

A Theatrical study of Oggu Katha:
A Narrative folk form of a Pastoral Community
In Andhra Pradesh

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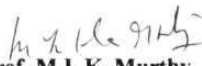
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page Nos.
(i) Contents	i
(ii) List of Tables	iii
(iii) List of Figures	iv
(iv) List of Plates	v
(v) Acknowledgements	viii
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1 - 20
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Area of Study	8
1.3. Literature Survey	9
1.4. Issues Addressed	10
1.5. Aims and Objectives	10
1.6. Methodology	11
1.7. Chapterisation	13
Notes	18
II. THEATRE - ITS GRAMMAR.....	21 -48
11.1. Theatrical Grammar - a Conceptual Frame	21
11.2. Principles of Grammar in Theatre	22
Notes	47
III. OGGU KATHA - ITS CULTURAL MILIEU.....	49 - 78
Notes	77

IV. OGGU KATHA - ITS THEATRICAL GRAMMAR.....79 -176

IV.1. Introduction	79
IV.2. Oggu Katha - and the Text	82
IV.2.1. Mallanna Katha - its plot structure	83
IV.2.2. Mallanna Katha - its characters	103
IV.2.3. Mallanna Katha - its language	111
IV.3. Oggu Katha and the Actor	122
IV.3.1. Bodily skills	126
IV.3.2. Vocal skills	136
IV.3.3. Psychological skills	143
IV.4. Oggu Katha - and the Space	148
IV.5. Oggu Katha and the Audience	157
IV.6. Oggu Katha and the Semantics	165
Notes	171

V. CONCLUSION.....177 - 196

V.1. Text	184
V.2. Actor	190
V.3. Space	193
V.4. Audience	194

PLATES.....197 - 223

GLOSSARY.....224 - 231

REFERENCES.....232 - 237

LIST OF TABLES

	Page No.
1.1. Elements of Folk forms incorporated in the Indian mainstream theatre.	6
1.2. Elements of Folk forms incorporated in Telugu mainstream theatre.	7
IV.3. The list of characters found in each act (Kanda) of Mallanna Katha.	107
IV.4. Sound effects created by the Oggu performers.	143
IV.5. The characters enacted by the main artists I & II in each act.	145

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page No.
il.1. Theatre Grammar.....	30
1112 Sub-sects of Pastoral community in Andhra Pradesh.....	52
1113 Colour pattern in the Patnam.....	70
1114 Patnam.....	71
IV.5. The structure of the text of Mallanna Katha.....	83
IV.6. The plot structure of Mallanna Katha.....	97
IV.7. The plot structure of main stream drama.....	98
IV.8. The Oggu performer's acting skills.....	125
IV.9. The ground plan where the performance was held.....	150
IV.10. Space in Oggu Katha.....	156
IV.11. Diversity of Audience.....	160
IV.12. The Semantics of Oggu Katha.....	168

LIST OF PLATES

Page No.

III.1. Entrance gate of the Mallanna Temple, Inole	197
III.2. Mallanna Temple, Inole	197
III.3. Inscription in Mallanna Temple; Inole	198
III.4. Rites performed at the choultry, Mallanna Temple, Inole	198
III.5. Oggu Pujaris conducting the marriage (laggam)	199
III.6. Jaggu	199
IV.7. Rites performed by Oggu Pujaris at the choultry Mallanna Temple, Inole	200
IV.8. Oggudolu	200
IV.9. Kathakudu as Neelima Devi in labour pains and Vanthakudu as her friend	201
IV.10. Kathakudu as Akumanchi Devi asking for child and Vanthakudu as Neelima Devi	201
IV.11. Kathakudu as Mallanna and Vanthakudu as Sanganna	202
IV.12. All the narrators in female roles (Mallanna's aunts)....	202
IV.13. Kathakudu as bandit (Mallanna) in disguise Vanthakudu as Mallanna's aunt	203
IV.14. Kathakudu as the muslim messenger and Vanthakudu as Mallanna's sisters –in-law	203
IV.15. Kathakudu as Mallanna's brother and Vanthakudu as his sister-in-law	204

IV. 16. Kathakudu as Mallanna's brother and Vanthakudu as his sister-in-law.	204
IV.17. Vanthakudu as Mallanna.	205
IV. 18. Kathakudu as Mallana, Vanthakudu as Bapana Ratnangi.	205
IV.19. Kathakudu as Mallanna Vanthakudu as Bapana Ratnangi.	206
IV.20. Kathakudu as Kotimarri setti and Vanthakudu as Balijalingalu.	206
IV.21. Kathakudu as Kotimarri setti and Vanthakadu as Balijalingalu.	207
IV.22. Aunt of Mallanna hiding under the cot.	207
IV.23. Vaani improvised as saree.	208
IV.24. Vaani improvised as turban.	208
IV.25. Vaani improvised as turban.	209
IV.26. Vaani improvised as turban.	209
IV.27. Vaani improvised as cradle.	210
IV.28. Rumaal (hand kerchief) improvised as baby.	210
IV.29. Rumaal (hand kerchief) improvised as letter.	211
IV.30. Rumaal improvised as koppu and gutka packet as flowers.	211
IV.31. Chetikarra (hand stick) improvised as Bundle of firewood.	212
IV.32. Chetikarra (hand stick) improvised as reins of horses.	212
IV.33. Chetikarra (hand stick) improvised as knife.	213
IV.34. Chetikarra (hand stick) improvised as Garden lizard.	213

IV.35. Chetikarra (hand stick) improvised as taraju.	214
IV.36. Chetikarra (hand stick) improvised as magic stick	214
IV.37. Long stick and chetikarra (hand stick) improvised as pounding shafts.	215
IV.38. Long stick improvised as used by the shepherd.	215
IV.39. Mimetic improvisation of shankam (conch).	216
IV.40. Mimetic improvisation of giving fruit.	216
IV.41. Mimetic improvisation of mirror.	217
IV.42. Mimetic improvisation of weaving thread.	217
IV.43. Performers doing spontaneous movement	218
IV.44. Performers doing rhythmic movement	218
IV.45. Performers doing rhythmic movement.	219
IV.46. Performers doing circular movement	219
IV.47. Place of performance.	220
IV.48. Straight lines formed by the performers in the space.	220
IV.49. Half strong positions of the performers in the space.	221
IV.50. Performers making circular movement in the space.	221
IV.51. Location of an event in the narrative.	222
IV.52. Performers creating the space.	222
IV.53. Audience at Inole	223
IV.54. Audience at Inole	223

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CHAPTER -I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Expressive behaviour in human society manifests in its various forms and is shared and experienced as a communicative medium of a collective whole (a social group / community). Art is one of the forms with its specific of cognitive experience and aesthetics. The domain of art encompasses an array of performing arts and theatre is pivotal to the latter, since it is a live performance. The basic features of human society such as pleasures and pains, value systems and other traditions become the properties of expression and experience. In this sphere of human lifeworld theatre exists as an enactment of experience. This character makes theatre not only a universal phenomenon but also an individual experience. Therefore, theatre becomes the theatre of the people and reflects their experiences, beliefs, aspirations and relationships. As universal, theatre reaches people cutting across cultural boundaries and at the individual level it confines to community. Theatre as individual experience confines to a community or a group of people. **Folk** theatre apparently falls under the category of individual experience. The group that experiences a particular lifestyle expresses its experiences, actions, aspirations, beliefs and relationships through enactment. These enactments incidentally correlate with their social, economical and cultural realms.

In the sub-continent, occupation being one of the major divides for social groupings it invariably becomes their identity. These identities are expressed variously by the social groupings apart from their occupation. **One** such expression is their enactment. These enactments in **the** current

nomenclature can be called as "Theatre", What is interesting to note here is that their theatre belongs to their community and therefore expresses their lifestyle as well as their identity. In other words, folk theatre belongs to the folk, which is practicing it. An attempt is made in this thesis to study the nuances of one such folk theatre of Andhra Pradesh, in order to bring forth not only the features of folk theatre, but also the strength that perpetuates the theatre since ages. Most of the folk performances acted out as theatrical presentations stem out of rituals. Studies revealed that theatre originated from rituals in the world. Both in the west and in the east this is common. While it originated from the Dionysious rituals, in the west it is the 'Yagna' in India. The following lines refer to Kapilavatsyayan (1977: 5) observation: "All activity in as much as it is dedicated activity is a sacrificial offering. Yagna is the offering of the best that one has to be the best one seeks. The *Satapatha Brahmana* elaborates the concept by cosmic sacrifice, the counter part by the idea of perpetual sacrifice treated by the Upanishad literature. The artist was also obligated to the offering by his best to his. "Istadevata".

Theatre in its eternal bondage to the life attempts to realise its identity from the time of the beginning of the human society. "The distinction between art for its own sake and un-rehearsed pragmatic mimicry has not always been clear. However. In primitive cultures the two overlap, drama doubling as religious ritual to promote collective well being-for instance the tribes control of nature as inverted in various gods. By imitating an action, the ritual participants hope to free themselves of "winter" and bring about an eternal rebirth. Such rites sometimes include impersonations demonstrating to the

gods, precisely what they are to do "the participants may actually imagine themselves becoming gods. They are 'beside' or 'outside' themselves in ecstasy or to put another way they are enthusiastic primitive tribal exercises of this kind and thus solve frenetic ritual and programmed art" (Kapilavatsyayan 1976: 9). In other words, the innate urge that humans possess to negotiate with the nature and supernatural is expressed as enactments. The existence of theatre in India is observed right from the vedic times: In the Rigveda.¹ we come across certain hymns in the form of dialogues *Samvada Suktas* some of which seem to contain dramatic flavour consisting as they do of conversation, speech and repartee. The *vajasaneyi samhita* of the *sukla yajurveda*² makes mention of the word *sailusha* which means an actor. It says that a *suta* was to be employed for *nritta* and *sailusha* for a song. The *Samaveda*³ with the hymns set to tune clearly shows that the art of music was fully developed in Vedic age. "Vedic sacrifices were essentially a mimesis. In the *Kausitaka Brahmana* sacrificial priests are described as dancing. In the same *Brahmana*, *sangita* (which comprehends music, dance and playing on instruments) form a part of *yajna-yagadi*. At the *Mahavrata Stoma* rite young maidens danced" (Gupta 1991: 3).

Therefore ritual has become the medium to stage enactment in the initial stages of development of mankind as argued by the evolutionary theoreticians. In due course the ritual got separated from enactment giving scope for a full-fledged theatre. The mention of the Natakas has been made in *Harivamsa*, *Srimadbhagavatham*, *Markandeya Puranam*, *Ramayanam*, *Mahabharatam*, *Artha sastra*, *Maha Bhashyam* with a profound and in-depth

emphasis. Sanskrit literature thus focussed on the genre of drama both in *Kavyas* and *Natakas*. The *Sanskrit* drama was not merely theatre of spoken word alone but was instead also a visual form, where the word was only one of its main constituents. Conventions of drama were developed by following the practice of popular art forms by the professional performers. Both Sanskrit and Prakrit were prevalent simultaneously. So also there were professionals of temple dancers and popular entertainers, who paved the way of theorising the concept of *loka Dharmi* (Desi) and *Natya Dharmi*. (Margi).⁴

The differences of regional centredness were termed as *Pravrithi*⁵ in the process of theorisation. Gradually the connections of Sanskrit drama accommodated *uparupakas*,⁶ *sangeeta natakas*⁷ and *sangeeta nrityas*⁸. Since these happened in connection with spiritual, ethical, emotional, social and cultural values and systems of people of both marga and desi rupakas run parallel and there was mutual reciprocation and influence. Seemingly Kapilavatsyayan (1976: 7) also observed this. "All these concepts could have been formulated only if there was a broad popular base and where the two traditions were continually interacting and supplementing each other. The folk forms were responsible for the evolution of some chiseled, highly stylized forms which continued to have affinity with other levels of performance".

