preference of the audiences.

Bhavai folk drama is a very powerful folk drama in Gujarat. This folk form contains all the nine *rasas* (*navrasas*), humour (jokes), satire, social comments, etc. Most of the performances are of mythological based subjects.

This bhavai performance is generally performed in the open places of temple premises and in the villages at the junctions (cross roads where four roads meet). The Bhavai performances are held during the nights only. Veedhi-Bhagavatham, Bayelata, Nautanki, Yatra and Tamasha performances also begin during the evening hours and continue throughout the night but this Bhavai begins in the evening and ends at around midnight. The village audience after having their meals, they come leisurely to witness the Bhavai folk drama. No audience leaves the place in between the performance. This shows the popularity and the interest of the audience towards Bhavai folk forms. This trend is being continued till today and hence, the Bhavai art form and its artists are having fame and name in the society of Gujarat.

There is some sort of difference between the popularity of Tamasha and Bhavai. The upper caste people did not accept the Tamasha form, but Bhavai art form was and is being accepted by all communities of people. Spiritual subjects are very less in the performance of Tamasha, whereas Bhavai is totally dependent on spiritual based subjects.

Most of the acts used to be anecdotes from epics and mythology. Among the mythological themes, Ram-Lakshman, Mahadev, Shankar-Parvathi, Kan-Gopi are well known. Over the years Bhavai acquired several other themes into its repertoire. Jasma-odon, Sudhra-Jesang, Ratna-Hamir are partly historical and partly legendary. There are others which reflect the Muslim rule over the Gujarat region, like Pathan-Bhamini, Zenda-Jhulhan, Chel Batav-Lal Batav. Some of these acts depict the socio-political conditions of those times.

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Some others deal with common experiences and characters one comes across in rural life. These depict various aspects of the society like customs, beliefs, and superstitions. Social evils are depicted in these acts through imitation and mimicry. Typical among them are "Bania" (merchant), "Kansaro" (Tinker), "Sarania" (knife sharpener), "Darji" (tailor) and "Mamaro" (bangle seller). Such acts provide the audience a peep into the lives of craftsmen and artisans and often give a chance to get a laugh. Some of the acts like "Achhooth" and "Kajado" are tirades against the prevalent social evils. They are presented satirically and the practices are ridiculed. For instance, in "Achhooth," the barbaric practice of untouchability is criticised. "Kajado" depicts the ridiculous practice of marriage between couples with wide age differences and denounces it. The ingenuity of Bhavai lies in the way the message is conveyed without sermonising.<sup>h</sup>

Like other folk forms, Bhavai performance is also very flexible. In accordance with time, place and situation, changes can be made in the performances. Scenes are improvised according to the situation prevailing at that time. Bhavai productions are very simple. There is no need of stage, curtains, backdrops for this Bhavai performances, which are very essential for Tamasha theatre. Special effects, special lights are also not needed for the performance of Bhavai production. Almost all the play is covered by narration, humour and music only, but the artists wear colourful dresses (costumes).

There is a certain pattern for the performance of Bhavai form. The chief person of the bhavai performance is called the Nayak. The Nayak pours castor oil in the ground in a round circle shape, and the audience sit around that circle on one side they place a torch (mashal). They treat this mashal as the symbol of Devi. They form this circle with castor oil to safeguard themselves from evil spirits. After this, the Nayak spreads flowers onto the audience, artists and onto the instruments, and makes the announcement of the play. But in Tamasha production, the beginning is different. It is like proscenium theatre and begins with the beating of dholki and daph instruments.

Bhavai performance commences with the playing of musical instruments like Bhungals, Pakhawaj and Cymbals. To the tune of these instruments they render the prayer of Devi and then sing a folk song. Then the Nayak announces the entry of Lord Ganesha. Ganesha character enters with the accompaniment of music and leaves the stage from the other side followed by the



character of Kalika (Devi), and after her exit the main performance begins. The introduction of the characters by Nayaks, the music, dance, the entry of characters creates a kind of mood in the audience, in a very short time which is possible only in Bhavai and not in theatre, where it takes some time for the audience to adjust, and understand the situation. In between two acts (vesh), male and female characters “Ranglo-Rangli” create humour to fill the gap.

Music and dance play key roles in Bhavai. Well known ragas and talas of North India are being used in these performances with the accompaniment of special musical instruments.

Bhungal, Pakhwaj, Paro, Vansali and Cymbals are the essential instruments used in Bhavai performances. Bhungal is a pair of wind instruments which are four feet long horns. They are known as Nara and mada. They give out a shrill drone with one or two variations. The former is high pitched while the latter has a low pitch. Sounding of Bhungals heralds the commencement of Bhavai performance. Pakhwaj is a percussion instrument. Paro and Vansali are wind instruments similar to flute. The former is made of metal, while the latter is made of bamboo. Cymbals are metallic instruments which produce resonant sound to keep time.<sup>9</sup>

Like music, dance also plays a vital role. Each act of the Bhavai commences and closes with dance.

In this way, the Bhavai folk form is entertaining the audience of Gujarat irrespective of rural and urban, as is done by the Tamasha form in Maharashtra.

### 7.3 — YATRA (JATRA) AND TAMASHA

From very ancient times, the style of drama took birth in India. For the entertainment of common people, the drama was introduced. There is a saying in Sanskrit “Kavyeshu Natakam Ramyam” which means Theatre (drama) is the beautiful and greatest of all Kavyas.

Like this, for the entertainment of people, Jatra Theatre also came into existence. This folk form was born in Bengal and is a very popular form in that State. Jatra and Tamasha, both are very old forms.

The performances of Jatra are done in open grounds. In a big open ground, they erect a stage. On one side of the stage they spread mats or carpets on the ground to enable the audience

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to sit On the other side of the stage, they arrange green rooms and for the passage onto the stage they leave some place -• small path from green room to the stage

The presentation of stories are based on mythological basis anti hence they put silk cloths over the chairs and use them for the purpose of thrones The stage properties are arranged by the stage boys of the Jatra teams They fulfill the scene of king going on elephants or horses through announcements as it is impossible to perform such scenes on stage Change of acting scenes if any were also being done through announcements Sometimes, the same person used to do both the roles of male and female, they wear the costume of female and he also keeps his mustache Even still, the audience treat that character as a female character "

For the Tamasha theatre performance, they need a big ground, at the end of the ground they put the dais, the face of the dais is towards east On the back side of the dais are the green rooms The dais and the green rooms are built with the help of tents Behind the green looms, they put tents for cooking and dining purposes The place where the audience sit are covered by a circus-type tent or can be left open The transport facilities of Jatra and Tamasha companies are similar

The presentation styles of Tamasha were discussed in detail in the earlier chapters Though the presentation styles of Tamasha and Jatra are different, but the main aim of both the forms is to entertain the people

### 7.3.1 — YATRA THEMES

A form of Yatra known as *Puranic Yatras* composed on the basis of themes derived from the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, the two great Indian epics, and the various major and minor *Puranas* appeared during that age In 1872, a public stage was established in Calcutta Mythological dramas preaching high ethical, moral and spiritual qualities in human life were in great demand and used to be staged during that time in Calcutta The contemporary Yatra generally drew inspiration from the Calcutta stage, and therefore, when the mythological or *Puranic* dramas were being performed there, the Yatras also adopted identical themes and were successful in preaching the same ideals among the population of the country The Yatra played

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the role of a moving theatre. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the ideas as preached by the Yatra exercised a tremendous influence on the life of the people of Bengal specially living in the rural areas. Traditional forms of narrative songs and music all came under the influence of the technique and form of Yatra. As a result, the traditional narrative of the *Ramayana* was also to a very great extent transformed into Yatra, and it was known as the *Ram-Yatra*. Other traditional narratives also had undergone similar change of form, and thus we find *Chandi Yatra* or the folk drama on the episodes of popular *Chandi*, *Bhushan-Yatra* or the folk drama on the narrative of the serpent goddess Manasa, so called because *Bhushan* in Bengali means floating down the river. Inasmuch as the legend of Manasa describes the floating down of the body of Lakhindar with the heroine Behula in the river, it is known as *Bhushan-Yatra*.

### 7.3.2 — YATRA - IT'S ORIGIN

Yatra means juloos — a religious procession. The relationship of Jatra performances are connected with religious nature only. In the beginning, they might have played a type of form while taking the idol of their deity into procession and the form might have been named as Jatra. The procession might have given importance to music and dance while worshipping their deities. Like this, the devotees were taking such processions by way of mixing music, dance and dramatic element. The combination of all these formed the Jatra.<sup>12</sup>

There are differences in fixing the period of origin of Jatra. Some say that Jatra was in vogue since Vedic times. This form is related to the procession of idols of gods and hence can be treated as a very old form.

It can be seen from the history of Mesopotamia also that way back in 4000 B.C., the Sumerian people were also taking processions of their Gods by playing music, through singing songs, etc.<sup>13</sup>

There is nothing wrong in accepting the above principle. The same thing was said by Mr E. P. Harwitz:

Even the Vedic age knew Jstras, memorable heirloom of Aryan antiquity. The gods of the Rigveda were hymned in choral processions. Some of the Samaveda hymns reached the rude mirth of the primitive Jatra dances.<sup>14</sup>

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Tamasha is also an ancient folk form.

Before the birth of Gyanmargi Kabirdas, the Tamasha form was very popular. Kabirdas narrated in his dohas about Tamasha.

“Everyone sleeps when a story is being narrated but when this Swang and Tamasha are performed, no audience can be seen sleeping (means they watch the performance very interestingly).”<sup>15</sup>

Though Tamasha is treated as an old traditional form, there is no evidence or proof of its origin, to decide the period.

### 7.3.3 – IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC

Before the beginning of Tamasha presentation, Dappu, dholki and jugalbandi are arranged. The jugalbandi and playing of instruments are started half an hour before the beginning of main performance. After that, gan, goulan and singing of lavni songs are performed. The Tamasha performance concludes with Vag Natya. Music plays the key role throughout the process. In one word, without music there is no performance.

In the same way, in Jatra folk form also, before beginning of Jatra, they start beating dhol and tala half an hour before the proceedings. With the hearing of these noise, the audience gathers there. Then the introduction of the particular story is narrated.

Jatra is the combination of nritya (dance), song, music, and dialogues through which they give the performance. The process of laughing, weeping and dialogues, everything is done through songs only.<sup>16</sup>

### 7.3.4 — INFLUENCE OF JATRA ON SANSKRIT NATAKS

Or. Keith says about the influence of Jatra on Sanskrit drama that

The dramas of ritual, therefore, are in a sense somewhat out of the main development of the drama, and the popular side has survived through ages in a rough way in the Jatras, well known in Bengal, while the refined and sacredotalised Vedic drama passed away without a direct descendant.”

By the above examples, it can be seen that Jatra is the very oldest traditional dramatic form.

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



With the change of period from time to time, the Jatra form has also had its development. The Jatra performances were held on Sakti Yatra, Shiv Yatra, Rama Yatra, Krishna Yatra. These are the very famous Yatra forms in Bengal.