Nevertheless the emotional involvement that humans had with rituals continued even when they watch theatre. This commonality brought the performers and audience together to share their lived experience through theatrical expression. The themes therefore of folk theatre are mostly

connected with the gods, goddesses, epic heroes and legendary personalities. The indigenous techniques of performance evolved in folk theatre on the improvised space in the temple yards and village squares are very much common. Generally the folk theatre has certain features common both in content and form. The following are some of them.

- A. Outdoor stages, mostly in the village squares and open places of temple yards.
- B. Song-speech-dance sequence.
- C. Percussion string and wind instruments.
- D. Performer as narrator and character.
- E. Purvaranga or invocatory session.
- F. Female impersonation.
- G. A comic relief character.
- H. Audience participation in the performance.

All these characteristics in general are found in folk theatre forms like Ramleela, Nautanki, Swang, Jatra, Bhavai, Yakshaganam, Therukuthu, Veedhi Bhagavatham, Prahlada Natakam, Ankianat and so on and so forth. This commonness is the vital force that makes folk theatre culturally united. The mythical elements inevitably become the source of folk theatre. The modern Indian dramatists also explore the indigenous presentational qualities apart from the mythical and mystic elements. Folk theatre became another prime source to create a new dimension to modern drama. This brought a unique situation in modern main stream theatre. This tendency of interacting with the performative qualities of folk forms still continues and the modern Indian theatre emerges into a unique format. As cited by Yagnik (cited in Gupta 1991: 140). "The modern Indian stage in its process of evolution has

absorbed the cultural richness of the classical drama, the folk traditions of medieval times and above all the influence of the west".

The contemporary theatre eminent personalities continue to attempt re-interpreting certain folk tales and proverbs, in which process efforts are put in realising and finding meaning behind these native expressions. Hayavadana and Nagamandala of Girish Karnad, Jo Kumaraswamy of Chandrasekhar Khambhar, Lakshapathi Raja of Jayasree are some of the examples to be considered here. This combination of folk expression in the frame of urban and modern contexts enriched Indian mainstream theatre with more vibrant and dynamic movement. These theatre personalities have adopted the performative techniques and the thematic components from the varied folk theatre forms in their productions. (Table 1 and 2).

Table. 1.1

Elements of folk forms incorporated in the Indian mainstream theatre

S.No.	Play	Director	Folk form
1.	Burnam Vanam (Macbeth)	B.V.Karanth	Yakshagana
2.	Charandas Chor	Habeeb Tanveer	Chattis Garh Tribal form
3.	Chakravyuh	Rathan Tiyyam	Martial Arts
4.	Malapalli	A.R.Krishna	Burra Katha
5.	Oorubhangam	K.N.Panicker	Theyyam
6.	Madhyama Vyayogam	K.N.,Panicker	Kalaripayattu
7.	Ghasiram Kotwal	Jabbar Patel	Dasavatara,tamasha,lavani
8.	Jo Kumaraswamy	B.V.Karanth	Bayalata
9.	Lakshapathi Raja	Jayasri	Bayalata,Kamsa Ata
10.	Jasma Odeon	Shanta Gandhi	Bhavai

Table. 1.2

Elements of folk forms incorporated in Telugu mainstream theatre

S.NO.	PLAY	DIRECTOR	FOLK FORM
1.	Malapalli	A.R.Krishna	Burra Katha
2.	Thurupu Rekhalu	Attili Krishna Rao	Jamukula Katha
3.	Veedhi Deepalu	Chatla Sriramulu	Burra Katha
4.	Chintha Chettu	D.S.N.Murthy	Burra Katha
5.	Indra Simhasanam	D.S.N.Murthy	Kuchipudi
6.	Narajati Charitra Samastham	M.N.Sharma	Oggu Katha
7.	Kagitam Puli	M.N.Sharma	Keertanakar
8.	Bommalata	L.Satyanand	Tholu Bommalata
9.	Gangireddulata	L.Satyanand	Gangireddulata
10.	Garadi	S.Hariram	Street Jugglery
11.	Chekumukirallu	Attili Krishna Rao	Thappeta gullu

The above two tables explain the present situation in the mainstream theatre of Indian theatre in general and of Andhra Pradesh in particular. From this it is evident that folk theatre becomes one of the prime sources in terms of its thematic and presentational techniques. These indigenous native expressions are identified and analysed to incorporate them into the mainstream theatre by the modern contemporary theatre personalities. Hence this present study attempts to explain the territorial boundaries between these two entities. Among the varied folk forms Oggu Katha as a form having its own indigenous grammar of theatre is taken for study.

The present study of Oggu katha is based on Mallanna Katha which is performed by the Oggu Pujarulu (minstrels) to their patron community, the

Kurumas / Gollas. Mallanna Katha is their caste myth, which narrates the exploits of Mallanna their caste hero. As the Mallanna Katha is narrated using a particular percussion instrument called as "Oggu" by "Oggu Pujarulu" it is popularly termed as Oggu Katha. In other words, Oggu Katha is the style of narration, which belongs to a distinct genre with an admixture of song-speech-dance-sequence performed by 5 to 7 performers having a lead narrator within them.

Since this style of narration is with this distinct nature, the grammar of folk theatre of this folk form is pursued in this thesis. The troupe comprising of 7 performers was lead by Majjiga Laxminarsayya. The performance for this study was conducted at one of the cult centers, Inole (also called Einavolu, Eiloni) in Warangal District, Andhra Pradesh.

1.2. AREA OF STUDY

Oggu Katha performance is quite popular in the Telangana region among the Kurmas / Gollas. In fact, they own it. It is performed for them as a part of ritual observation in connection with rites of passage. The concept behind the performance is to seek the blessings of Mallanna who also has the power to purify pollutants. The Telangana region being situated in the dry agro eco system, pastoralism became one of the main modes of production and therefore occupation to a considerably good segment of population. This study is done based on the performances of Oggu Pujarulu at Balkampet, Hyderabad, Bagh Amberpet, Hyderabad and at Inole, (also called as

Einavolu, Eilloni), Warangal District. These three places are quite popular as cult centers for the pastoral community; Balkampet is famous for the temple of Yellamma, the village goddess who is the tutelary deity of pastoralists. Baghamberpet, where the shrine of Mallanna is situated, the families of Ogggu Pujarulu perform here regularly the Ogggu Katha in a cyclical manner during rituals. Several families of pastoralists live within the premises of the Baghamberpet Mallanna temple.

Ogggu Katha as a form of narration has its own theatrical grammar. Though it is discussed by several academicians of linguistics, languages, folklorists and theatre artists, there is still much scope to explain the potentialities of the varied components of its grammar.

1.3. LITERATURE SURVEY

Though there are several works on these pastoral communities (Feldhaus et al. 1997: Murty 1993: Murty and Sontheimer 1980: Sontheimer 1983, 1989. Thurston 1909 (1975)). The Ogggu Katha as a theatrical entity, has not received due attention. Just to name a few dealt with pastoralists of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharastra. All these works concentrated on their life styles, rituals, gods, belief systems their fares and festivals. They also brought forth the kinship relationship in the family structure and social organisation of these pastoralists. Since Ogggu Katha is presented in a theatrical format, there is a need for studying its grammar in order to learn **how** the art form could flourish since ages despite of the onslaught of modernity and technical advancements.

I. 4. ISSUES ADDRESSED

From the literature survey carried out it is found that there are certain issues which require attention in the study of Oggu Katha performances. These are as follows.

1. What is theatre? Does the theatre have any relevance to the community, which hosts it?
2. Can a folk performance be viewed as a theatrical genre?
3. If so, can there be equivalence to the theatrical practices of mainstream theatre?
4. Can these elements of Oggu Katha be considered as grammar of theatre, so as to view them as structures of performing art?
5. Whether the structures as enumerated by their theatrical grammar have any relevance to the community's lifestyle?
6. What makes the folk theatre different from the mainstream theatre? Or they are parallel, or do exist in symbiosis?

I.5. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The first objective of the study is to probe into the issues enumerated above. On the whole these issues can be grouped into two. One set of issues pertains to the field of theatre and its grammatical elements. The other set of issues to the folk performances as theatrical events and their structural elements.

These two sets of issues are examined in the Oggu Katha performance. The second aim of the study is to cut across the disciplinary boundaries of theatre arts and folklore studies, and to approach the discipline of theatre as interdisciplinary so as to draw lessons mutually with regards to the techniques of presentation, narrativisation and strategies of performances.

The third objective of the study is to see how the interrelationship between the performer / actors and audience takes place in both folk and mainstream theatre that ensures perpetuity to the theatre.

The last objective of the study is to evaluate the concept of experience which transforms the audience and the performers into the text /narrative and which makes every performance unique and therefore how it becomes the live nerve of the very theatrical experience.

1.6. METHODOLOGY

Two types of methodologies are used in the present study. One type of methodology is drawn from the discipline of theatre that is related to the development of theatrical grammar. According to this, the basic theatrical elements are observed and studied in their co-relationship and it is suggested that the basic elements such as actor-audience and text and context / space holistically make a performance. Each element has method of its own to develop. An actor is prepared during the performance stage, to make him fit to get into a role after which the development of the character on the actor is

ensured by a series of rehearsals. Therefore there is integrally a series of training sessions, which are important to the actor to develop him into a character. What is important to note is that in the discipline of theatre it is not only the training of actors through different methods, but also at the production level he is trained to develop as a character in a given performance. When he is trained as character in the process of rehearsals he is made to learn to integrate the text and context (space) of the play to be presented to a given audience. If the text is already written, advocating a certain ideology, that ideology is incorporated into the characterisation itself. This combining of method, with ideological perception makes the core of methodology of theatre. If the text is silent of any ideology, yet the producer / director intends to impart his own ideology (perception) the characterisation is made so as to promulgate the message intended to the audience. In the process the theatre itself is made up of methodologies as revealed through the usages such as realistic, nonrealistic, avant-garde, eclectic etc., clubbed issues (ideologies or perceptions) which form the basis of methodology in theatre. For this reason, realism, surrealism, non-realism, community theatre, people's theatre and various other nomenclatures emerged in the discipline of theatre to denote a particular method and issues that a theatre adopts in the play production. After having explored all these perceptions of theatre, the basic elements that exist in all these theatrical methodologies are conceived as the grammar of theatre. The ways the various elements interact in different plains give a different tone to the play production. In the case of language though alphabets are limited, yet the way they interact create innumerable words. So also in the case of theatre, though the elements are limited, the way they are combined

produce different productions. Therefore this observation on the theatre discipline is taken as the basic methodology for the study.

The second type of methodology is drawn from the discipline of folklore. The basic method that is being followed in folklore is the field method. Since the topic of this study is the performance of Oggu Katha, the performances are observed in the field context. Interviews with performers and audiences are conducted as part of the field method in order to gain knowledge on the various aspects of the performance. Therefore both observation method and interview method are used with a perception to get how the performance is viewed and perpetuated by the community. This being the case the basic methodology in the second type is conceived as folklore methodology because it is the views of the folk and their perceptions that become the study material for this thesis. The idea is to primarily understand the performance of Oggu Katha and then to assess the theatrical values that it possesses. Since Oggu Katha is a ritual performance several field visits to different places became necessary to document the contextuality of the performances.

I.7. CHAPTERISATION

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Each chapter focuses on aforementioned issues and an in-depth analysis is attempted.

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter introduces the concept of ritual theatre, specifically the ritual theatre of the pastoral community of Andhra Pradesh. It also covers the area of study, literature survey, issues addressed, aims and objectives and methodology employed and a synoptic view of chapterisation. The main aim of this chapter is to fix a frame of reference to the study, confining the scope to the ritual performances of the community to view them from the theatrical perspective.