The influence of Jatra fell on Sanskrit dramas and on the scholars of other languages. "Geet Govind" was written by following the same style of Jatra. D. N. Vidya Bhushan says that

"Shakti Yatra"<sup>1</sup> — It is said that there were Yatras before the birth of Shri Chaitanya, but those Yatras were about them as concerned with Shakti. At that time there were no Krishna Yatras.<sup>18</sup> During the period of Chaitanya, the "Krishna Leela" was very popular. The influence of Krishna Leela was such that if there were any other Yatra being performed, the same was also heated and was called as "Kaliya Daman Yatra." This Kaliya Daman Yatra was popular among audience for about four hundred years.<sup>19</sup>

The influence of Tamasha was not there on Sanskrit drama or on any other folk forms of India.

### 7.3.5 — NINETEENTH CENTURY JATRA NATAK

During the nineteenth century, the Yatra was influenced by other various Indian dramas. The popular dramas that influenced Yatra were Rama Narain's "Ratnavali," Kali Prasanna Singh's "Savitri-Satyavan," Madhusudan's "Padmavathi." Most of the writers wrote literary Yatra dramas. But Babu Kalidas Sanyal wrote a drama "Nala Damayanti" in Yatra style and this drama was performed in Uttar Pradesh, instead of West Bengal and this drama was very popular among the audience of Uttar Pradesh, though the Yatra is a new form to Uttar Pradesh audience.

Tamasha and Yatra forms, though the production style varies, but both the forms are moving folk forms. They move from village to village to give their performances.

With the cooperation of artists, common people, through entertainment of people of remote villages, these forms have overpowered the most popular "drama form," which is very famous and popular among the urban community.

The social life of Tamasha artists and that of Jatra artists are similar. Their social and economic conditions are also same. The artists of both Tamasha and Yatra are very dedicated.



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ones and perform **their** duties with dedication and with great care. All the artists are from remote villages and devoted themselves to these forms. The artists do not think about their past and future. What is happening at present is important for them.

All the artists of Tamasha and Yatra work on salary basis. The organisers of Yatra Natak and Tamasha Phad arrange free meals and accommodation to the artists and pay a fixed amount per year. The life of these artists is detached with the other society people because there is no stability for them and they have to move from one place to other for giving their performances. There is no job guarantee and pensionary benefits in their old age, for these artists from the organisers. The artists are not allowed to leave their jobs whenever they wish. The presentation purely depends on the will and wish of the villagers. They have to perform the dramas which the villagers demand. Government give protection for their performances.

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# CONCLUSION

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



### CONCLUSION

I have been working on this subject for the past four years to gather material on traditional Tamasha theatre and modern Vag Natya. During this process, I visited the places of Tamasha Phads and had the privilege of meeting some of the Tamasha organisers, Tamasha shahurs and Kalavanths. As Tamasha is a folk form, my interest towards this subject has increased day by day. To a performer, while researching, a folk form attracts him more than a classical form because folk forms are very near to reality.

Maharashtra is very popular for folk arts. It is the motherland of folk art forms. The Maharashtra folk art forms that I read and witnessed and the most I liked were (iondhal, Vaghya Murali che Jagaran, Sawal-Jawab, Lavni, Dhandar, etc). Tamasha form is also a very important one. In Tamasha, all the above mentioned folk art forms are mixed. Tamasha people have adopted all the above folk forms in their Tamasha and formed Modern Vag Natya.

Before the beginning of the performance, the prayer of (ianesha by (Jan is being performed. After that, Goulans (Gopikas, milkmaids) going to Mathura with milk pots, Krishna interrupting them in the midway and the milkmaids going to Mathura with the help of Mausī and the songs sung on these occasions are called Goulān songs.

After Goulān, Lavni songs and dance is performed. After Lavni, Rangbaji, then farcical sequences intervening before the vag, which forms the main narrative of the Tamasha. The Vag usually deals with legendary and historical themes. The Tamasha ends with Mujra. All these items have been researched carefully and taken into my thesis.

Moreover, during my research field work, Tamasha literature, audio cassettes, lavni songs, different Tamasha company posters, addresses of different Tamasha phad companies and that of kalavanths have been collected and included in my thesis.

On going through the lifestyles of Tamasha kalavanths, it was observed by me that they are economically very poor and very backward. With the scientific advancement of the world, day by day and the effect of mass media on the public and the attraction of all the people towards

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mass media and there arises a question mark on **the** future of Tamasha or on any other folk art form.

During the twentieth century, mass media has advanced. During this decade, in almost all the villages, people are viewing Televisions. By sitting in between four walls of the house, the viewers are watching various types of entertainment programmes on Television through different channels.

At one time, for watching movies, people used to go to theatres, stand in queues and by spending money and energy they used to see the movies. But the situation has changed now. People are viewing movies by playing cassettes on VCRs and almost all the channels are showing movies everyday on Television. The wish of the common man is fulfilled by these Televisions. The entertainment is reaching the people free of cost and people began thinking of staying most of their time at home watching television instead of going outside to get entertainment by spending valuable money.

Tamasha folk form is very ancient traditional folk form. Because of poor attendance for the performances, and to attract the attention of audience, traditional Tamasha has been converted into modern Vag Natya, by the organisers. To attract public, gan, goulan, lavni and farce are introduced in the Tamasha and have diluted the Tamasha form. Moreover, with the introduction of Vag Natya, the importance of traditional Tamasha has come down.

In this era of scientific revolution, the attraction towards Tamasha by the audience has drastically reduced, because of crude artificial make up, with vulgar and double meaning dialogues, with cinematic style of Vag Natya production.

Another reason for the downtrend in the audience towards Vag Natya is that in Lok Natya Tamasha (Vag Natya), the element of tradition has been reduced by the organisers and they have diluted the form.

The Vag Natya kalavanths and the organisers are economically backward. They have been trying their best to attract public but due to paucity of finances were unable to erect rich settings, use rich costumes, engage well trained kalavanths in their performances. Whatever be the reason, the popularity of audience towards Tamasha has decreased. Development of interest

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



in the public towards Tamasha is not in the hands of Tamasha phads, because of their poverty. But if different organisations came forward, and if they take necessary steps to save this oldest traditional form of Maharashtra, then only this form will survive in these modern days.

This is the wish of all the lovers of Tamasha theatre.

Tamasha kalavants should be given advance training and if they were provided with job guarantee and after their retirement, if they are paid pension, etc. then the kalavants would be able to try their best for the development of this Tamasha and then the form may prosper. To increase the popularity of Tamasha, first the status of the kalavants should be increased. The performance qualities should be increased by using latest technical developments in the Vag Natya and this is possible only if they are supported financially by various organisations and by art lovers.

There is another way also to attract the public towards this form. The subjects on the developmental programmes in the society, the subjects which should enlighten the public should be taken and Vag Nattas be performed. Topics related to the prosperity of the country, national integration and such other social related matters can also form the Vag Natya subjects. The important events of Indian history, without changing its originality, should be dramatised and performed.

If all the above steps are taken, then the form Tamasha will prosper competing with modern mass media.

All the Tamasha companies in Maharashtra should be united and form into a Tamasha Cooperative Society. They should take the assistance of the experts in theatre and by taking their advice, should change their production styles. Otherwise, like Surabhi Theatre of Andhra Pradesh, this Tamasha theatre also will have to face the downfall and the kalavants have to face difficulties for poverty.

Because of non-popularity and because of poverty, the Tamasha artists who prospered with high values at one time have stopped their activities and these artists have settled in other different professions.

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There is need of finding the reasons of Tamasha theatre facing downfall by the companies with a serious view. Not only treated commercially and by treating this as a regional folk form, the form should be recognised as an ancient traditional folk form of India and efforts should be taken to save this form for future generations. All the countrymen should take this responsibility.

The Tamasha theatre which was banned four decades ago has been reborn and has come into existence with the efforts of the Tamasha Sudhar Samithi. For benefitting the society through Tamasha theatre form, the then Home Minister of Maharashtra, Sri Morarjee Desai, in 1952 gave the green signal for these Tamasha performances with good values. The founders of Tamasha Sudhar Samithi framed some guidelines which the Tamasha organisers have to follow, for the bright future of Tamasha theatre.

If all work hard to bring the fame of traditional Tamasha to the Modern Tamasha through vigorous efforts, it can be said that this form of Tamasha will live long and can occupy a place in history in golden letters.



# ANNEXURE





## ANNEXURE

As part of my field work, I have visited several Tamasha phads at different places in Maharashtra. I met several Tamasha organisers, Kalavanths, Shahirs, musicians, set designers, stage in-charges, lighting experts, sound experts, and other Tamasha-related people. I stayed with them, moved with them, and witnessed several of their performances. At the time of their leisure during day time, I have interviewed some of the shahirs and Kalavanths. I am giving some of the interviews taken by me. In addition, I am also giving the interview taken by Maharashtra's well known playwright Vijay Tendulkar with Dadu Indurikar, the famous Tamasha artist of Maharashtra. This interview was published in *National Centre for the Performing Arts Quarterly Journal*, Vol II, No 4, December 1973.

First of all, I give the interview with Chandrakant Dhawalpurikar, Tamasha organiser of Naraingaon village, Junnar Taluq, Dist. Pune. The interview was taken by me on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1995.

I have deleted the questions answered by Dadu Indurikar in my interview, to avoid repetition.

Pradeep Kumar: What is your full name?

Chandrakant Dhawalpurikar: Chandrakant Dhawalpurikar

PK: Where is your native place<sup>9</sup>

CD: By birth Naraingaon.

PK: What is your age now?

CD: I am fifty five.

PK: How long have you been running this Tamasha phad?

CD: I do not remember, but more than twenty years.

PK: What is the name of your Tamasha Phad<sup>9</sup>

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CD: Chandrakant Dhawalpurikar Lok Natya Tamasha Mandal

PK: How many **artists** are working in your Tamasha Phad?

CD: About one hundred

PK: What are the salaries paid to the Kalavanth<sup>9</sup>

CD: Depends upon their experience

PK: Are all of them educated?

CD: Most of our kalavanth<sup>9</sup>s are illiterates. Some of them know reading and writing

PK: You are the organiser of the phad. Did you participate in Tamasha as an artist?

CD: Right from the beginning, I am an artist of Tamasha. That made me to form a Tamasha company

PK: Do your family members also participate in Tamasha performances?

CD: Yes, my son is participating

PK: What is the income from one Tamasha show<sup>9</sup>

CD: It cannot be shown exactly. Sometimes we have to incur losses also from the performances

PK: Is your Tamasha company popular among the masses?<sup>7</sup>

CD: Popularity will always be there for those who performs well

PK: Your artists belong to which place?

CD: They are from different places

PK: How many days does your company function in a year<sup>9</sup>

CD: We work for eight months in a year. We stop our shows during the rainy season

PK: Did you go to other States also to give shows<sup>9</sup>

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CD: We give performances in other States also, if somebody invites us. But most of our performances are held in Maharashtra only.