Chapter II: Theatre - Its grammar

This chapter is divided into Two sections. Section I deals with a conceptual frame to study theatrical grammar. The set of codes, rules and regulations of usage that a theatre possesses is discussed as the grammar of the theatre.

Section-II is on the principles of grammar in the theatre. It comprises of the interplay of the codes of text, context, actor and audience in order to enact a theatrical event. In the process of textual enactment, elements of both internal and external influence and as such form the event. The process by which the internal elements such as verbal expressions, kinetics, and cognitive senses combine themselves to make the theatrical event possible is discussed. There are different exercises in this direction and approach. (see for example Gassner 1956, Bentley 1968, Willet 1964, Kapilavatsyayan 1968, 1996, Rangacharya 1971 Shekhar 1977). The formulae of external elements

like music, sets, lighting, costumes and makeup are discussed to see how at semiotic level they act and present the theatrical event. The main focus of this chapter is to assess the importance of theatrical elements that cause the event and how different combinations of these make differential events either in mainstream or in folk theatre.

Chapter III: Oggu Katha - Its cultural milieu

Mallanna Katha is a performance based on the oral text of the caste myth of the Kurmas / Gollas performed in Oggu Katha form. Its relevance to community becomes inevitable and therefore this chapter is devoted to enumerate their lifestyles. The relevant cultural milieu, which makes possible the performance, is the focus of this chapter. The occupation of Kurumas / Gollas, their verbal genre, their material culture and other expressive traditions as revealed in the fares, festivals, rituals and rites of passages are brought forth to see their influence on the Oggu Katha performance. How the community is organised into septs and how they relate themselves to the performance of Oggu Katha is also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter IV: Oggu Katha - Its theatrical grammar

This chapter being the core of this study is divided into five sections, so as to deal in detail with each element of theatre which form the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha performance.

The first section deals with the textual elements of Oggu Katha performance. Mallanna Katha being taken as the case study of Oggu Katha performance, the structure of the text of Mallanna Katha is discussed in detail. As such the structure of Mallanna Katha is of six kandas. Each kanda has a plot structure and on the whole all kandas posit another plot structure forming the dual plot structure as the characteristic feature of the structure of Mallanna Katha text. Other structural elements such as characters and characterisation and language as sign system used by the community and within the performance are also discussed as textual features in this section.

The second section deals with another important element of theatre namely actor/performer. Since Mallanna Katha is a ritual theatrical performance the lead narrator and his associates hail from the community of minstrels, known as oggus whose professional right is to perform the caste myth as part of purification rituals. This is the crux of theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha with regard to the theatrical element of performer/actor. The actor himself is the narrator and character and shifts between these two realms. How the innate talents such as bodily skills, vocal skills and psychological skills are dynamically used to create visual, aural and aesthetic effects by the performers/actors during the performance is highlighted in this section.

The third section deals with the concept of space, which has in itself the context connotation, which is referred to one of the elements of theatre. In this section physical and social contexts of performance are discussed. During the performance how the narrator creates for himself a dual space and shifts

between the narrator's space and narrative's space as narrator and character is analysed. The nuances of the dual spatial concepts are discussed in detail.

The fourth section deals with another important theatrical element, namely, the audience. Mallanna Katha being the caste myth of the community, the people of community themselves becomes the audience. Two types of audiences are identified in the performances of Mallanna Katha in the field survey. They are external audience and the internal audience. The internal audience are those who has the quality of transformation from mere audience to devotees during the performance and contribute to the very act of performance. The external audience is generally who seek gratification by watching the form of Oggu Katha and not act as internal critics of the performance. How the dual positioning of audience in Oggu Katha performances forms the basis of the theatrical grammar and how it ensures perpetuity of the genre of Oggu Katha is discussed elaborately in this section.

The fifth section deals with the nature of theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha form. The dyadic nature of all the four units of the

NOTES

1. The Vedas are the earliest literary productions preserved in any branch of Indo-European family. The Vedic literature is distinguished by refinement and beauty of thought and the skill in the handling of language and metre. It is mostly religious in its content and form. Derived from the root 'vid' to know the word means sacred lore or that from which knowledge is got. The Vedas are four in number. Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Adharvana Veda. The Samhita, Brahmana, Aranyaka and Upanishads represent four stages of development of Vedic literature in the same order. The samhitas are collections of hymns grouped and arranged into a single book with a purpose. They contain hymns, which are composed in different period by different sages. Different sages can be noticed even in the compilation of one particular Samhita. The Rigsamhita is the oldest of the samhitas. It consists of a collection of 1028 hymns, which are composed, in praise of the ritual deities like Agni, Yama, Indra, Varuna etc. Aiyar 1995: 4-7.
2. The Yajurveda has come down to us in two branches. 1. The Krishna Yajurveda 2. Shukla Yajurveda. The former school came to be called Krishna (black) because the contents are not well **arranged and** the sacrificial formulas are intermingled, to a certain extent, with their explanations. The latter school came to be called Shukla (white) because **the** hymns are well arranged and the sacrificial formulas are not mixed up

with the explanation of the hymns. The samhitas of both branches deal with many important rituals such as the new moon and full moon sacrifices (darsha poorna masau), the soma sacrifice the construction of the fire altar and also vajapeyam, rajasuyam, ashwamedham, sarva medham and other sacrifices. The samhita of the shukla yajurveda is known as vajasaneyi samhita. It is said to have been revealed by the sun in the form a horse to Yajnavalkya, the great sage who proficiated the sun god by penance and got the shukla yajurveda from him. This samhita has two recensions-the Kanva and the Madhyandina from the historical point of view. The Satapatha Brahmana is the most important Vedic text, next to the Rigveda Samhita. Ibid.

3. According to another division based on the form, Vedas are spoken as 'thrayee'. In this classification, portions of the Vedas which are in the form of verses are called 'Ruk", those in prose are called 'yajus' and those that are set to music and sung or meant to be sung in sacrifices are called Sama. Ibid.,p.4:
4. Natyadharmi. If a play contains speech activity beings and state of the extraordinary kind and requires acting with playful flourish of limbs and possesses dance, and requires conventional enunciation and is dependent on emotionally carried persons (lit. characters) is to be known as conventional (Natya Dharmi). Lokadharmi. If a play depends on a natural behaviour (plot) professions and activities of the people and has simple acting and not playful flourish of limbs and depends on men and women of

different types, it is called realistic. (Loka Dharmi) Ghosh. Manmohan 1950, 45-46.

5. Pravriti or regional identity is recognised through costume, dialect, habit, tradition. Costume and occupation. It must be mentioned that there are innumerable variations in the factors that contribute to and establish regional identities. These in fact vary even within a particular region. However, for the sake of brevity, Bharata has classified four regional identities. They are Dakshinatyā, Aavanti, Odra-magadhi and Paanchala madhyama. Broadly speaking, the classification made by Bharata may be taken to mean the southern, western, eastern and northern regions of India, taken in order. Each of these regions consists of different tracts of land with separate identities. The classical and regional practices were referred to as Margi and Desi in treatises of music, dance and dramas which came out during and after 13th century like Sangeeta Ratnakar of Saranga Deva.
6. While the rupakas are considered to be major forms of drama (natya), the uparupakas (dance compositions) as minor forms of drama. In the latter, music and dance predominate and most of them are forms of dance-drama or regular dances (nriya prabandhas). Though vithi and bhana are said to be major types of dramas, yet seeing their nature we can even classify them among the uparupakas. (Gupta 1991: 118).
7. Sangeeta Natakas are musical plays.
8. Sangeeta nriyas are musical ballets.

CHAPTER - II
THEATRE - ITS GRAMMAR

II. THEATRE - ITS GRAMMAR

Grammar is a set of codified laws, which explains how a community uses its language. Theatre grammar explains how the enactment of a play revolves around certain codes and laws. In this chapter two sections are made to deal with the conceptual frame and the principles of grammar in order to argue for a grammar of its own to theatre.

II.1. THEATRICAL GRAMMAR - A CONCEPTUAL FRAME

Theatre in a broader sense is a virtual enactment of an event be it fictional or real. This includes a linguistic mode expressed through body language or semiotics or a verbal expression in the form of exchange of speech modes between the characters and the whole kinesis which create spectacle in order to not only draw the attention of the audience but also to communicate the message which is imbedded in the enactment. By and large this broad definition includes two levels of communication process, one through audio-visual component and the other through semiotics. The audio-visual component has a direct bearing to the enactment of particular event or episode. They are basically construed on physical properties such as actor, movement, speech delivery, song and dance etc. The semiotics and the other have an indirect bearing to the enactment. It is virtually played on mental constructions through a series of signs which are reflected either in the set, costumes, makeup, enactment, lighting and or sound effects etc. "Sign is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or

capacity (Peirce. 1931: 189). In other words the function of the sign is to produce the meaning. For Peirce (Ibid), the process of semiotics involves a triad of three entities: The sign, its object and its interpretent. The object is that which the sign stands, while the interpretent is the mental effect generated by the relationship between sign and object.

In the theatrical parlance a grammar of its own emerges as distinct feature. This grammar also has the same function of grammar in the language. In the sense that certain rules and regulations, codes and practices, as in the language bind it, the theatre grammar is also arbitrary in the relationship between signifier and the signified in the sign system. It is in the technique of creating such arbitrary nature that a style of theatre emerges. For instance in the philosophy of theatre two schools of thought emerge based on the principles of arbitration which is in the grammar of language called as the "Principle of Motivations".

In the theatrical epistemology they are called as "idealistic theatre" and "materialistic theatre". The idealistic theatre basically prioritized idea over matter. In other words, "idea i.e., the spirit" that precedes the "matter". The non-realistic theatre is the off shoot of this idealism, where in the betterment of human kind with all its virtues and ideas is the concern of this theatre. Fantasy played the major role in the play productions in idealistic theatre. In Indian context folk performances found a major chunk of this idealism. The celestial bodies in dialogue with the physical bodies negotiating the issues becomes the prime theme of this theatre. Therefore non-realistic being in the form of

zoomorphic figuring intrude into the realm of physical beings and again into the realm of divine nature. Folk theatre is full of such narratives stemming out of epic traditions such as Ramayanam, Mahabharatam and Bhagavatham.

The materialistic theatre basically revolves around the concept that the matter precedes the idea. All realistic theatre owes its existence to these principles. According to this philosophy, the depiction of human reality as it is, so as to didactically advocate the audience of their reality. In other words, human suffering and miseries be shed away but project them for what they are so that the humans (audience) would strive for betterment. Most of the western theatre especially of the 19th century which got influenced by Marxian materialistic conception of historical determinism persuade the plays to project the realities of class struggle, poverty, exploitation so on and so forth.

The idealistic theatre developed a grammar of its own based on "infinite Semiosis" i.e., the process by which signs refer endlessly only to other signs, with meaning constantly deferred in an infinite series of signs, without any direct dependence on any object or referent" (Barthes 1974: 174).

The materialistic theatre to the idealistic theatre developed its grammar on semiology (Saussure. 1966:16). This would show what constitutes sign and what laws govern them. The sign is a physical object which has a signifier either in a linguistic form or in "Onotomopia", which denote a meaning i.e., the "signified".

Therefore, the materialistic theatre relied mostly on "sign-signifier-signified" sequences. However, what is interesting and common to both the idealistic and the materialistic theatre is that their play productions enter into two fundamental types of relationship. One is paradigmatic and other is syntagmatic. The paradigmatic is basically construed on paradigms, which consist of a vertical set of units, which have in common be it similarity or contrast. The syntagmatic is a contraction of relationship through horizontal arrangement into a signifying whole. Paradigmatic operations involve choosing while syntagmatic operations involve combined.

Thus the syntagmatic and paradigmatic units when used as a theatrical grammar culminate into Scenes or Acts. The way scenic continuum is achieved is through syntagmas. Therefore the syntagmas virtually denote the interplay of acting, movements, song, music, dialogue, set properties, sets, lights etc. The ways they are structured reflect the tone of the scene in particular and the play in general.

II.2. PRINCIPLES OF GRAMMAR IN THEATRE

The principles of grammar in theatre emerge basically at two levels. One is at the level of text and context and the other at the level of performer and audience. The text and context are virtually inanimate but becomes animated through the interactions of performer and audience. The following discussion brings out intricacies of the theatrical grammar drawing insights from the experiences of the east and west theatrical practitioners. (Gassner

1956: Barba, 1968, Bentley, 1968, Schechner, 1977, 1985: McGaw, 1975, Stanilovsky 1936, Ghosh, 1950, Gupta, 1954, Sekhar, 1977, Apparao 1967, 1988 and Rallapalli, 1969).

This art of theatre, through its travel since unknown ages, developed into a complete medium of expression, involving several elements. This happened in both the western and the oriental cultures. Hence, the different genres of this art of theatre evolved where in the elements of grammar flow in, increase, multiply, accumulate and at times disappear and again reappear in a different role making it more lively, standing as symbols of the mind, thought, action of the human society. (Gassner 1951, Willet 1964, Sekhar 1977, Rangacharya 1971, Elam 1988, Murphy 1993)

The foremost treatises on the art of drama, poetics in the west and Natyasastra in India stand as the prime resources for delineating various elements in theatre.

Aristotle in his poetics gives out six elements of drama. These are: 1. Plot: 2. Character: 3. Language: 4. Thought: 5. Melody and 6. Spectacle.

The Greek theatre originating from the Dionysian rituals gradually evolved into a complete structure, involving each of the above elements. Aristotle realises these 6 elements as the basis for the theatre to achieve "catharsis"¹ (Singal 1977: 53-54) among the audiences.

As times passed other elements like music and dance entered into the area of dramatic compositions. Though both of them were integral part of the Greek tragedies, could not be reported as special devices for achieving dramatic performance. The paradox, exodus, the choral odes apparently involved music and dance as a natural flow of performance originating from the dythrambic context.

The elements of music, dance, songs apart from the set design and costumes design the audio and the scenic decor continued in the west as and when required. So also the tendency continues in India since age-old times. Theatre is from rituals, theatre is from folks, theatre is from life and theatre is from science. It manifests itself in more than one form and advances its vocabulary. In a country whose culture embraces the entire human behaviour pattern and traits, the genre of theatre also is seen into multiplication. So the genre so also the vocabulary. However, it would be a difficult exercise to bring these genres into a single framework.

A broad classification that is accepted authentically is that of Bharatha, which says that Natya / Drama is of two major divisions. Lokadharmi / Representational and Natyadharmi / Presentational.

These are explained further as "if a play contains speech, activity, beings and states of the extraordinary kind and required acting with playful flourish of limbs and possess characterization of dance, and requires

conventional enunciation and is dependent on emotionally carried persons (lit characters) it is to be known as conventional (Natyadharmi)'.

If anything used by (lit among) people appears (lit set forth) in a play (lit here) is endowed with a corporal form and speech the practice is (also) called conventional Natyadharmi.

"If a play depends on natural behaviour (in its character) and is simple and not artificial and (in its plot) professions and activities of the people and has (simple acting and) no playful flourish of limbs and depends on men and women of different types it is called realistic Lokadharmi" (Ghosh. 1950: 245-246).

In India Bharatha gave this classification an effective vocabulary for both the genres. In the west, the vocabulary grew through several conducts of political processes; several theoreticians emerged, and debated on the relationship of theatre genres and vocabulary.

In his consideration of art, Wagner sets down two broad divisions (Simon 1968: 288). "Art derived directly from man, and art as shaped by man from the gift of nature. In the first division he sets dance (or motion) tone and poetry as which man is himself the subject and agent of his own artistic treatment: in the second, architecture, sculpture, and painting in which man extends the hanging for artistic portrayal to the objects of surroundings, allied ministering nature"

Richard Wagner (1865) of Germany observes this issue of classification in identifying the vocabulary of theatre art in modern context. Commenting on the ideas of Wagner, Symon says, "Wagner points out the significant fact that from Aeschylus to Moliere, through Lope de Vega and Shakespeare, the great dramatic poet has always been himself an actor, or has written for a given company of actors. He points out how in Paris, where alone the stage has a measure of natural life: every genre has it theatre. Here then is the very foundation of the dramatic art, which is only realised by the complete interdependence of poet and actor". The poet forgetting himself as he creates his poetry in terms of living men and women, and the actor diverting himself of self in carrying out the intentions of poet (Ibid, 311).

However, the evolution of the vocabulary being the focal point it is observed that the European scholars and theoreticians approach from the point of view of the poets where as Indian theoreticians of ancient do from the point of spectators or audiences. It would be appropriate to mention Bharatha's suggestions on the vocabulary of theatre, where he places the 11 elements of Natya.

"Rasaa Bhavaa Hy abhinayaah Dhar TO| Vrithi P| avrithayah"

"Sidhihi Swarah Thathathodyam Ganam Rangasca Sangrah."²

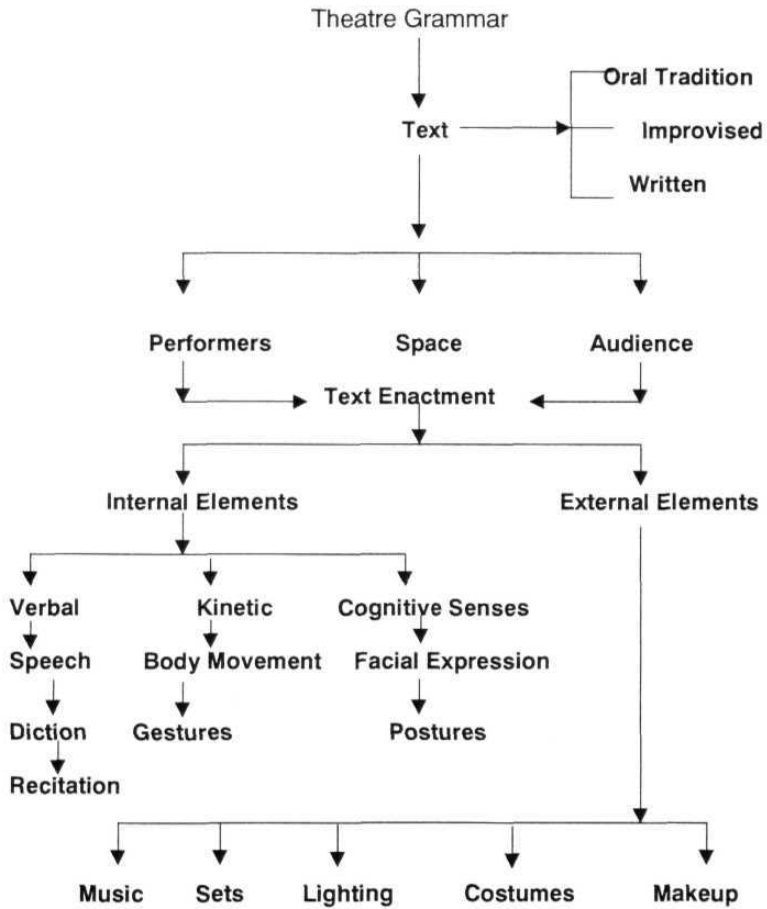
Bharata and his following commentators continue to make the presentations of Natya, as a whole of these above said elements and gave a

clear understanding of the vocabulary of Indian theatres. The theoreticians of the western theatre observed it passing through different meandering and metamorphosis in which the vocabulary of theatre changed very rapidly.

Meyerhold's Bio-mechanism, Stanislavsky's Method acting, Bertolt Brecht's innovation of theory of alienation, Gerzy Grotowsky's refusal of colour and set design and his projection of theatre through only the actor's energy, paved way to bring in and throw out different components of vocabulary but ultimately retained the mostly needed ones, the actors and the audiences. The following figure is given to evaluate the grammar of theatric.

However, a clear insight of the total theatre can be proposed with the culmination of various devices of the same for the evocation of fruitful commonness between the audience and the artists. The major activity that takes place before the audience is the enactment of the text by the actors. This textual enactment blooms on the given stage with the help of both lively and mechanical devices if needed. The inner elements that are demanded by actor for the enactment are - The oral, speech, diction, recitation and singing. The kinesis - use of space through movement, rhythmic movement, and the cognitive inputs - facial expression postures and gestures. The external elements are music, set design, lighting, costumes and make-up. These are given in figure II.1.

Figure II.1.



However, these devices are put to use depending upon the genre of theatre, the style of presentation and various contexts. As a result the devices and the performance build up a harmonious relationship, maintaining the property of the grammar of theatre, as in the words of Keir Elam " It is clear that many of the syntactic and indexical function of gestures in our theatre are founded on those prevailing in society, whereby become recognisable and thus "expressive". Individual actors and directors will of course establish personal kinetic styles or idiolects. (Olivier and Eduardo de Fillippo or Meyerhold and Grotowski for example) just as certain generic constraints will influence such factors as timing or the mode of across stage movement (eg. The rules of performing farce). But it is difficult to identify general and stable kinetic sub codes in our theatre. Perhaps the closest one can come to formulating as general "over coding" rule with respect to the basic Kinseki system is to say that in performance selected characteristic feature of social movements are heightened or exaggerated. So as to increase their very 'sociability'. As Daniel N Stern puts it, "a good actor will probably exaggerate just that part of the entire pattern that has to highest communicative value (1973 120). The subject defining, attention drawing and intention stressing functions of kinetic markers are emphasized in order to maximise their ostensive potential. Indeed, the pejorative adjective 'Theatrical' is applied to anyone (eg. an ostentatious party goer) who demands attention by excessive gesture stress (Keir Elam. 1988: 77-78).

Whatever be the genre and style of theatre it is the creative principle that operates the grammar. "The mimetic dramatisations of the actors may more effectively form the vocabulary of theatre than the grandeur settings of a Naturalist and vice-versa, for the purpose of the event is to achieve the required effect and commonness, between the performer and audience". While exemplifying Shaw's *Don Juan in Hell*, John Grassner puts it as "Meaningless finally becomes the idea of presentational" staging as the panacea for modern dramatic art. Unless the producer is prepared to make a Carnival out of every modern play, or unless the play wright has included narrator, choruses and soliloquies or other presentational element, the audience may well turn presentational production into a representational or realistic one (Gassner. 1956: 215-216).

Here the intentions of the play (or the Play Wright and other personal) form the prime sources of grammar. The other elements that creep in together in theatre orchestrate the vocabulary in tune with the text and the performers: which depends on which, is the question of operation of creative principles that establishes the grammar.

Brenda Murphy quoting Elia Kazan " A published play is often the record of a collaboration. The director's stage directions are incorporated, as are some of the contributions of others working on the show actors, business, designer's solutions and so on. The theatre is not an exclusively literary form. Although the play script is the essentially important element, after that is

finished, actors, designers, directors, technicians "write" the play together (Brenda Murphy. 1993: 362).

At this instance one can realise the transformation of text into spoken and theatrical in nature. The form of text into spoken in theatrical expression transformed invisibly invites other visual and kinetic elements. Though the genre and style establish the context, it is this harmonious blend of other elements that 'speak' and 'show'. Hence the context and the demands of the narrative i.e., a story, the images, and the word, the people and ideas, decide the grammar of theatre.