PK: What is the future of Tamasha theatre? What is your opinion?

CD: If systematically run, the common people will respond well to our performances and I am sure **Tamasha** will have a very good future.

PK: What is the reason for the imitation of movies in Modern Vag Natya?

CD: Imitation depends on the company which is giving the performance. It is difficult to point out the reasons for this imitation of movies.

PK: Whose cooperation did you get more during the performances?

CD: Manager and all the kalavants cooperate with me very well and we perform the Tamasha show successfully.

PK: You have all the equipment. How long did it take for you to procure all these equipment?

CD: As per convenience and depending on the financial position, I have procured the equipment in a phased manner.

PK: Is your Tamasha company a full-fledged one?

CD: Yes, our company is a full-fledged Tamasha Company.



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Dadu Indurikar, the renowned Tamasha artist of Maharashtra, was the recipient of Best Actor Award instituted by the Sangeet Natak Akademi for the year 1973. Given below is the text of an interview with him by Vijay Tendulkar, the well known dramatist.

VT: Shall we start right from the beginning? When did you first see a Tamasha being performed? You mentioned that your father was a Tamasha artist. Can you remember the first time you saw it being enacted?

DI: When I was still in school. The jatra Tamasha groups used to visit our village. I was terribly drawn to this form of entertainment.

VT: How old were you then?

DI: Maybe six or seven.

VT: Which means you started watching such shows before you were sufficiently old to understand most things?

DI: I developed a liking for such shows. The minute I learned that a group had come to our village, I'd go to the show. I used to sit in the front row. Nobody stopped me. Because my father had been a Tamasha artist. People would say, "Let him sit in front." My father had a disciple called Khandu Dagdu Sugane. His disciple, Kusha Umarikar, always brought his group to our village. I never missed a single performance of that troupe. This Kusha was a very clever *songadya* (clown). He had the audience laughing all the time. Naturally I used to laugh too. Then I asked myself 'But why doesn't the songadya laugh?' So even when I was quite small, I understood that the songadya knows one trick to make others laugh without laughing himself. Then there were the *bhedik lavanis* of my father in the

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



house. I learnt them by heart. My father died when I was very small. Just after my first marriage.

VT: How old were you then?

DI: Six or seven years old. Couldn't even wear a dhoti<sup>1</sup>. Used to wear shorts or a loin cloth. My stepmother used to wrap it around me and send me to school. I had formed one habit. As soon as school began, I used to learn by heart all the poems in our textbooks. When I was in the first standard, I knew all those they learnt in the second standard. When in the second, I knew those that they studied in the third. It was like that with me. If I listened to a song once or twice, I could remember the whole of it. That is after I had learnt to read and write.

VT: These *bhedik lavanis* your father wrote, what are they like?

DI: They are *shastra*-based. If you like, I will sing you one of my father's *lavis*. It's called *Bailapowalachi Bhedik*<sup>2</sup>. When they adorn the bullocks for the festival, he seems then like a bridegroom. The whole ritual of decorating the bullock for the festival is described here. I used to know all the *lavis*. And the people around would admire me. They'd say, "A tiger's cub can't go astray<sup>1</sup>. You don't have to teach a baby fish how to swim in the water." Then they used to present me with a rupee. A silver rupee, or a *pagota* (an elaborate headgear) and a shawl. I would go and give it all to my mother. And she would go to the old market and buy me a vest!

VT: Your stepmother?

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DI No My own mother and my stepmother They were both alive They used to buy me books and shorts And my brother — the one I told you about, the one who died the day before yesterday — he used to work terribly hard all the time, hew stones to support us Me was very, very good to me Another man in his place would have thrown me out Me was proud of me He lived in Wowal Me had his own house there But my father was good to him That's why it seems as though he came and breathed his last in our house

VT You said you were married then?

DI Yes

VT But you were so young!

DI Seven or eight.

VT Your bride?

DI Three She was just an infant — used to roam around half-naked in the marriage pandal My first wife, she left me, then I married the second one, the one who is now in Khandala

VT Why did your first wife leave you?

DI She didn't like this Tamasha business She died two years ago

VT Any children?

DI Two sons Both of them died

VT: How?

DI: Now you know what this Tamasha business is like! When they were ill, I could never manage to get there in time Otherwise things wouldn't have taken this turn She felt, "We had these lovely sons. Anybody to take care of them! They are dead What's the point

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continuing my life with a husband like this?" That's the way she felt, but I loved my profession. That's how it was. So in 1940

VT: How old were you then?

DI: Say, twenty years old

VT: Your schooling?

DI: I had studied upto the seventh standard. I could have got a job as a teacher. But I was mad about Tamasha. I just couldn't take any interest in a job. I continued with my Tamasha. You know Kisan Kusgaonkar. He helped me to make a start. In 1940 we started. Not at this Bangdiwala Theatre. We used to do the *Supari Tamasha* "here" during the fairs.

VT: What do you mean when you say "here"?

DI: I mean the *maval* area. We had Dhondiba, Ravji, Mahantbhau, Gawali. Then Dadu Indurikar, the younger Dadu Indurikar (son of this brother who died the day before yesterday). Then we had Dasharath Bhalyarao. Then we had one of my nephews, Baban. All of us were there in that group.

VT: How much did you earn at that time? Every month?

DI: In the villages we got just our meals, nothing more. They listened to the Tamasha and fed us. If someone was really pleased with us, he would give us two annas or more. In all, we might get say two or four rupees.

VT: And all this as late as 1940?

DI: Then we got two annas. Now it goes up to a rupee. Those days they fed us. We loved doing our Tamasha.

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VI' Then you had no time for your kids?

DI None at all. That's why my wife left me. I don't blame her.

VT The rest of your group faced the same difficulties?

DI Yes. In 1945 we started off at Bangdiwala's. Then we went to Nasik.

VT You said you had formed a Tamasha group in 1940. And all of you had these problems. So you did the Tamasha because you loved to do it? Not for the money?

DI Of course not. You can earn money in many ways. But we loved our art. We wanted to go on with the Tamasha.

VT Sometimes it is said that the Tamasha artists are poor. But they can't leave their profession. They can't train themselves, develop in any way because of their miserable plight. And you insist that it wasn't just a way of earning money, that you loved to perform?

DI It doesn't matter very much if there's no money or food to be had. But there must be a show on at night. We all agreed on that. Quite determined. So from Bangdiwala we went to Nasik. Then to Poona. Poona's the real centre. They say the students there are very intelligent, the *pehalwans* very strong, the *tamashgirs* very clever. They used to say if a Tamasha is a hit in Poona, it will be a hit in the whole universe, not to talk of the world.

VT That's what they used to say about plays too.

DI The Poona audience enjoyed our show. They invited us to Sholapur. We went and stayed there for a fortnight. We were about to leave Sholapur. I remember it was a Sunday and the people there said, "Stay on. You must." I said, "We have to go." So they set on us with sticks and knives. Now my cousin Maruti, he was scared of such happenings. I



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wanted to go and report to the Police Chowki. But Maruti said, "People will say that we went to Sholapur and came back with a proper heating." So we stayed on. Then Maruti died. For six months I was so dejected, like a madman I was. Then that Kisan Kusgaonkar came and said to me, "There were four calling themselves after Vishnu Indurikar. One has gone. But there are still three of them left to keep alive their father's name. Rahu indunkai had just you. And you were born when he was gone in years." What Kusgaonkar said was true. He said, "Now you love Maruti, didn't you? Like a brother. Start a Tamasha troupe in his name." So we began and we continued as Maruti Indurikar's Tamasha group, till 1954.

VT: Now when you started afresh, where did you find the dancers?

DI: There was a girl called Soni from Sholapur. And Kometai's daughters. We started off with them.

VT: But how did you find them?

DI: Find? There are such girls everywhere. You go and give them money and bring them back with you.

VT: If they are already with a troupe, that's a different matter! But when you had to find talent afresh, how do you go about it?

DI: Parents want their girls to learn how to dance. You go and get them. Tie the anklets round their feet and teach them. To sing, to accompany the song with the right *ada*. We used to try and teach them all these things.

VT: Who? You or someone else?

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DI I used to teach them Or I used to say to them, "Watch that troupe See how that girl goes about it "

VT You mean they learnt to dance that way"

DI Yes, of course Now this Prabha Joglekar She is a village girl We taught her That is, Shankar Shevnekar and I taught her Now people still say there's no one like her Even Vijayabai Mehta said, "There's a lot we can learn from her " We took pains to teach her That's why she shone, compared to the rest She is quite clever

VT You mean you teach them how to dance?

DI Yes, of course I tie those anklets round my feet and tell them how to do it

VT Where did you learn? Or did you just pick it up, watching others?

DI Mostly watching

VT But you have to know the rhythm, the time measure both in music and dance<sup>1</sup> How did you learn that? Watching, listening since your childhood days?

DI After all, what's rhythm<sup>7</sup> Formerly we had only the tuntune, our one-stringed instrument, and the dholak, our small drum This harmonium is a recent thing Before that we used to tune the tuntune and adjust the dholak to that note We used to begin and then sing to the tune of the instrument

VT But till which year was this<sup>9</sup> When did the harmonium enter on the scene"

DI Bhau Mang brought it in

VT In which year?

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DI: Must be in the thirties or forties. Bhau: Many brought the harmonium into the sphere of the Tamasha.

VT: You mean to say you never used it until then?

DI: I think so.

VT: At least not in your shows!

DI: Certainly not in ours. When we were with Bangdiwala we never had a harmonium with us. We had a tuntune, the tal, a halgi and a dhol. My brother Maruti played the dhol. He was marvelous. As soon as he entered, people would watch his face, hear him play the dhol and applaud him heartily. He was really good.

VT: You can play the dhol yourself.

DI: I can. But not as well as he could. Of course, formerly I was the one who would play the dhol. When I went to my sister's village, I used to play the dhol and sing *bhedik lavnis*. In that village there was a man called Shibda Mahar. He was a regular ganja man. He brought Bapurao into our maval area.

VT: You mean Patthe Bapurao?

DI: Yes. He had a long beard, wore a saffron robe, and had a lungi tied round his waist. I thought he was some *gosavi*. When I went there, someone said, "This Laxmi's brother sings well." So they said, "Bring the dhol. Let's hear him." I was always game for this sort of thing. I took the dhol, tuned it and sang a gavhana. I sang it. You know whose it was? Bapurao's!

VT: Which one?

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DI: *Eka nandachinari*. And he brought out his chilini and then put it aside

VT: You mean Bapurao<sup>7</sup> Patthe Bapurao<sup>7</sup>

PI: He set it aside and sat watching me. Right to the end of the gavhana. Me didn't draw the chilim even once. It was extinguished. Me said to Shibda Mahar, "Bring him here."

VT: Who said this?