A play in its progression evolves into a complete form of theatre as a function of narrator. A narrative is performed and experienced whatever may be the content both by the audiences and the performers. The following definitions also enquire into this issue. "The key elements in Narrative are story, the abstract sequence of events, systematically related, the syntagmatic structure. Discourse is the text in which the story is manifested; the statement is a particular medium such as a novel, myth, lecture, film, conversation or whatever. Telling is the action, the action of narrating the communicating process that produces the story in discourse. No distinction is made here between telling and showing, as the same story may be counted or enacted or both" (Turner and Edward (ed.) 1986: 145).

Another important prime source of the grammar of theatre is the audience. The relation to the spatial and temporal terms of the context of

theatre drives the artistic crew to form a given language of theatre. As discussed earlier the function of the language of theatre is both showing and telling. Now at times to the demand of the context of theatre it also should speak and make the audiences speak which act of sharing makes the grammar enriched with more devices and vocabulary. Here a quotation of Brenda Murphy could be accounted. "To refine on this we should remember that plays have never been merely written but "wrought". The playwright may write every word of the published script, but the language of a play is not simply words. The language of the theatre is also form and color and movement and sound, a language that cannot be created by a playwright writing, or one artiste without the creative collaboration of others. The script merely records the stage language that results from this creative collaboration" (Brenda Murphy. 1993: 3).

When talked about the creative collaboration, it also includes audiences. Audience also becomes the prime source of the grammar of theatre. They are as important as a verb in a sentence. The theatrical grammar is incomplete without audience and their participation. Audience with their participation in terms of temporal and spatial values creates an effective vocabulary for the grammar of theatre. In some genres their participation may be as mere watching the actors performing but cannot be neglected for their involvement with the sympathetic and empathetic symptoms. Certain genres and styles of theatre invite only this kind of emotional involvement for eg. Realists and naturalists, since they demand to this extent, which brings out a commonness and only then the theatre is a success. Bharatha to this also

makes suggestions to the dramatists to allow the audience possessing certain qualifications and call them as Sahridaya audiences. "According to the "Natya Sastra" requires that the ideal spectator has been susceptibility and excellent judgement with ability to feel the emotions of characters as depicted by actors. He should be attentive, an expert in handling the four kinds of instruments, have knowledge of dresses, dialects, gestures and meters. He should be well versed in the sastras and arts and should be religious by temperament. Thus he should have been keen intelligence, capacity to examine and weigh the merits of performance and participate in the pleasures and sorrows depicted on stage" (Gupta. 1991: 97).

Stanislovsky, the Russian dramatist who was in the phase of realism was very much concerned for the audiences. As this school demands more attention and emotional involvement from two parts of the audiences to identify themselves with the character and situations performed, much care is taken, lest they would distract. All efforts were made to take care of audience's eyes and ears to focus on the actors and their environment. Eventually this kind of participation of the audiences controls the grammar and vocabulary of theatre. As a result care was taken in the set design, acting skills, usage of language, sound effects lighting effects were extensively and meticulously operated in the production. Since the purpose of realism was to give the illusion of "look like life", every device was explored and carefully presented to the satisfaction of the audiences. The involvement in the scenes and the identification with the characters went in hand with the vocabulary of the realistic theatre, by the audiences. Stanislovsky and Nemirovich

Danchencko wanted the spectator to forget that he was sitting in a theatre hall. They wanted him to participate in the actions as an eyewitness to an event and to look at it as a helpless spectator (Ramarao. 1975: 44).

Hence, the audience forms to evolve a fruitful and meaningful vocabulary for the grammar. Here this concept of involvement and remaining as helpless spectators is the demand of the genre and context of theatre. No distinction can be traced whether the audience is here for an aesthetic experience or for an efficacious achievement. In structuring the vocabulary for the theatre grammar their participation and concern on the performance and the concern shown by the performance on the audiences evolve it to the tune and demands of the context.

In both the occasions and the contexts, all genres of the theatre the audience become another primary source for effective exploration of the vocabulary. This can be further realised by considering various experiments in theatre done in this angle. Indian traditions of performance have already established the vocabulary with the audience participation and involvement.

In the west it is being evolved by way of experimenting in different genres and contexts. "Erwin Piscator (1893-1966) wanted theatre to educate the audience and bringing awareness towards the political ideology. He being the communist wanted to make the audience to learn, used some techniques like the projection of moving pictures, conveyer belts cantilever bridges, roaming motor bikes, roaring machine guns etc., including animated cartoon

scenes and slide projectors. Now this context appeared like a classroom to the audiences and was delighted" (Ibid. 44). These devices apparently became the vocabulary for the theatre, only because of the concern he had towards the audience, which successfully enhanced the vocabulary.

Bertolt Brecht was an ardent follower of Erwin Piscator, even theorized this concept and came out with the theory of alienation, which means to detach the audiences from being involved in the rousing emotional scenes of the play. The process of stage production, the lights hanging up on the actors were visible for the audiences. He wanted the audience 'to think' and not 'to involve' emotionally. To achieve this he followed the same vocabulary as his master did.

"Brecht wanted the audience not to forsake the faculty of thinking in the theatre. The action on the stage should stimulate their minds, not their feelings. They should not identify themselves with a character on the stage. They should remain outside all the characters of the play in order to be able to judge them all. Then only would they be able to judge them all. Thus only would they be able to opine, evaluate and sit in judgment over the actions of their parallels that the actors impersonated on the stage. This would enable them not to repeat mistakes committed in the past. The spectators should not only differentiate good and bad, but should also think out what is bad and why. The spectator can achieve this only as an alien to the play or production" (Ibid. 144).

Bertolt Brecht also used songs only to break the continuity of action to achieve this effect of alienation, which he adopted from Indian theatre. Apart from songs he also adopted other devices and vocabulary of Indian theatre like half-curtain, dance and other gestural patterns and suggestive settings.

Here, an attempt is made to enquire into the evolving of vocabulary for the grammar of theatre and the role of the audiences whatever may be the purpose of the content that is passed, through a context. As discussed till this, it could be realised that among the basic elements that evolve the grammar of theatre, the audiences are the prime one. A quotation is placed here in support of this inquiry into vocabulary of grammar of theatre.

"Brecht and Meyerhold before him, worked to keep alive the tensions between these extremes. They wanted to move audiences back and forth moment to moment. The way Brecht's *verfremdung* works is to unexpectedly shift, mode, style, rhythm, perspective so that at the moment and place of change, when an emotional scene is abruptly halted or hold a scene suddenly becomes moving, the dramatist, director or performer (whoever is 'authoring' the moment) can insert her or his own 'statement' an ironic or telling comment that encourages the spectator to think about what's been seen and or felt. The performance structure is broken open by its anti structure and in that liminal space a direct communication, a potentially deep contact, connects author to the audience. Of all the experiments with theatrical structures over the past century this one is most likely to stick. In it resonances of medieval theatre as well as of many folk theatres existing now" (Ramarao. 1975: 143).

A combination of actor's performance and the audience's participation makes the grammar more effective and meaningful. Some genres and styles and context of the performance merely want the participation involving the actions of the play. The entire performance transforms into humane with a communion, which suits to that particular context and genre of theatre, and which technically enriching the grammar i.e., audience voluntarily and or involuntarily becoming the performers and the performers becoming audience. Such experiments also occurred and were responsible for theorising the concepts. One such example is of Okhlopkov, a Russian director.

"Okhlopkov brought actions into the very midst of the spectators in such a way that the spectators also reacted along with the actors. At the end of the performance, the actors, applauded their audience for latter's performance! This was what Okhlopkov wanted his theatre to be 'a meeting place' where the actor and the spectator must clasp hand in fraternity" (Ibid. 159).

The responsibility of the actors and spectators is more in defining and executing the vocabulary if they are vested with the job of substituting the other sources of vocabulary, like the makeup and costumes, lighting and sound and the structure of the grammar paving the way to another kind of genre and context of theatre.

Jezzy Grotowski in his interview with Eugenio Barba says "It is no mere coincidence that our own theatre laboratory has developed from theatre rich in resources in which plastic arts, lighting and music were constantly exploited into ascetic theatre in which the actors and audiences are all that is left. The other entire visual elements i.e., plastic etc., are constructed by means of the actors body, the acoustic and musical effects by his voice. This does not mean that we look down upon literature, but that we do not find in it the creative part of the theatre even though great literary works can no doubt, have a stimulating effect on this genesis. Since our theatre consists only of actors and audience we make special demands on both parties. Even though we cannot educate the audience not systematically, at least we can educate the actor" (Barba. 1978: 31).

The spirit of the content should be meaningfully conveyed. The purpose of performance has to be achieved. The limitations and the sources have to be realised and explored to execute the vocabulary. The sources control the grammar and project the meaning and an experience is drawn. Irrespective of the context an activity of theatre releases the images and its world in a shared atmosphere. The present inquiry of the basic vocabulary of theatre derives certain questions. Grotowski in his interview with Eugenio Barba says, "Can the theatre exist without costumes and sets? Yes it can. Can it exist without music to accompany the plot? Yes, Can it exist without lighting effects? Of course. And without a text? Yes: the history of theatre confirms this. In the evolution of the theatrical art the text was one of the last elements to be added. If we place some people on a stage with a scenario

they themselves have put together and let them provide their parts as in the Commedia-del-arte, the performance will be equally good even if the words are not articulated, but simply muttered. But can the theatre exist without actors? I know of no example of this. One could mention the puppet show. Even here, however an actor is to be found behind the scenes. although of another kind. Can theatre exist without an audience? At least one spectator is needed to make it a performance. So we are left with the actor and the spectator" (Ibid. 32).

As discussed earlier an attempt is being made to identify the prime sources of theatre that create the vocabulary and the grammar. After having hitherto realised the prime sources of Text, Actor and Audiences it is the role of context / space when and where the actual theatrical event happens.

Regardless of the genre and context/space, it is the actor's responsibility to build a contact among themselves and with the audiences by the power of their acting skills for which 'a space' is inevitable. "The Space" here used in terms of its physical dimensions is the "Acting area" used by the actors and the area used by the audience. The atmosphere of the performance is shared by both the audience, and the actors both in terms of time and space i.e., the context. This sharing experience as a result brings out the transformation which is discussed already earlier i.e., the actors becoming the spectators and the spectators becoming the actors, ultimately building an atmosphere of performance - a theatrical event.

Now, the actor in relation to the space given, if vested with the responsibility of charging the contact, substituting the other elements like music, lighting, stage decor etc., the vocabulary evolves with the righteous exploration of acting skills. Actor will become everything that could have been communicated with the help of other elements of sources both by artificial and natural devices of light and sound, line, colour, mass and texture, apart from those things that could be done only through acting skills.

Here Jerzy Grotowsky's experimentation with actors could be accounted. "The actor who undertakes an act of self penetration, who reveals himself the most painful, that which is not intended for the eyes of the world - must be able to manifest the least impulse. He must be able to express through sound and movement, those impulses, which waver, on the borderline between dream and reality. In short, he must be able to construct his own psycho-analytic language of sounds and gestures in the same way that a great poet creates his own language words" (Ibid. 35).

Here one can find the transformation of the actor as a poet, as the musician, as a choreographer, as a conductor of the orchestra as a dancer and so on. In evolving vocabulary in this situation of theatre the actor appears to be as a crystal.

In the words of Janne Risum "Acting is like a crystal with many surfaces. So is our perception of acting. So are our ideas about it". Artaud wrote in 1925 "An actor is seen as if through crystals. Inspiration in stages.

One must not let in too much literature" And Decroux in 1962: "one composes by superimposing crystals of space". A performance leaves an inner movie in the memory of every spectator. In our inner movies, we may each see quite distinct sequences of physical actions, which we have especially noticed - may be some personal reason that we don't even recognise. An actor moves across the floor, turns, makes a gesture, dances, speaks, stops" (Janne Risum. 1996: 345).

The actors and the audiences with a spirit of sharing the experience of a theatrical event have to assemble "somewhere" i.e., "The space" which transforms into a performative space, apparently of a context.

The usual play houses and auditoriums with their structural component guide both the groups. There will be another kind of space where the usual performances take place outside the usual play houses for e.g., the temple yards, street corners and village squares.

There is still another category of space which is not usually meant for theatrical events, but being adopted for a theatrical event i.e., staging of plays and performances in those existing structures of buildings and landscapes. This is a broader categorization of the space in general, which controls the entire environment into the atmosphere of theatrical experience by structuring the needed vocabulary of theatre.

In all those categories the relationship between the actor and space emerges into a form sharing the images and the meanings in which process the grammar of theatre takes its structure.

The actor's role in establishing the given space in the presence of the audiences, is fulfilled only through his channelising the energy maintaining the contact with the audiences and with the content he is to convey, making a meaningful atmosphere of theatre. John Gassner talks about the role of the actor in the given space. In his words, "we may present the problem in the form of questions and answers: Does the actor need thoroughly stimulated environment in order to perform effectively? Experience in the theatre dictates an answer in negative. The good actor can imagine whatever environment is needed for his playing. He does so, in fact, whenever he rehearses without scenery. Just as he does not need a cup and saucer and hot water in order to pretend that he is drinking tea, he does not need an exactly reproduced living room in order to conduct himself as though he were in a parlor" (Gassner. 1956: 56).

The actors and the audiences do create an imaginative world in a given space and achieve an experience, suiting to the demands of the space, content and form with their own vocabulary. Here lies the relationship among the basic elements of sources that create the vocabulary for the grammar of theatre. In the words of John Gassner "The actor himself can establish environment for the spectator. A sense of place at the Globe was conveyed, at least to some degree, by the level (upper or lower) upon which the action

was performed and the illusion of place as no doubt furthered by the use of some stage properties such as seats, thrones, heraldic banners, and other hangings. But a sense of environment, in the final analysis could be convincingly conveyed only by the actor-by the way he related himself to stage areas, properties, other actors, and the audiences" (Ibid. 60).

It could be concluded that the basic function of creating vocabulary for the theatre as discussed till this point is vested on four elements or sources. They are the Text, the Actor, the Space and the Audience. The vocabulary grows, pursued and presented to the ultimate goal of an experience shared by all the participants to the demands of the genre, style, form, content and the context by space. Out of the discussion made, the prime sources that create the grammar of theatre are identified are thus:

- ❖ The actors and their acting skills.
- ❖ The Text - written or improvised or drawn by oral tradition.
- ❖ The Space - given or found suiting to the context.
- ❖ The audiences and their participation.

To surmise from the above discussion, the theatre grammar is basically constructed on four major elements with all their nuances. The combination of these units on one hand and on the other sub-units within each unit forms the grammar of theatre. Each combination produces a particular form of theatre. For instance the text predominates and prompts the performance; the drama emerges as the grammar of the theatre. All structural features of the drama

therefore dominate the performance. The actor's skills bound to follow the character and therefore tie up the actor to the text. The Shakespearean plays are the best examples for the "Drama" based plays. The audience refuses to see anything beyond drama. They always judge the actor only in relation to the playwright's expectations of the actor. In other words it is Shakespeare who predominates than the actor who portrays the character. Taking this logistics into consideration, grammar of theatre has to be seen in terms of the compositions of these units and their relational context. In the case of folk performance the hierarching of the units shuffles because of the fact of the very structure of performance which is based on a shared oral text of the performances and audiences.

This distinguished feature, make the narrative forms of the folk theatre such as Oggu Katha warrants a grammar of its own. It is the grammar of the audience and the performers, which forms the basis for the interaction of the units in the theatrical grammar. Therefore to understand that grammar, the cultural milieu of the community which owns the text and shares the enactment is essential, to be understood. Therefore in the following chapter cultural milieu of Oggu Katha is discussed.

NOTES

1. Catharsis: - Butcher refers to a passage in the Poetics, which, according to him, is the key to the meaning of catharsis in the Poetics. The relevant portion of that passage is as follows: For feelings such as pity and fear or again enthusiasm, exist very strongly in some souls, and have more or less influence over all. Some persons fall into a religious frenzy whom we see as a result of the scared melodies - restored as though they had found healing and purgation. Those who are influenced by pity or fear, and every emotional nature, must have a like experience, and others in so far as each is susceptibility to such emotions, and all are in a manner purged and their souls lightened and delighted. The result of catharsis is thus according to Aristotle himself a state of emotional health. By propounding this theory of catharsis, Aristotle has advanced a strong plea for tragedy.
2. In reply to the queries raised by sages, Bharatha stated that Natyaveda Sangraha or the essence of Natyasastra in its eleven aspects in one stanza (Chapter-IV).

"Rasaabhavaahyabhinayah Dharmi vrithi pravrittayah |
Sidhihi Swarah Thathathodyam Ganam Rangasca Sangraha" ||

They are rasa, bhava or emotion abhinaya or histrionic expression (acting, dharmi or school of acting, vrithi or mode of expression, pravritti or regional identity, sidhi of success of production, svara or musical note.

CHAPTER - III
OGGU KATHA-ITS CULTURAL
MILIEU

III. OGGU KATHA - ITS CULTURAL MILIEU

Theatre as seen in the previous chapter structured on its own grammar, is bound to survive on the inter relationship that exists between the units such as text, context / space, performer and audience. In the process of relationship among the events the meanings are conveyed. Since the meanings have to have bearing within the units, an inevitable interplay of the units takes in sharing that which is called as Traditional Knowledge. Language in general and theatrical language in particular is shared by the folk, which owns it and understands it to general consequences. Therefore to read a language it is imperative to understand who speaks it in what contexts. Unless one understands the people and their language, one may not be able to understand the different ways of communicating in different contexts. The language refers to the language system shared by a community of speakers, where as "Parole" refers to the individual speech acts made possible by the language. i.e., the concrete utterances by individual speakers in actual structures (Saussure. 1966; p. 149).

Therefore, to understand the language, it is imperative to understand the community, which speaks it. Arguing from their standpoint a theatrical grammar should essentially relate itself to the relationship between the audience and performers who share and understand the language of theatre. For this reason, to understand Oggu Katha form from a theatrical perspective it is most proper to understand the community, which owns it and perpetuates

it. Therefore, in this chapter, as cultural milieu to Oggu Katha, ethnographic details of the community of Kurumas / Gollas and their priests known as oggupujarulu who actually perform this katha (Narrative) is studied. This study is crucial because the material objects used to invoke certain signs while performing the narrative is shared by the community during various rituals, be it at familial or communal levels. Similarly the verbal expressions in the narrative of the performance are also shared by the community at various contexts. Unless one understands such background, one may not perhaps understand better the theatrical grammar that is implicit in Oggu Katha.

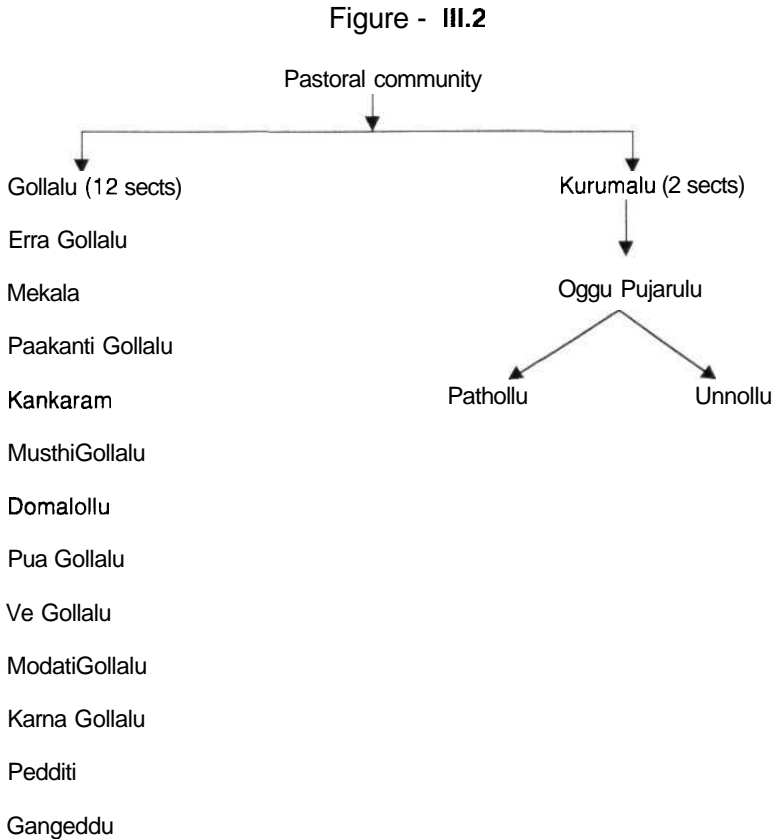
Oggu Katha, which manifests itself in different places, with different motives, in its most indigenous, untouched and pure form is found in 'Einavolu'. Einavolu or Inole and or Eileni as it is popularly known is a remote village near Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh state (plates 1 & 2). The Mallikarjuna Devasthanam of Inole is maintained by the endowment department of the State Government of Andhra Pradesh. The inscriptions found in the temple premises read that the temple was built by 'Ganapathi Deva' of Kakatiya Dynasty around 11th century A.D. and installed deity is called 'Mailaru Deva' (plate 3). Mailaru Deva is one of the many names given to Mallanna, the caste deity of the pastoral community of the Andhra Pradesh. The family of Oggu Pujaries serving this temple bear the surname of "Majjiga" which means butter milk itself hints at the origin of the community. These Oggu Pujaries at Inole perform and narrate the story of Mallanna exclusively. They belong to Kuramas sub-sect of pastoral community of Andhra Pradesh,

which makes their livelihood from cattle, and sell milk and milk products. They are also shepherds. The community popularly called as "Yadavas / Yadavulu" owe their origin to Lord Krishna. There are two major divisions amongst the community. The 'Gollas and the Kurumas'. The 'Gollas are again of as many as twelve sub-sects and Kurumas are of two divisions. "Sarlandri Balamma". who belongs to the "Golla" community and is of 75 years of age explained thus on the division of 'Gollalu', *"Maa Mandila Unnattu iga inka ewarila ledu". Memu Krishnuniki puttinnollam gada andukiinni teerluga unnamu. Krishnuniki eduguru pendralu gollala manta. Aayana pillalnnattu iga kurmolemo Mallanna biddalu. Gollalu pannedu theerlunnaru, konni perlu chepta: Erra Gollalu, PaakanatiGollalu, Mushti Gollalu, Domalollu, Pua Gollalu, Ve Gollalu, Modati Gollalu, Karna Gollalu. Kurumollalo kuda rendu theerlunnaru: Pathollu, inka, Unnollu. Allane Oggu Pujarolu, Kurmollu antam. Gollollu Mallannanu puja cheste, Kurmollaku BeerannaDevudannattu"*¹

"We in our community have different sects this is mainly because we are the descendents of Lord Krishna. Krishna had seven wives and we are his children. Children of each wife become each sub-sect. We are nearly twelve sub-sects in Gollas. I will tell you as many names as I remember: Erra Gollalu, Paakantai Gollalu, Mushti Gollalu, Domalollu, Pua Gollalu, Ve Gollalu, ModatiGollalu, Karna Gollalu. And there are two sects under the Kurmas- they are Pathollu and Unnollu. They are called as Oggu Pujaries and Kuramas. While the gollas worship 'Mallanna,' the kurmas worship 'Beeranna."