DI: Patthe Bapurao! You can't imagine his style of speech<sup>1</sup>. "Shidu, who's playing the dhol? Bring him here." Then that old fellow said to me, "Padu, come here. Me wants you." I was scared stiff. I thought, "This gosavi, what does he want with me?" I went up to him. I was afraid all the time. He said, "Which part are you from?" I said, "horn Nilgiri." Me asked, "What's your name<sup>7</sup>. Who taught you this gavhana<sup>7</sup>." So I said, "These Tamasha folk come to my village. I listen and try to remember." "Who taught you to play the dhol<sup>7</sup>." So I said, "My father died when I was a child. There was the dhol he had left behind. I learnt to play it just like that." Then he asked me, "You mean nobody taught you to play it<sup>7</sup>." I said, "No. Nobody taught me." So he said, "Come and sit by me." So I went and sat near him and I thought, "Must have been a tamashgir!" Me said, "Sit. Sing." And the chilim went on. That's how it was. That was in 1940.

VT: Where was he then?

DI: Near Poona.

VT: When..you met him the first time, how old was he?

DI: Very old.

VT: And you?

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DI I was already married then.

VT Was he pleased when he heard you sing his gavlana?

DI Yes

VT When you saw him first how did he seem to you? And the second time?

DI Really like a gosavi — the first time I was scared. Then that Shibda Mahar he said, "Don't be scared. Come with me." People would say, "Let's go Master." They called Bapurao "Master." They'd say, "Come to our village." He'd start off with the chilim suddenly.

VT Draw in in the chilim?

DI Yes. He was terribly fond of his ganja. He drew in the chilim, and wrote a song. Maruti and I went to him and said, "Give us something for *shubhamangala*." He said, "Why?" Maruti said, "We have a Tamasha group." He said, "Who are they?" Maruti said, "From our village Rahu Indurikar's son." So he asked, "What does he play?" Maruti replied, "The songadya." So I said, "Don't you remember? At Shibda's I sang the gavlana." So he said to Maruti, "This fellow's clever." And even as he finished saying this, he began to write, and I watched him spellbound. I saw him write the lines and I said to Maruti, "This man is terribly clever. Here he's talking to us and writing down every word and without a single mistake." So Maruti, he says, "The man's a Brahmin. Can't go wrong." So I added that vag to my stock.

VT You told us that when Maruti died, you began all over again?

DI Yes. The troupe's name was *Dadu Maruti Indurikar's Tamasha*. I had our village group Dhondibha, Baburao and there were the girl dancers.

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VT From where<sup>7</sup>

DI One was from Sholapur, the other from Kawata

VT Married?

DI No We had these two and then a group of eight

VT This was in which year?

DI 1948. Maruti died and we began all over again after six months

VT What did you do those six months?

DI Stayed at home Wept most of the time Then that Kisan Kusgaonkar said, "If you love him, don't weep. Start afresh "

VT But in that intervening period, how could your group manage<sup>7</sup>

DI We all went back to the village We had homes We had brothers

VT You had land?

DI Yes But a tamashgir knows his Tamasha. He knows nothing about what to grow on a piece of land.

VT So you started after this break of six months?

DI Yes.

VT: Did you begin earning more than you did before<sup>9</sup>

DI Yes.

VT But prices had begun to rise by then?

DI Yes, they had.

VT; But what was your income on an average<sup>9</sup>

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DI: In Poona thirteen rupees a day for one *bari*. And when we went to Nasik, sixteen rupees

VT: Sixteen for the entire group?

DI: Yes. Only on that condition did we go to Nasik

VT: That included food?

DI: Yes. And the extra we got during the performance, *Daulatjada*. That was what they called an addition. We had Uma Chandurikar's brother Bapu and Chandra the dancer. In MM) we came to Bombay, not at Bangdiwala's. But at that corner near the *vad*

VT: Where?

DI: Near De Lisle Road. We went along with Bhau Bapu Narayangaonkar. And that was a good influence on us. His method of singing was excellent. Savlaram's method was the same. The *vag*, the *charan*.

VT: In what way was it different from your style?

DI: They were better singers. We were nowhere near them. As for me, people enjoyed my brand of humour.

VT: What did you learn from them? How to project the voice?

DI: Partly that. But also the whole way of saying something.

VT: Can you explain what you mean?

DI: Our projection of voice or of words was not so strong. People like my humour. I used to do the 'second *bari*.'

VT: And what did the last *bari* do?

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DI: Oh, they had the vag on Harischandra, or Savithri or Simhagad. We didn't have such a strong treasure of vags. We went along with them for six months.

VT: This Bangdiwala Theatre you refer to, where is it?

DI: Nothing remains.

VT: It was in Bombay?

DI: Those days there were thirteen or fourteen theatres. There used to be twenty-five groups here at one time.

VT: Anywhere near Bhangwadi Theatre?

DI: No. Near the Musafir Khana at Crawford Market.

VT: Nothing there now?

DI: Nothing. Shankar Shevnekar joined in 1950. And others came to me, too.

VT: Before that what were they? Tamasha artists?

DI: Yes, they had their own groups. Then they joined us after their group broke up.

VT: Why did their groups break up?

DI: They had money problems. The songadya would go away or the dancer would join another group or the singer would find some other employment or sometimes they didn't get paid regularly.

VT: This happens often?

DI: Yes, yes. It goes on all the time. Even now. In 1953 I was with Baburao Punekar's group. My own group had broken up.

VT: Why?



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DI Because the younger Dadu Indurikar was not as firm in his support as Maruti was

VT Was he related to you?

DI Yes, he was Maruti's younger brother My cousin He learnt everything in my group  
Then he wanted to start off on his own So he left I disbanded the group I mortgaged  
Ravji's trunk Gave each of them ten rupees and joined Baburao Puneekar I think that was  
in 1953 or 1954 And the best part of it was that I learnt historical vags there For instance,  
*Maiharrao Holkar, Bolki Pagdi Jaising Rat hod* I learnt a lot use humour only at an  
appropriate moment There's a murder, or a funeral then that's not the moment to make  
people laugh Never let them laugh when there's sorrow in a sequence I learnt this  
through my own experiences, when I was working with him I was with him for two years

VT Did you have rehearsals?

DI No.

VT Then?

DI No rehearsals He would just explain the situation

VT That is?

DI He used to say, "We are going to do this vag tonight " I didn't have any proper reheatsals,  
not even once.

VT But surely you must have seen him do the Maiharrao vag before?

DI I used..to act in it even before I saw it!

VT You mean you began to act in it even before you saw a performance?

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DJ Yes. For instance, we are going to Lalbagh from here. Say by taxi, or we're pushing a cart, or walking. I used to feel my way. He didn't rehearse me, not even once.

VT What did he tell you?<sup>7</sup>

DI Nothing. "Get into your costume."

VT Then?

DI I wore the costume.

VT After that?

DI He says, "I'll speak this and you reply thus. If I say the other thing, answer me in another way." I used to keep it in mind, remember it all.

VT Which role did you play?<sup>9</sup>

DI Mohan Singh. Once I did the part, I could go on.

VT But all you knew was what exactly to answer in reply to his words. And he would answer you in the same spirit. So you just played it by ear. But suppose you didn't get the words right, did he manage to keep it along?

DI Yes, yes. He would look after that and I would oiler my words in the same spirit. It was all a kind of instinct that told us how to manage things that way.

VT He would tell you what scenes were in your vag?<sup>9</sup>

DI Not necessarily. He was say to someone else, "Tell him." So I used to listen to it all, told as a story. That's a habit with all of us. Get up in the morning and decide, "Tonight we will do Harishchandra." He would say, "You be Harishchandra." Then, "Taramati, Rohidas."

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Dhondya Mahar and Vishwamitra you " Once you heard the story, you did the vag

"This was our level of intelligence

VT But it's quite high!

DI For two years there wasn't a single rehearsal and we went through the show And I remembered every one of the vags and when I had my own group, we enacted them

VT Now tell us how you got those vags ready

DI In story form

VT But who prepared them?

DI The writer, of course

VT All the ones you mentioned are old<sup>7</sup>

DI Yes Very old

VT Did Punekar stage old ones or did he prepare these<sup>7</sup>

DI He got them ready Read the story, then wrote out the narrative

VT Did he write it out<sup>7</sup> Or did he have a printed copy<sup>7</sup>

DI He had it all written out

VT Now this vag of yours, *Gadvache Lagna (The Donkey's Marriage)*, it's an old narrative<sup>7</sup>

DI Yes It's in a Navnath book The story, I mean

VT What's in the original story<sup>7</sup>

DI The original story The apsaras are dancing in the court of Indra The gandharva Chitransen is pleased by the dance And in his excitement he send out flies at them These bite these apsaras and they stop dancing. They say nothing to Indra But Indra says to them, "Why

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did you stop dancing so suddenly?" They say, "Indra, (iod of our Ciods. we were dancing to please you and someone set flies on us. They keep on biting us. So we can't dance anymore." Indra was furious. He cursed the individual who had spoilt his fun. "May he In-born a donkey among mortals!" Then the gandharva falls at India's feet. Don't set such a harsh curse on me. Find me a way of redeeming the curse." But India refuses to show him any mercy. Then Brihaspati intervenes and says, "Indra, I love this gandharva. You cursed him because he was in the wrong. But find some way of redeeming him. He can be a donkey by day and a man by night." They agreed to this. The gandharva will marry Satyavati, the daughter of King Satyavarma of Tulanagri. A son will be born to them. And once the gandharva sees the face of the son, he will be redeemed. This is, in short, the plot of the story. We had our own versions —holding her hand, and not the son being born. Or two women.

VT: Then?

DI: Sometimes we shortened it. Vadgaonkar told me the plot of this story. I retained it *chhap* to *chhap*.

VT: What does *chhap* mean<sup>9</sup>

DI: What the writer writes, we call *chhap*. What I told you about Pathe Bapurao writing for us is *chhap*. Vadgaonkar wrote it out for us. How Chitrasen Gandharva was redeemed and the king was pleased. His daughter had such a wonderful husband<sup>1</sup>. We mentioned our guru's name and then it ended. This is what is meant by *chhap*.

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VT: So before you began with *Gadvache Lagna*, Puneekar told you how to do all those old vags

Then you formed your own group. And you performed the vags you had learnt there

When did you start with *(iaJvache Lagna)*?

DI: From the very beginning. From 1940

VT: And when did you start your own group?

DI: In 1955. From 1958 to 1962, the Tamasha mandal of Dadu Maruti Indurikar and Shankar Shevnekar won eight of the first or second prizes in the State competitions. I have those certificates. In 1962, the competitions were stopped

VT: How many performances of *Gadvache Lagna* had you performed till then?

DI: Thousands. Formerly we used to get our public you know how? Find a potter, give him a rupee or two, and get his donkey. Promise to allow three or four of his chaps to come and watch the Tamasha free. Then tie all the wedding adornments round the donkey's ears, spread a jari piece over his back, and make him walk around the whole area to the accompaniment of a shehnai. Today is the day, The Donkey's Wedding. And people would flock to watch the show.

VT: Now you employed this device. Did others do similar things?