" In earlier days each sub-sect used to get their child married in their own community. We paakanti gollalu never used to give our girls in marriage to Erra Gollalu or others but now-a-days everything is possible.

Figure giving the details of various sub-sects of Pastoral community in Andhra Pradesh.



"The 'Kuruvas' popularly called as 'Kurumas' are mainly seen in the Rayalaseema and Telangana regions of the State. The Kurumas are also

called as 'Birappala Varu ' or 'Goravas' in the neighbouring state of Karnataka. There is a famous anecdote regarding the origin of Birappa and Mallanna- the caste deities of kurumas and gollas, which says that the first drop of sweat of Lord Siva became 'Birappa' and the second drop became 'Mallanna'. But the story narrated by Oggu Pujaries says that Mallanna is the son of Adireddi and Neelima Devi who was born by the grace of Lord Parameswara and the Oggu Pujaries are his descendents, that is they belong to the lineage of Mallanna and his Brahmin wife Bapana Ratnangi. Having come from the womb of a Brahmin mother gives them a status to serve the God in the temple." The Kurumas and the Gollas are devotees of Siva and worship him in different forms. The Kuruvas (also pronounced as Kuruma in Telangana) and the Gollas worship this god in his various incarnations - Birappa, Bira Lingeswara, Samba Siva, Sambhudu, Sankara Mahadeva, Rudra, Golla Mallayya, Chenchu Mallayya, Parvathala Mallanna, Srisaila Mallanna, Komarelli Mallanna, Katta Mallanna, Mailara, Maillari, Jangama, Khadelraya etc., for the pastoral community their god is Vira / Hero), with an awe inspiring personality sitting on a horse back with his consort (satisametha Sayudhasvika Virudu) (Murthy 1994;. 66 (ed.)). This extract from the article "Siva: The god of shepherds" by Murthy, M.L.K. gives a list of the various forms of Siva worshipped by the Pastoral community. 'Majjiga Chandraiah', the oldest surviving of Oggu Pujaries of Inole also gave a similar list of various places of worship of kshetras and the names, "Mallanna is also called as Mailaru Devudu. There are many Malign gudis (temples). They are Eiloni, Komarelli, Odela, Katta Mallanna, Katterasala, Jagityala, Parvatala, Yalala,

Srisailem and Egulagunta. So also there are few Oggu pujari families who attend the deity in temple. Their surnames are Majjiga, Bandari, Are, Sera, Marate. All these families are linga dharulu and narrate the Mallanna katha."². The Kurumas or Kuruvas are called as Kurubas in the neighbouring state of Karnataka. A detailed note on the Kurubas of Karnataka given by Edgar Thurston is as follows:

"The popular tradition as to origin of the caste is as follows. Originally the Kurubas were Kapus. Their ancestors were Masi Reddi and Nilamma, who lived on the Eastern Ghats by selling firewood and had six sons. Taking pity on their poverty, Siva came begging to their house in the disguise of a Jangam, and gave Nilamma some sacred ashes, while promising prosperity through the birth of another son, who was called Undala Padmanna. The family became prosperous through agriculture. But, unlike his six brothers, Undala Padmanna never went out to work in the fields. They accordingly contrived to get rid of him by asking him to set fire to some brushwood concealing a white ant hill, in the hope that snake within it would kill him. But, instead of a snake, an innumerable host of sheep appeared. Frightened at the sight of these strange black beasts, Undala Padmanna took to his heels. But Siva appeared, and told him that they were created for his livelihood, and that he should rear them, and lives by their milk. He taught him how to milk the sheep and boil the milk, and sent him to distant town, which was occupied by rakshasas, to fetch fire. There the giants were keeping in bondage with a Brahman girl, who fell in love with Undala Padmanna. They managed to

escape from the clutches of the rakshasas by arranging their beds over deep pits, which were dug for their destruction. To save her lover, the girl transformed him into a lizard. She then went with him to the place where his flock was, and Undala Padmanna married a girl of his own caste, and had male offspring by her as well as Brahman. At the marriage of these sons, a thread kankanam (bracelet) was tied to the wrist of the caste woman's offspring, and a woolen kankanam to that of the Brahman girl's sons. The sons of the former were, therefore, called Atti (cotton) kankanadavaru, and those of the latter Unni (woolen) kankanadavaru. The latter are considered inferior, as they are hybrid origin. A third sub-division is that of the Ande kurubas, named after the small vessel (ande) used in milking goats. In a note on the Kurubas of Alur, Thikka, meaning a simpleton, is given as the name of an important division. It is noted in the Mysore Census report, 1901, that the Kurubas have not taken kindly to education, and are by nature so simple that Kuruba has, in some places, become a byword for a simpleton. The Kurubas are also known as Halu Mata, or milk caste, as they believe that they were created out of milk by Revana Siddeswara. In Hindustani they are called Dhangars, or rich people. Some, inspite of their poor dress and appearance, are well-to-do. At the Madras Census, 1901, Kavadiga, Kumpani, and Rayarvamsam (Raja's clan) were returned by some members of the community. In Mysore, the Kurubas are said to be divided into Hande Kurubas and Kurubas proper, who have no intercourse with one another. The later worship Bire Devaru and are Saivites. According to another account, the Halu Kurubas of Mysore have sub-divisions according to the day of the week, on

which they offer puja to their God i.e., Aditya Varada (Sunday) Brihaspati Varada (Thursday), Soma Varada (Monday). "The Kurbas" Mr.H.A. Stuart writes," are again sub-divided into clans or gumpus, each having a headman or guru called a gaudu, who gives his name to the clan. And the clans are again sub-divided into gotras or septs, which are mostly of totemistic origin, and retain their totemistic character to this day. The Arisana gotram is particularly worthy of notice. The name means saffron (turmeric), and this was originally taboo; but, as this caused inconvenience, the korra grain has been substituted, although the old name of the sept was retained"

EXAGAMOUS SEPTS

NAME OF THE SEPT.	SYNONYM IN ENGLISH
Agni	Fire
Alige	Drum
Andara	Booth
Ane	Elephant
Arashina or Arisana	Turmeric
Arathi	Wave offering
Ari	Ebony
Ariya	Noble
Avu	Snake
Bandi	Cart
Banni	Prosopis spicigera
Basale	Basella rubra
Batlu	Cup
Beli	Feronia Elephantum
Belu	AgegleMarmelos

Bende	Hibiscusesculentus
Benise	Flint
Bevu orBevina	Melia Asadirachta
Binu	Roll of woolen thread
Bola	Bangle
Chandra	Moon
Chelu	Scorpion
Chilla	Strychnos Potatorium
Chinna or sinnata	Gold
Deva	A tree
Emme	Buffalo
Gali	Devil
Gauda	Headman
Gulimi	Pick-axe
Halu	Milk
Hatti	Hut
Honnungara	Gold ring
Lbabire	Tortise
Lrula	Darkness
Iruvu	Black ant
Jelakuppa	Fish
Jirige	Cummin
Jivala	An insect
Kalle	Bengal gram
Kanchu	Bell-metal
Kavada	Coloured border of a cloth
Kombu	Stick
Kori	Blanket
Mana	Measure
Malli	Jasmine
Menu	Pepper

Minchu	Metal toe-ring
Mise	Mostache
Mugga	Loom
Muttu	Pearl
Nali	Bamboo tube
Nayi	Dog
Othu	Goat
Putta	Ant-hill,; snake hole
Ratna	Precious s.one
Samanthi or Savanti	Chrysanthemum
Sama	Millet,Panicum Miliare
Samudra	Ocean
Sankhu	Cocunch shell
Sarige	Lace
Sury	Sun
Thuppa	Clarified butter
Turaka	Muhammadan
Ngara	Ring
Uppiri	earth-salt

*Mysore Census Report, 1901.

The titles of members of castes are gouda or heggade and the more prosperous go by the name of Kaudikiaru, a corruption of Gaudikiaru. Many, at the present day, have adopted the title Nayakkan. Some are called Gorava Vandlu" (Edgar Thurston. 1987; pp. 139-142).

The traditional singing of Kurmas and the Oggu Pujaries is seen in its continuity in many parts of Telangana, and in the district of Warangal,

Karimnagar and Ranga Reddy in particular. There is a four hundred years old temple of "Mailanna" at Amberpet in Hyderabad where the annual festivals of Mailanna are celebrated and the Oggu Katha is performed by Oggu Pujaries who follow the 'Khandoba' tradition, their dressing reflects their tradition. The Khandoba tradition is seen in Maharastra. These Oggu Pujaries probably could be the one referred as Maratis by Majjiga Chandrayya. There is also a residential area in Hyderabad where in all the Kurumas live and this place is called after the Kurumas as 'Kurmaguda'. Similarly, a remote village near Warangal which is resided by a sect of Kurmas who live on agriculture and Oggu Katha performances is also known by the same name of the performers as 'Oggonipalle'. The uniqueness of this village is that the whole village consists of forty families who live in huts built in a single street. Thus the whole village is of a single street.

The Oggu Pujaries amongst the Kurumas who serve as the temple priests has a dignity of status. Both Oggu Pujaries and the kurmolli dwell as Oggu katha performers. Though the place of their performances vary their story, narration, performance to a great extent remains the same. The distinction between two kinds of performances is explained thus by a kuruma of the Oggonipalle 'Uttareni Komarayya' "Aalla Tandrulu Allaku Gullichinru Maa tandrulu Maaku Urlichinru-Their fathers gave them temples and they do not perform outside the temples. We move from place to place, village to village and perform the Oggu Katha and during the agriculture season we are busy with the work here (showing the fields)"³.

The difference between the status of the Oggu Pujaries and other kurumas is explained in the caste legend Mallanna Katha. The Oggu Pujaries are believed to be the direct descendents of the off spring's of Mallanna and Bapana Ratgnangi. However, we can find a positional difference amongst the Oggu Pujaries. The Oggu Pujaries who perform the household rituals and the patnalu during the jatara's differentiate themselves from the Oggu Pujaries who perform the rituals at the sanctified places of kshetras like Einavolu, Komarelli, Odela, Sri Sailam, Katta etc. This issue was very clearly put forth by a Oggu Pujari of Hyderabad who works for the Caravan Malleswara Swami Gudi Munge Narayya, "we are Oggu Pujaries. All the months of the year except the ashadamasa are good for the Mallanna Pelli (marriage). We perform the rituals at the caravan Malleshwara Swami gudi in the season from Sankranti to Ugadi. We also go to houses of gollalu to fulfill their mukkulu. We draw the patnalu and perform the ritual. So also we become a part of the marriage celebrations. There will not be any marriage without our involvement. We sing the auspicious songs and narrate the Mallanna Katha, Ellamma Katha, Beerappa Katha, and Narashima Katha, suiting to the 'mukku' and occasion. We use the Oggu Dolu and the 'Talam' for this purpose. The Oggu Pujaries at big temples like Komarelli, Eiloni, Odela and Katte use Jaggu an instrument, which looks like "Damaru", and they are called as Jaggollu. They do not come to houses. They perform 'patnalu', laggalu' and other activities within their respective temples' (plate 4).⁴

The right to perform at the temple to conduct the rituals and then to perform at households and to perform for public without being connected with the rituals is strictly followed by the Kurmas and the Oggu Pujaries. . So also are the duties assigned to the Oggu Pujaries. The rites executed by the Jagollu in the kshetras can be broadly divided into two types- the first being those which are done daily and the second being those rites which are done occasionally.⁵ The rites that are executed daily are regarding the services of the temple deity. Cleaning the temple, sanctum sanctorum early in the morning before the arrival of the pujari to perform puja is regularly practiced in the Einavolu Mallanna temple. Majjiga Chandraiah, belonging to the Oggu Pujari family gave the following duties regarding their duties at the temple. "We people the Oggu Pujaries in Eileni belong to Majjiga family. Each of our families serves the temple for a period of one year. And the duty of attending the temple services is rotated to each family and is usually done by the eldest member of the family. Right now this year my nephew - my brother's son Majjiga Lakshminarasayya is serving".⁶ The details given by Majjiga Chandrayya throw light on the importance of Oggollu as priests. Though the Endowments department has employed a priest in the temple the services of Oggu Pujaries are practiced even today. And regarding their occasional duties are to perform patnaluvu during pandagalu, or to fulfill the mokkus during marriages of the God etc. Narrating Mallanna Katha is also a part of their occasional duties.