DI: Oh, yes. They tied those ornaments round the donkey's ears.

VT: In your case it was appropriate. The show was about a donkey's wedding. But if they were going to present Malharrao Holkar?

DI: No, then you couldn't do it our way. But for our show it was the right kind of advertisement. An actual donkey walking from door to door! Then fix a tent, put up

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boards. That was enough. The people would know that a Tamasha group had arrived. They used to be pleased. That's the only form of entertainment in the villages. And there's dance in a Tamasha. If a show is good, then crowds flock to see it. Which kind of show would you call good? One which has a lot of stuff in it, where you can laugh and yet learn something. Then people come. In the districts of Ahmednagar, Nasik, Satara everywhere. Once there was an *urus* in Poona. We played in the open. The Patil of the village was invited. He said, "There'll be women today. Don't use bad language." Hu! he didn't have to tell me. I never used bad language on the stage.

VT: When you played in villages, what ticket rates did you have?

DI: When?

VT: From 1962 onwards.

DI: From 1962 onwards, we charged thirty-seven naiya paise. That's six annas.

VT: The same rate for all? On what basis did you fix six annas?

DI: Formerly we had two anna tickets in Bombay. Then we raised them to four after 1940.

VT: You mean the ticket rates were lower in Bombay?

DI: Yes, outside Bombay they were higher.

VT: What was the point of fixing rates higher in the villages?

DI: No particular calculation. People never got a chance to see a Tamasha. So

VT: So they came to see the show, paying slightly higher ticket rates.

DI: Now we charge a rupee.

VT: Even in the villages?

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DI: Yes. One rupee for one person. It began in 1970. Those who had never visited the villages before and were going there for the first time have now become very rich. They have cars.

— Mercedes cars.

VT: You mean Tamasha artists?

DI: Yes.

VT: Mercedes cars?"

DI: Yes.

VT: Where did they earn so much money? How much does one show fetch them?"

DI: The tent they fix is big. Ten thousand people can watch the show.

VT: The tent is their own property?

DI: Yes, it belongs to them and when a yatra is on, they fix it.

VT: Ten thousand sit in a tent and watch?

DI: Yes, like in a circus.

VT: So they can earn about eight or nine thousand rupees?

DI: Now this year itself in the drought-affected areas we earned more than we had ever earned before.

VT: One rupee ticket rates?

DI: Yes. One rupee tickets.

VT: In the drought-affected areas?

DI: Yes, you could earn ten thousand a show. Just one night.

VT: Did the artists get good money?

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DI Not always They would give them say two or three thousand

VT But was the payment based on payment for each performance?

DI Nothing of the sort

VT Then how did they calculate the amount?

DI They used to get an advance And till all that money was repaid, the artist couldn't leave the group

VT And the advance was cut from the pay?

DI Yes.

VT And what was the pay?

DI Say ten rupees per performance Sometimes a little more

VT So on an average how much would it work out to?

DI In festival time upto five thousand The money was not given to the artist but sent to his family That's the custom with us Our artists have all kinds of habits They want rich food, fish or mutton They want other things too And we tour seven months in a year The rest of the time the artist must sit at home doing nothing Then back to the owner Because he's down and out by then He will ask for an advance, say of three or four thousand rupees. And sign a receipt

VT But otherwise the earning is say ten rupees a night?

DI Yes, ten rupees.

VT For everyone? Even for the man who plays the dholak?

DI Yes, yes.



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VT: The dancer<sup>7</sup> How much would she earn<sup>7</sup>

DI: Depends Sometimes fifteen, sometimes twenty

VT: But when there's no show on<sup>7</sup>

DI: If there's a break, there'll be no payment That's all decided That's part of the contract

VT: What happens in the rainy season<sup>7</sup>

DI: You sit at home Money's short All of us have families They have to be led So go back to the owner and ask for an advance

VT: Formerly we used to be told that the members of a group came from the same family Is it the same now<sup>7</sup>

DI: Not so now

VT: You mean you don't have some of your family members in the group<sup>7</sup>

DI: It used to be like that in Bhau Mang's Tamasha But not in ours After Shankar Shevnekar left us, I haven't a single artist from the old group left with me The show, *Gadvache Lagna*, still draws good houses The group hasn't gone to pieces because the old members left us You know what people say when this happens "Nothing in that show now The songadya has left the group Not much to see now No force in it "

VT: Who are the most important characters in the group<sup>7</sup>

DI: The Sardar, the songadya, the dancer, the girl dancer, and the dholak player

VT: The sardar is known for his humour<sup>7</sup>

DI: No He is the hero Then the songadya and the girl dancer

VT: You mean the sardar is more important than the songadya<sup>7</sup>

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DI Yes, the **sardar** is the one with the brains. The songadya is lower in the scale.

VT The **sardar** doesn't sing.

DI He can, if he is gifted by fate with a talent for music.

VT After him the dancer girl?

DI Yes.

VT Then the dholak player<sup>7</sup>

DI Fither the player who plays the dholak or the halgi. Then there's a man who plays the harmonium, then the villain, and so on. Nagarkar's Tamasha group once had fifty members in it. And when Nagarkar entered, there used to be a terrific round of applause. And when the villain Ganpat appeared, there used to be another round of applause for the two songadyas, two rounds of applause. Those girl dancers they had so much power, they were applauded. Even the dholak player used to be welcomed in the same way. But this was not so with all the other Tamasha artists. There only the songadya got a round of applause. There was a time when Nagarkar's Tamasha really flourished.

VT. And in your case<sup>9</sup>

DI The same. When I entered, there used to be a lot of applause. Before I made my entry, Marini used to get his share of applause. In Bombay people knew him better. He used to dance. And I used to sing the gavlana. Vadgaonkar's music and words. A very old one. I used to sing it even in my school days.

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VT At the start you said you learnt one important thing in your childhood The songadya must make people laugh, he mustn't laugh himself Me must appear sober, serious What other characteristics must this actor acquire<sup>7</sup> Specially the songadva in the Tamasha<sup>7</sup>

DI First, his humour must bring him laughs If he can also play the dhol, so much the bet let If he can play the harmonium, that's an advantage too And if he can dance like a girl that is also a good added qualification Only Savla in Bhau Mang's group and Shamrao Palegaonkar could manage all this They could act the sardar, and the songadya, play the halgi, the dholak, the harmonium, the table and even dance It's rare And they were the best in Maharashtra Savla is in Poona

VT And Shamrao?

DI He is in Satara They're old now But the point is that they are still in the Tamasha One man acting for ten hours at a stretch That's something rare

VT When you designed your role in *Gadvache Lagna*, how did you set about it?

DI I didn't do it the way you mean I used to watch those Tamasha troupes that came to our village Dashrath Dehu, Lehu Thankar used to come from the Aryabhushan Theatre of Poona Vadgaonkar was my father's disciple Those two dancers also I was impressed by their performance When they did *Gadvache Lagna* in my village, I was seven years old

VT In what way is your current presentation different from theirs<sup>7</sup>

DI The difference — well, those days there used to be a lot of obscene jokes I dropped all that Because I saw that women used to come and watch the show I felt that we ought to present shows where the women in our families could come and watch us And I felt we

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ought not to include jokes that they might dislike. Once eight years ago, Khedekar's Tamasha was on in a village. The patil there and Narayan came to Chandrakant and said, "Must have your Tamasha. It's as good as theirs."

VT: Who is this Chandrakant?

DI: Dhawalpurkar. He said, "Your Tamasha is as good as theirs." Chandrakant said, "I'm going to Supari." So the pehalwan asked an old woman, "Which Tamasha should we take?" She said, "If you want a good Tamasha, take Indurikar's. The rest won't be of any use. You can have Bhau Mang's or Khedekar's, but this Indurikar's is very good." Now this pehalwan came looking for me. Said he wanted the Tamasha. We said, "We want a hundred rupees. We won't let you down. You will get your money's worth." We went and nobody would offer us a drop of water. We didn't have a car. We had a generator. They wouldn't give us a drop of water because we had come in a hired car.

VT: Which year?

DI: 1969. We came here in 1970.

VT: What do you mean when you say they wouldn't offer you a drop of water?

DI: That's the custom. When the artists reach a place, the people offer them water. That was a small village. But they thought we were an inferior troupe.

VT: They must have known you?

DI: Who, they? No. I hadn't performed there before. This was Durga. Kathayacha Durga, near Poona. So they didn't offer us water. There was a disciple of my father there. The same caste. He asked us, "Where do you come from?" "From Rahu Indurikar," we said.

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He said, "Go ahead. We'll get these fellows on their knees before long. Feel no concern at all for the artists. All the time it is Tukaram Khedekar."

VT: Tukaram Khedekar, does he belong to your caste?

DI: No. He is a Maratha.

VT: You mean there are such caste considerations in the Tamasha? The Maratha is believed to be superior?

PI: Yes. It used to be so. Not so much now.

VT: Which other Maratha artists were there in addition to Tukaram Khedekar?

DI: Dattoba Tambe. His father was a tamashgir. Now my father's disciple in this village, he said to me, "Go on. Perform. Show them. These Marathas are not at all concerned about us. All they want is Khedekar." Now I liked my drink. But that day I didn't touch a drop. These people didn't offer us food, no tea either. Not even pan. They thought ours was an inferior show and their money would be wasted on us. I didn't sleep, didn't eat. I was just aching for the Tamasha to begin. I got after that pehalwan. "Let's start soon." Before dawn. The vag must be over before sunrise. I got after him. He couldn't understand why I was so impatient. My father's disciple, he got things ready for the show. And I started off "Other groups have come and sung their gavlanas here. We respect them all. You come and watch us, pay what you can. We are here on account of our forefathers' blessings and to serve you." I started off: gan gavlana. I made them laugh. They said it was a wonderful beginning. Then I started on the vag itself. Malhar Rao Holkar by Baburao Puneekar. But before that I addressed the audience again. I said, "You haven't offered us water. Maybe

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you don't have it. We can always go to the river. But the way you treated us, it has made us all sad. You think our Tamasha is inferior. In a school you have boys who are clever, but the parents are poor and don't have money to buy them books. " Then I said to them, "Tukaram Gadkari comes here. He's popular with you. But he worked under me at Bangdiwala Theatre. Madhu Nagarkar started off after I did. Datta Patil, Master Ururekar made a tamashgir out of him."

VT: Datta Patil<sup>7</sup>

DI: Yes, they all entered the field after me. I belong to Bhau Mang's. Dagdoba Salvi's generation, their category. I mentioned other tamashgirs in my speech. And then I said to them, "If you like the show, pay for it. If you don't like it, we'll go back home empty handed." We began the vag, Malharrao Holkar, and those who normally went to work in the fields at six in the morning stayed on till eight to watch it.

VT: When did you begin?

DI: At midnight.

VT: The vag<sup>7</sup>

DI: No, the whole show. Gan, gavhana, rangbaji.

VT: And the vag<sup>7</sup>

DI: At three in the morning.

VT: So the vag went on for five hours.

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DI About four and a half hours. But I did it with so much spirit that the pehalwan came and thumped my back. "The whole night there was just Dadu before us. We didn't remember that Tukaram Gadkari existed." I said, "For your hazeri I'll have one vag."

VT What does hazeri mean?

DI It means "during the day." Have the first vag from nine to twelve.

VT Tell us about this system.

DI See, we began at twelve and went on till eight in the morning. Then we had a wash, we drank tea and started off again at nine.

VT This is the regular thing?

DI Yes, in the villages.

VT Even now?

DI Yes, even today.

VT Then how do they go to work, if they're working in the nearby factories?

DI They take the day off. To watch the Tamasha those people stayed away from their job.

VT And you had the hazeri?

DI I started on the hazeri vag and won their respect. "Tomorrow is Saturday. I'll perform free for you. The women must sit in front, then men at the back. And our artists must consider that their mothers, sisters, wives, daughters are all before them. So they must think a little and not use any kind of language. We have *Ramc ha Vag*. It is Pathe Bapurao's work. And it is meant for women. So the women must sit in front. That's my request to you." They applauded me. We received five hundred rupees. And I did the other vag. Began ten at

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night and finished at five in the morning. The women paid one rupee each — three hundred rupees in all. They liked it so much.

VT Now you do *Gadvache Lagna* in Bombay. Is our audience very different from the one you get in the villages?<sup>7</sup> Do you present your show here exactly the way you do it there? I don't mean that you do it in the open there and in a closed theatre here. I mean in relation to the audience. Say in Poona — at the Bal (jandharva) you have an urban audience. In a village it's a different kind of audience. So do you change your style?

DI No.

VT Not even in the dialogues?

DI No. Just the same.

VT And the duration?<sup>7</sup> They say you go on for five hours at a stretch in villages?

DI Now, you see if there's Tamasha on at the time of a fair, you present two vags, in the case of a lavni, you repeat the lines. But you make sure that you don't bore the audience.<sup>1</sup> Now for the State competitions, I read the rules carefully. Five marks for the dholak player, five for the halgi player, five for the tal player, and five for the tuntune player. That makes 11 twenty. And fifteen for the girl's ada.

VT How much does that make?<sup>7</sup> Thirty-five.

DI Fifteen marks for minor roles and that makes it fifty. Fifteen for the songadya. That makes it<sup>7</sup> .

VT Sixty-five.



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DI Fifteen marks for the response, fifteen for the plot I studied this break-up of mails So I got a clock and began rehearsing. Now our Malhar Rao Holkar lasts three hours How to fit in the gan, gavhana, rangbaji and the vag into just two hours?

VI Less than two hours<sup>7</sup>

DI Yes The vag lasts three hours Gan, gavhana that takes one hour Rangbaji lot one and a half It used to go on for more than five hours We had to shorten it to less than two hours I worked out a system Nobody taught me I would say Bapurao's first line in my mind Shall I sing the rest?

VT Do

DI I used to carry on, sing one stanza, then end the gan Then I used to go on to the gavhana Krishna's gavhana End on a note from Pathe Bapurao All over in fifteen minutes That left me one hour and a half for the vag I used to time it well Everything had to go like clockwork I decided that the halgi player mustn't stay too near the mike if he did that, our words wouldn't carry So the dholak and the halgi were shifted behind and had to play in strictly disciplined manner And thus we used to reduce the sequence to one hour and a half Finish it just a little before Then the curtain, leaving two minutes for my *Vaikunthichalaya Vithal* and the final bow before the spectators From 1958 to 1962 I used to win all the prizes — the halgi prize, the dholak prize, the award for the songadya Five prizes. You know how<sup>7</sup> Tatyasaheb told me, "When you do an exam, you have to put down your pen after the bell goes and hand in your answer paper You can't say I want to write a little more. It's the same here."

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VT: In the villages, do you perform without mikes? You say there are now ten thousand watching a Tamasha<sup>7</sup> How can the voice reach them?

DI: Formerly it was quite different. Once a Tamasha began, you didn't even whisper to your neighbour. Not a cough. We used to carry iron rods and tie rags at one end, dip them in kerosene and light them. Keep them burning on both sides of the stage.

VT: Till which year?

DI: 1938. We went on till 1943 the same way. Burn kerosene, light those rags, call the people. Earn a few rupees and a meal. Then start off in the afternoon for the next village. You see, people loved the Tamasha then. There was no other form of entertainment.

VT: But now you can't do without a mike.

DI: Naturally, the villagers know all about mikes.

VT: You use them?

DI: Of course. What else can you do? Your voice doesn't reach the back row and they shout, "Can't hear. Speak loudly." Then you shout louder. You think it's all a bit crude<sup>7</sup>.

VT: And now they listen to film music. Do they make you sing film songs?

DI: They do. They'll bring out two annas and say, "Sing Bugdi mazi sandli." Formerly they used to ask us to sing a bhedik or some devotional piece. There's one by Vadgaonkar. Our village womenfolk used to like it a lot. Really lovely lines. I used to sing this in Bombay. I knew many lavnis by heart. I think I have forgotten most of them; I feel the break.

VT: We had come upto 1969. Then you began again and you have gone on with the Tamasha right till today.

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DI: Yes. I came here right away

VT: How<sup>7</sup>

DI: Our well known comedian Shankar Ghanekar told Madhukarrao Nerale of Hanuman Theatre, "Get that Dadu Indurikar."

VT: But Nerale must have seen you on the stage before?

DI: Sure. Right from the time the Hanuman Theatre was built. I used to bring my group here

VT: Then you stayed here right till now?

DI: Yes. Three years. Doing *Gadvachdagna*. I had stopped the show for two months. They wrote to me asking me to come back. I said to myself, "I am poor. I am an artist but art is hardly valued. I must learn to be humble." So I came back.

VT: You were talking about those girl dancers<sup>7</sup>. Do they have someone in the family acting in a Tamasha troupe? Is that how they enter the profession<sup>7</sup>. And what happens when they stop dancing<sup>7</sup>. What do they do to earn a livelihood then?

DI: Then they find a man, get married.

VT: But what happens to a girl in the later part of her life?

DI: Becomes someone's keep. Who drives the girls to this? The owner<sup>7</sup>. Nobody bothers about what will happen to them when they are old. The owner thinks of his own pleasures. Once he has finished with one woman, he runs after another.

VT: When would you say they are too old to act?

DI: Forty, forty-five

VT: Leave aside the lot of the girls you mentioned just now, what happens to the rest?

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



DI They go out during the day to clean vessels, wash clothes

VT These Tamasha women?

DI Yes. There's Baya Salunka who used to be in our troupe. I got her a harmonium of three hundred rupees because she had nobody to support her. It's alright when you are young. The girls begin to work with a troupe, they start dancing when they are twelve or thirteen. But nobody cares once they are old.

VT When is a dancer considered old? When is she "out" of the profession?

DI When she hardly gets a rupee, or four annas as nazar

VT When does this happen?

DI When she is about forty. But if she has a slender build, she can go on till she is **fifty**.

VT But the one you mentioned?

DI She is forty. There is a small village **Walvada**. Her father used to live there. She came to us when she was seven or **eight**. We taught her to dance. She used to dance beautifully. People used to say, "No Tamasha like Dadu Maruti Indurikar's."

VT Then what happened?

DI As she got older, she got a lot of "publicity." Her father took her from one troupe to another. And the troupe would flourish. She is a grandmother now. But even now she has so much **appeal**. Those days one **tilt** and the audience responded<sup>1</sup>. It can happen to anyone. Once you are old, no one has any use for you. But not in her case. People still want her. They like that "action" of hers.

VT You said if a woman is "out," she has to find any kind of work, even manual work.

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



DI: What else is she to do<sup>9</sup> If she finds a protector when she is in her prime, then things work out well for her. Otherwise there's just misery in store for her. This has been my experience these last thirty-three years. In our line, honesty is rate — both among men and women. Cheating is common.

VT: Won't things improve<sup>7</sup>

DI: I don't know. But I would like them to.

VT: You went through a hard period, didn't you?

DI: Yes, in 1967.

VT: They say you cleaned vessels<sup>7</sup>

DI: Yes. My wife used to work as a servant in a Parsi family. She earned fifty rupees a month.

VT: And you<sup>7</sup>

DI: I helped her. We got two meals a day and her pay. The children were with her parents. The Parsi employer asked me what I did. I said, "Tamasha." He asked me what that meant. I replied, "Drama."

VT: Didn't you invite your employer to your show<sup>7</sup>

DI: No, they weren't interested.

VT: You worked in their house, helping your wife with the household work<sup>7</sup> For six months<sup>7</sup>

DI: Yes. But I told you I did so because I was in difficulties. They burnt down our tent and I lost everything.

VT: Where did this happen<sup>7</sup>

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



DI: We were at Khandoba's in the Satara district. The fair there is attended by the Mangs and Ramoshis.

VT: This is not the Khandoba of *Jejuri*?

DI: No. This fair is Khandoba's fair at Pali. Mangs, Ramoshis, thieves throng there. They propitiate Khandoba, entreat his blessings for the robberies they plan to undertake. And if they are successful, they come for the thanksgiving on Khandoba's wedding day.

VT: Still?

DI: Yes, even now.

VT: Who burnt down your tent?

DI: My rivals.

VT: You suffered heavy losses?

DI: Yes, about twenty thousand rupees.

VT: What was damaged?

DI: The generator worth about five thousand. Our new tent which had cost us about seven thousand. I had about three thousand rupees in the trunk. And our costumes and properties. They wanted to smash the vehicle. But I stood before it and howled out loudly.

VT: When did it all begin?

DI: During the performance itself.

VT: But it was your crowd that came to watch the show.

DI: They were spectators who came to watch my show because they were told it was good. There was a huge crowd. And a boy came and removed a wire.

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



VT: While the show was on?

DI: Yes. I was on the stage. I saw it happen. The amplifier failed and the people began to shout, "*avaz, avaz*". We tried to explain. But it was no use. I was behind the boy. I asked him, "Why did you do it?"

VT: Then?

DI: The people got up and broke the door, smashed the glass, pulled down the tent. We were forty. The crowd numbered two thousand.

VT: Was anyone injured?

DI: Yes, my uncle was hit by a stone. He bled. The rest of our artists fled.

VT: And the girl?

DI: Shankarrao Shevnekar quietly led her aside and took her to safety.

VT: But do people really behave like this if the actors aren't heard properly?

DI: Oh, yes. They did the same thing to Bhau Mang.

VT: But is it all done on purpose?

DI: Yes, I saw the boy start it. My rivals had their people among the spectators.

VT: You say they did the same to Bhau Mang?

DI: They even burnt their vehicles — Kolhapurkar's, even Tukaram Khedekar's.

VT: Do the contractors engineer trouble? Or your rivals?

DI: They are all there. And members of the public too. They can't bear to see someone else succeed.

VT: Didn't the police come to your rescue? Stop this skirmish? Wasn't there any injury?

## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



DI: No, nothing

VT: Didn't you lodge a complaint?

DI: The local people threatened me. They told me to be more sensible and not to try anything of that sort. So I got into our vehicle and we drove to Poona. The owner there helped us.

VT: You mentioned that you are a mahar. When you are on tour, you stay in a village. Do people behave differently because you are a mahar?

DI: Formerly they did. Not anymore. Baburao Punekar is a Maratha. He would stay with the village patil. I lived in the maharwada.

VT: Did you face a lot of difficulties during the drought?

DI: Well, in Marathwada people love the Tamasha. They come in bullock carts, women, children, the whole lot. They eat their *bhakar* outside the tent. They enjoy every minute of the performance. They get to see it just once a year. There's no other form of entertainment.

VT: The cinema?

DI: They prefer the Tamasha.

VT: But film music?

DI: Yes, they listen to the film records. If they like a particular song, they ask us to sing it.

VT: You incurred a loss of twenty-seven thousand after your tent was burnt down?

DI: Yes. I paid off my debts. I have yet to settle a debt of five thousand. I must think of my children. My daughter wants to become a nurse. The younger daughter is in the sixth, my son is in the fifth. My youngest is four years old.



## TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA



VT: Would you like them to be tamashgirs?

DI: No. I would like to educate them.

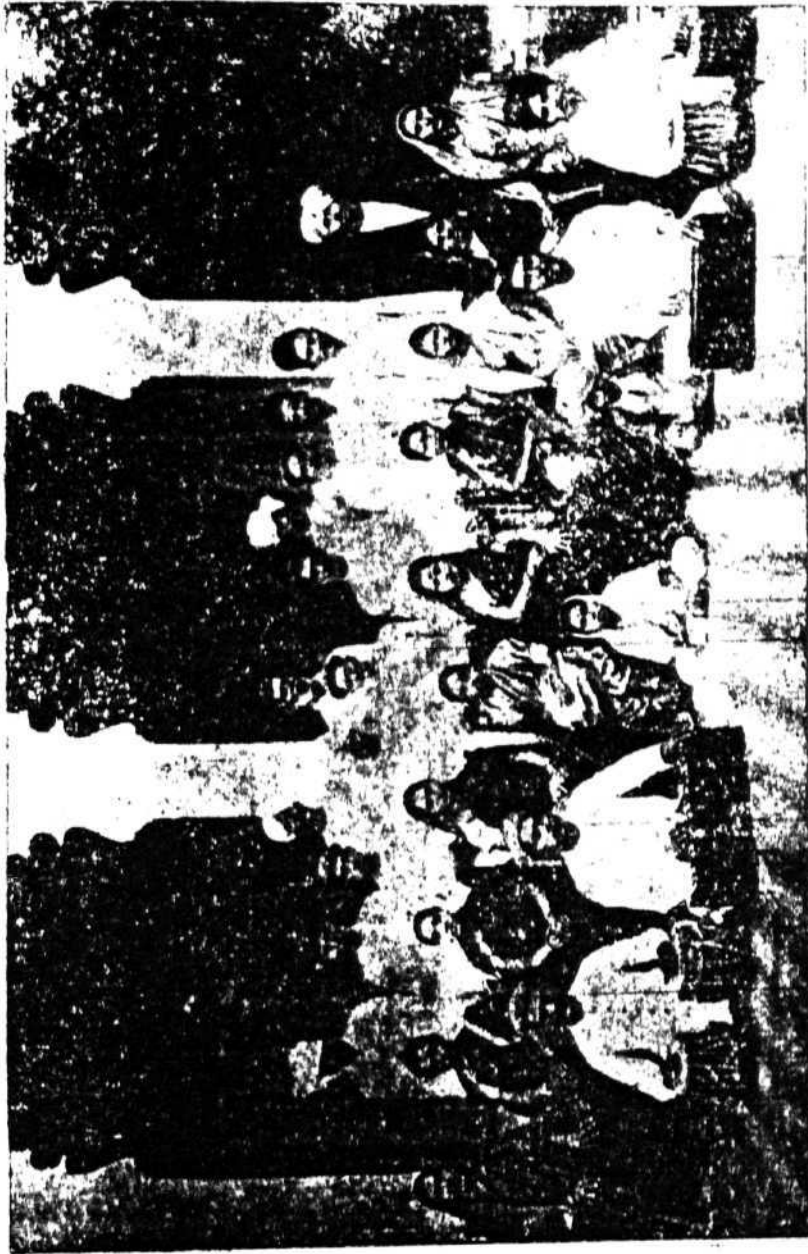


**PHOTOGRAPHS**





महमंदशाहा बाऊदशाहा काबरी ऊर्फ जंगली महाराज (पठेबापूराव कुलकर्णी यांचे गुप्त)  
जन्म-१८१८ होनमुर्गी, सोलापूर मृत्यु-१८९० मांबुर्दा, रोकडोया मंदीर पृष्ठ ५



पुणे येथील लिलाबाई जयकर, भामाबाई पांचाळ पंढरपूर, केशरबाई कडसकर, दगडोबा गरड, काटे पाचगे इत्यादींचा नमाशा मंडळाचा कार्यक्रम श्रीमंत सरकार मयाजीराव गायकवाड (कलाविनचि अलदाते, मानधन देणारे) बरोबरचा इतिहास.



सुप्रसिद्ध शाहीर आधरकुण ऊर्फ पठटेवापूराव कुलकर्णी  
 (जन्म हरणाक्ष रठरे १८२२) (मृत्यू १९४० पुणे)  
 महाराष्ट्रात तमाशात अग्रगण्य स्थान मिळविणारा  
 सुप्रसिद्ध आवणी गार.



नामचंद पबलाबाई हिवरगांवकर  
जन्म १८७५) (मृत्यु १९३४)  
कोकीळकंडी सुप्रसिद्ध लावण्या गायिका  
(पठडेवापुरावना मिठारानी वग कोल्हापूर दरबारात करणारी)



छत्रपती शाहू महाराज (कोल्हापूर)

सन १९०९ साली प्रथमच दरबारात ' मिठुराणी ' वग केला  
गटठेवापूराव यास जरीचा फेटा व नामचंद पवळाबाई हिला चांदीचा  
तोडे जाड दऊन त्याला त्याचा गौरव केला



१९४८ साली सरकार तर्फे बंदी हुकुम आणणारे



मोरारजी वेसाई  
(माजी गृहमंत्री)



बाळासाहेब खर  
(माजी मुख्यमंत्री)

बंदी हुकुम कोसिलहॉल पुणे येथे भेटून रघु ककन घेणारे, प्रमुख मानकरी



बापूसाहेब जितेंकर  
संपादक तमाशा अक



अहमवशट ताबे  
मानक तमाशयन तमाशा शिखर



तमाशा कलावंतांचे कैवारी  
बाळासाहेब देसाई  
(माजी बांधकाम मंत्री)



बाळासाहेब धनुषवार



चित्रामण गणेश खर्चे



यशवंतराव रामकृष्ण वाते

तमाशा अंक लेखक



बापूसाहेब जितीकर  
(संपादक तमाशा अंक)

भठठेबापूराव कृत लावण्या पुस्तके प्रकाशक व हक्कदार, सन १९४८ मध्ये  
तमाशावरील बंदी हकूम उठविणारे प्रमुख सहाय्यकर्ते.

तमासगिरांचे कंभार। तक्रारी दुरकरणारे)



ना. स. तिरपुडे  
माजी समाजकल्याण मंत्री



बाबुराव भारस्कर  
माजी समाजकल्याण मंत्री



न्यायरत्न विनोद



दत्ता वामन पोतदार  
सरकारमान्य तमाशा कमेटी अध्यक्ष

पठ्ठेबापुराव कुलकर्णी यांचे शिष्य सुप्रसिद्ध तमाशाचे सूरदार अजराअमर  
किती करणारे बिल्लीछया राजधानीच्या सुवर्णपदकाचे मानकरी



बापुसाहेब बंग  
नारायण गावकर



भाऊसाहेब बंग  
नारायण गावकर



बाबुरावजी कुरणकर  
स्वतंत्र फड मालक



दादोबा तुळापूरकर  
स्वतंत्र फड मालक मुंबई

भेदीकांचे सामनेबाले महाराष्ट्रातील प्रमुख तमासगिर  
पुणे, मुंबई, कोल्हापूर, सोलापूर, जळगाव, बारशी



दण्डबाबा शिरोलीकर  
महाराष्ट्रातील त. मोगडे



अर्जुन बूबा बाघोलीकर  
गृप्रमिद भेदीकांचे अस्मल अभ्यासू



संभाजीराव कोलापुरकर



शिवाजीराव कोलापुरकर

तमासगिरांची संकट निवारण करणारे व प्रोत्साहन देऊन  
तमाशा फंड वित्तीय नेणारे



प्रल्हाद केशव अत्रे  
तमाशा अंक लेखक



डॉ. भ. पोपटलालजी शाहा  
तमासगिरास प्रोत्साहन देणारे



बाळासाहेब गोरे  
तमाशा संस्थेचे सेक्रेटरी



अंकुशराब पवार  
माजी कार्पोरेटर

तमाशा संघ स्थापन करून तमाशा कार्यक्रम दिल्लीत नेणारे व सरकार तर्फे  
सुवर्ण पदके व मानधन मिळवून नेणारे व तमाशा अंकात लेखन करणारे,



रंगराव पाटील



भाऊसाहेब गोरें



राजाभाऊ पिटें



केशवराव जाधें



मिठुाराणी बगतील प्रमुख कलाकार सोंगाडे



रामभाऊ देशपांडे  
पेटी मास्तर



रामभाऊ गोंधळी अहीरेकर



किसन कुरणकर



किसन कुसगांवकर

ढोलकी धरील प्रमुख गायका



सरस्वतीबाई कोल्हापूरकर



ताराबाई खडकीकर



कामीनाबाई पुणेकर



भामाबाई पंढरपूरकर

पश्यतः कालीन सगनभाऊ होनाजी बाळाजी कोकिलकठी ओलहोडिय  
रोडियो व रेकॉर्डिंग व लावण्या गायिका



होमाबाई लवटे



रोशनबाई सातारकर



कालनबाई शर्कर



जयश्री जयसिंगपूरकर

कै. शिघ्रकवि पठ्ठे बापूराव कुलकर्णी यांचे

## जीवन चरित्र



कै. पठ्ठे बापूराव

रंठरेकर

बापूसाहेब जितोकर

लेखक व प्रकाशक

प्रस्तुत कवि श्रीधर कृष्ण ऊर्फ पठ्ठे बापूराव कुलकर्णी यांच्या रंगबाजी भाग ५ वा प्रसिद्ध करण्यास मला अंतःकरणापूर्वक अत्यंत आनंद वाटत आहे. यांचे कवने इतके उत्कृष्ट आहेत की. असा लावण्याचा कवि मागेहि झाला नाही आणि पुढेहि होणार नाही, अशी आमची खात्री आहे. पठ्ठे बापूराव कुलकर्णी यांचा जन्म मुक्काम हरणाक्ष रेंठरे ता. वाळवे जि. सातारा, येथे सन १८६८ साली झाला, ते शाळेत जाऊ लागले त्या वेळेसच त्यांचे लक्ष कवितेकडे पार असे, आणि कोणत्या कवीने कोणत्या कविता लिहिल्या त्या निरखून पाहणे व आपण स्वतःही लिहिणे हे





प्रो.आनंदराव महाजन  
उपाध्यक्ष, मराठी तमाशा परिषद, पुणे.

नामांकित तरुण तडफदार ६९ कलावंतांच्या संचाल  
धार्मिक, सामाजिक, पौराणिक वगनाल्य सोबत  
आनंद म्युझिकलचा जबरदस्त ऑर्केस्ट्रा अवश्य वहा

संचालक: संजय महाजन

नगरसेवक जळगाव नगरपालिका M.A.  
जळगाव

# ॐ आवाह शिवाय नमोऽस्तु





विंकरराव  
माने चिंचणी  
कर





ELITE

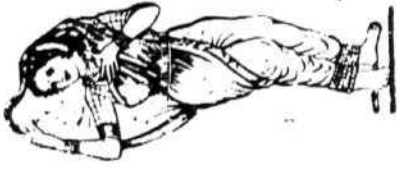


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॥ जय महार प्रसन्न ॥

★ नृत्याची बिजली ★

# सौ. वंदना चादूरवाडीकर



बहुरंगी लोकनाट्य तमाशा मंडळ

केंद्र- जाटनांदूर, ता. पाटोदा, जि. बीड. फोन : ५१८

लिकीट दर

७/- रुपये

ठिकाण-

तारीख-

वार-

खुष खबर

॥ श्री गजानन प्रसन्न ॥

खुष खबर !!

# मा. माणिकराव औटी राजुरीकर सह मा. दादु जाधव गुणाटकर लोकनाट्य तमाशा मंडळ

अवश्य पहाण्यास विसरु नका.

आपल्या यात्रेच्या शोभेसाठी खास मनोरंजित कार्यक्रम अवश्य पहा !  
आमच्या ३० कलाकारांच्या व ११ नृत्यांगणांच्या संचातून सादर  
करीत आहोत गण गौळण, नविन तुफान विनोदी रंगबाजी  
नव्या जुन्या चित्रपटातील गाणी इ. सादर करीत आहोत



- आमची लोकप्रिय तमाशाट्य -

- ❑ स्वतः भंगले संसाराचे
- ❑ बंडखोर लखु भोसला
- ❑ मुंबईची आशा नायिकीण
- ❑ दख्खनचा मराठा
- ❑ गवळ्याची रंभा
- ❑ राष्ट्रासाठी मुलाचे बलिदान



आमच्या तमाशा मंडळाला एक वेळ अवश्य भेट द्या !

चौकशीचे ठिकाण - नारायणगांव



स्वूष स्वबर !

॥ श्री गुरुदत्त प्रसन्न ॥ श्री पळशेश्वर प्रसन्न ॥

स्वूष स्वबर !



तेच तेच तमाशे पाहून कंटाळलेल्या तमाशा रसिकांना  
बहारवार तमाशाची अनुपम भेट !

लोककला प्रतिष्ठान पुणे (रजि.)

- यांचे प्रेरणेने -

टी. व्ही. ढोलकी सम्राट

मा. दौलत,

अंकुश पळसमंडळकर सह



नृत्य चंद्रिका :

सौ. लता कवलापूरकर

❖ लो क ना टय मंडळ ❖

लोक रंजनातून लोकशिक्षण देणारे  
एकमेव लोकनाटय मंडळ



गणगोवळण, बतावणी, लावण्या  
रंगवाजीसह भजनाट  
विनोदी वगनाटय !



❖

मनेजर

श्री. के. बी. खैरे

श्री. जहांगीर साठे

❖



वार -

विनांक । ।

ठिकाण

आपल्या गावच्या उत्सवासाठी त्वरीत संपर्क साधा.

(अनिकेत विटीय प्रेम, भारावणगाव)

अखील महाराष्ट्रातील कानाकोपऱ्यात गाजत असलेले  
नवीन दोन पोली तंबूत व ७५ कलाकारांच्या संचात सहर्ष सादर करीत आहे



गणपतराव व्ही. माने

लेखणी सम्राट



संचालिका आवकानाई कराडकर

मात्रे विचणीकर सह आवकानाई कराडकर



कोकनाट्य ग्रामशा मंडळ

केंद्र : ४२३ कराड, मार्केटयाई, ताटे यांच्या दवाखान्यामार्गे, कराड, जि. सातारा.



खुण खवर !

॥ श्री लालबाय लाल ॥

खुण खवर !!

आपल्या यात्रेच्या सोभेसाठी खास मनोरंजित कार्यक्रम अवश्य पहा.



आमच्या ३० कलाकारांच्या व ११ नृत्यांगणांच्या संचातून सादर करीत आहोत गण गवळग, नविन तुफानी रंगबाजी, नर्तन व जुन्या चित्रपटातील हिट गाणी इत्यादी सादर करीत आहोत. नाविन्यपूर्ण कार्यक्रम लाईट लाऊड स्पेकरच्या भषक्यात आलीशान रंगमंचावर सादर कर्ते

वडा  
सभाट

मा. माणिकराव औढी राज्ञरीकर

सह

मा. दादु जाधव गुणाटकर

लोक नाट्य तमाशा मंडळ

## ● आमची लोकप्रिय वगनाटचे ●



- स्वन्न भंगले संसाराचे
- मंबईची आशा नायिकीण
- गवळ्याची रंभा

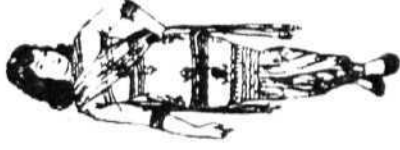


- बंडखोर लखु भोसला
- दख्खनचा मराठा
- राष्ट्रसाठी मुलाचे बलिदान

वार -

तारीख -

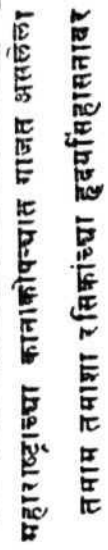
स्थळ -



वर्ग -

तिकीट दर -

केंद्र - नारायणगाव. ता. जुन्नर, जि. पुणे.



सु. वि. ३००

लोकनाट्य



बा.स. पाटील

हिन्दी मराठी चित्रपटातील अजोड गायो,  
चटकदार लगवणा हलगी डोलकिचा कड-  
कडाट, विनोदाची आतष बाजो वतुफान  
हमवणारे, रडवणारे बगनाट यसहकुटूब  
पाहण्यासारखा एकमेव तमाशा



नमः पृथ्वी

तमाशा  
मंडळ

五、六、七、八、九

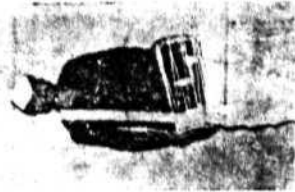
तमाशा  
मंडळ

सादर होणारं

- १-बर्डच्या नाचात कारवाचा फुटलो खुनाल
- २-पोलीसानी केला वेगळ पडला मंडाडचाराणा अ
- ३-मानू आला मंतीन अ तेवर घाला
- ४-वंश्या झाले भावामाठ

एंगमचावर लाईट डेकोरेशनच्या मपक्यात

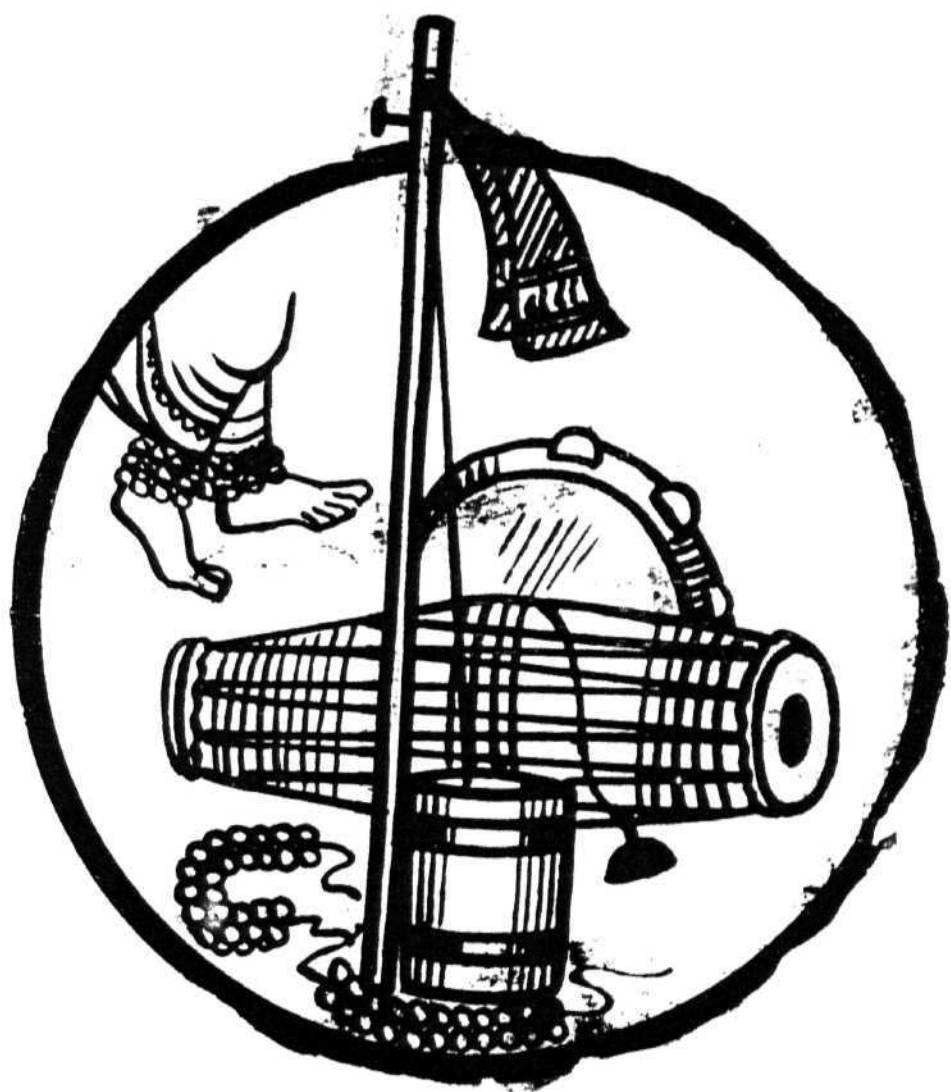
एक लोकप्रिय मराठी तमाशा



મારદરતે ૨ પોલી મલ્ય તંબુત પ્રશસ્ત

११ नृत्यांगना व ४० कलावंतांच्या भण्य संचात





ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼

ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼





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