The ritual acts that are invariably the job of Oggu Pujaries are very organized. Normally the rituals conducted by these pastoral families can be classified into two:

1. Rituals at household
2. Rituals at Mallanna Temple

RITUALS AT HOUSEHOLD

These rituals are conducted by Oggu Pujaries at the houses or at temples. Munge Narayana Oggu Pujari of Hyderabad elaborated on the household rituals by Oggu Pujaries similar to the observations of Edgar Thurston, which is given hereunder:

"When a girl reaches puberty, she is kept in a corner of the house for eight days. On the ninth day she bathes, and food is taken to her by an old woman of the house. Kuruba women are invited to be present in the evening. The girl, covered with a blanket, is seated on a raised place. Those assembled throw rice over her feet, knees, shoulders, and head and into her lap. Coloured turmeric and lime water is then waved three or five times round her, and ravikes (body-cloths) are presented to her.

The following account of the marriage ceremonial was recorded in Western Bellary. When a marriage has been settled between the parents of the young people, visits are exchanged by the two families. On a fixed day,

the contracting couple sits on a blanket at the bride's house, and five women throw rice over five parts of the body as at the menstrual ceremony. Betel leaves and areca nuts are placed before them, of which the first portion is set apart for the god Birappa, the second for the Gauda, another for the house god, and so on up to the tenth. A general distribution then takes place. The ceremony, which is called sakshi vilya or witness betel-leaf, is brought to a conclusion by waving in front of the couple a brass vessel, over the mouth of which five betel leaves and a ball of ashes are placed. They then prostrate themselves before the guru. For the marriage ceremony, the services of the Guru, a Jangam or a brahman priest, are called into requisition. Early on the wedding morning, the bridal couple are anointed and washed. A space, called the irani square, is marked out by placing at the four corners a pot filled with water. Round each pot a cotton thread is wound five times. Similar thread is also tied to the milk post of the marriage pandal (booth), which is made of pipal (*ficus religiosa*) wood, within the square a pestle, painted with red and white stripes, is placed, on which the bride and bridegroom, with two young girls, seat themselves. Rice is thrown over them, and they are anointed and washed. To each a new cloth is given, in which they dress themselves, and the wrist thread (kankanam) is tied on all four. Presents are given by relations, and arathi (red water) is waved round them. The bridegroom is decorated with a bashingam (chaplet of flowers) and taken on a bull to a Hanuman's shrine along with his best man. Coconuts, camphor and betel are given to the priest as an offering to the god. According to the another account, both bride and bridegroom go to the shrine, where a matron ties on their forehead chaplets of

flowers, pearls etc. At the marriage house a dais has been erected close to the milk post, and covered with a blanket, on which a mill-stone and basket filled with cholum (andropogon sorghum) are placed. The bridegroom, standing with a foot on the stone and the bride with a foot on the basket, the gold tali, after it has been touched by five married women, is tied round the bride's neck by the officiating priest, while those assembled throw rice over the happy pair, and bless them. According to another version, a bed sheet is interposed as a screen, so that the bride and bridegroom cannot see each other. On the three following days, the newly married couple sit on the blanket, and rice is thrown over them. In Western Bellary, the bridegroom, on the third day, carries the bride on his waist to Hanuman temple, where married women throw rice over them. On the fifth morning, they are once more anointed and washed within the irani square, and, towards evening, the bride's father hands her over to her husband, saying "she was till this time a member of my sept and house. Now I hand her over to your sept and house". On the night of the sixth day, a ceremony called booma idothu (food placing) is performed. A large metal vessel (gangalam) is filled with rice, ghi (clarified butter), curds and sugar. Round this some of the relations of the bride and bridegroom sit, and finish off the food. The number of those who partake thereof must be an odd one, and they must eat the food as quickly as possible. If anything goes wrong with them, while eating or afterwards, it is regarded as an omen of impending misfortune. Some even considers it as an indication of the bad character of the bride.

Concerning the marriage ceremony of the Kurubas of North Arcot Mr. Stuart writes as follows: "As a preliminary to the marriage, the bridegroom's father observes certain marks or curls on the head of the proposed bride. Some of these are believed to forebode prosperity, and others only misery to the family, into which the girl enters. They are, therefore, very cautious in selecting only such girls as possess curls (*suli*) of good fortune. This curious custom obtaining among this primitive tribe is observed by others only in the case of the purchase of cows, bulls, and horses. One of the good curls is the *bashingam* found on the forehead; and the bad ones are the *peyanakallu* at the back of the head, and the near the right temple. But widowers seeking for wives are not generally particular in this respect. (As bad curls are supposed to cause the death of the man who is their possessor, she is, I am informed, married to a widower,) The marriage is celebrated in the bridegroom's house, and, if the bride belongs to a different village, she is escorted to that of the bridegroom, and is made to wait in a particular spot outside it, selected for the occasion. On the first day of the marriage, *purna kumbam*, a small decorated vessel containing milk or ghi, with a two anna piece and a coconut placed on the betel leaf spread over the mouth of it, is taken by the bridegroom's relations to meet the bride's party. There the distribution of *pan supari* takes place, and both parties return to the village. Meanwhile, the marriage booth is erected, and twelve twigs of *naval* (*Eugenia Jambolana*) are tied to the twelve pillars, the central or milk post, under which the bridal pair sit, being smeared with turmeric, and a yellow thread being tied thereto. At an auspicious hour of the third day, the couples are made to sit in

the booth, the bridegroom facing the east, and the bride facing west. On a blanket spread near the kumbam, 21/2 measures of rice, a tali or bottu, one coconut, betel leaf and camphor are placed. The Gaudu places a bail of vibhuti (Sacred ashes) thereon, breaks a coconut, and worships the kumbam, while camphor is burnt. The gaudu next takes the tali, blesses it, and gives it to the bridegroom, who ties it round the bride's neck. The Gaudu then, throwing rice on the heads of the pair recites a song. In which the names of various people are mentioned, and concluding Oh! Happy girl; Oh! Prosperous girl; Basava has come; remove your veil; .The girl then removes her veil and the men and women assembled throw rice on the heads of the bridal pair. The ends of their garments are then tied together, and two girls and three boys are made to eat out of the plates placed before the married couple. A feast to all their relations completes the ceremony. The Gaudu receives 21/2 measures of rice, five handfuls of nuts and betel leaf, and twelve saffrons (pieces of turmeric) as his fee. Even though the girl has attained puberty, the nuptial ceremony is not coincident with the wedding, but is celebrated a few months later". In like manner, among the Kammas, Gangimakkulu, and other classes consummation does not take place until three months after the marriage ceremony, as it is considered unlucky to have three heads of a family in a household during the first year of marriage. By the delay, the birth of a child should take place only in the second year, so that, during the first year, there will be only two heads, husband and wife, At a marriage among the Kurubas of the Madura district, a chicken is waved in front of the contracting couple, to aver the evil eye. The maternal uncle's

consent to a marriage is necessary and, at the wedding, he leads the bride to the pandal. A Kuruba may, I am informed marry two sisters, either on the death of one of them or if his first wife has no issues, or suffers from an incurable disease. Some twenty years ago, when an unmarried kuruba girl was taken to a temple, to be initiated as a Basavi (dedicated prostitute), the caste men prosecuted the father as a protest against the practice.

In the North Arcot district, according to Mr. Stuart, "the mother and child remain in a separate hut for the first ten days after delivery. On the eleventh day, all the Kuruba females of the village bring each a pot of hot water, and bathe the mother and child. Betel and nut are distributed, and all the people of the village eat in the mother's house. On the next market day, her husband, with some of his male friends, goes to a neighbouring market, and consults with a Korava or Yerukala what name is to be given to the child, and the name he mentions is then given to it". In a case, which came before the police in the Bellary district in 1907, a woman complained that her infant child had been taken away, and concealed in the house of another woman, who was pregnant. The explanation of the abduction was that there is a belief that, if a pregnant woman keeps a baby in her bed, she will have no difficulty at the time of delivery

Remarriage of widows is permitted .The ceremony is performed in a temple or dark room, and the tali is tied by a widow a women dedicated to the deity, or a Dasayya (mendicant) of their own caste. According to another

account a widow is not allowed to wear a tali, but is presented with a cloth. Hence widow married into families, in which no widow remarriage has been taken place and are treated like ordinary members of the community.

In Western Bellary I, gathered that the dead are buried, those who have been married with the face upwards, others with the face down wards. The grave is dug north and south, and the head is placed to the south. Earth is thrown into the grave by relations before it is filled in. A mound is raised over it, and three stones are set up, over the head, navel, and feet. The eldest son of the deceased places on his left shoulder a pot filled with water, in the bottom of which three small holes are made, through which the water escapes. Proceeding from the spot, beneath which the head rests, he walks round the grave and then drops the pot so that it falls on the mound, and goes home without looking back. This ceremony is a very important one with both Kurubas and Bedars. In the absence of a direct heir, he who carries the pot claims the property of the deceased, and is considered to be the inheritor thereof. For the propitiation of ancestors, cooked rice and sweetmeats, with a new turban and cloth or petticoat, according to the sex of the deceased, offered up. Ancestors, who died childless, unless they left property, do not receive homage. It is noted, in the Bellary Gazetteer, that "an unusual rite is in some cases observed after deaths, a pot of water being worshipped in the house on the eleventh day after the funeral, and taken the next morning and emptied in some lonely place. The ceremony is named the calling back of the dead, but its real significance is not clear.

Of the death ceremonies in the North arcot district, Mr. Stuart writes that "the son, or, in his absence, a near relative goes round the grave three times, carrying a pot of water, in which he makes a hole at each round. On the third round he throws down the pot, and returns home straight, without turning his face towards the direction of the grave. For three days the four carriers of the bier are not admitted into their houses, but they are fed at the cost of the deceased's heir. On the third day, cooked rice, a fowl and water are taken to the burial ground and placed near the grave, to be eaten by the spirit of the dead. The son, and all his relations, returns home, beating on their mouths. Pollution is observed for ten days, and, on the eleventh day, sheep and fowls are killed, and a grand feast is given to the Kurumbas of the village. Before the feast commences, a leaf containing food is placed in a corner of the house and worshipped. This is removed on the next morning, and placed over the roof, to be eaten by crows. If the deceased be a male, the glass bangles worn by his wife on her right arm are broken on the same day" (Thurston 1987, 143-150).

Munge Narayan, a Oggu Pujari of Hyderabad said so regarding the various rituals conducted by them. "We perform different rituals right from "Jeeva" (human) kalyanam to the 'deva' (God) kalyanam and the drawing of patnam is done only on the demand of the devotees. If at all there is a mokku only the patnam is performed. Depending on the kind of mokku on whom it is owed we draw the 'patnam', and invite the God or Goddess to accept the

offerings made by the devotees. Different items are used for different patnams. For example the moduga aku and tangedu aku powders which are a must for the Mallana's patnam. The figure drawn as patnam contains the pictures of Trisulam', Paadaalu, 'Jaggu' and 'Om'. The only difference between the patnalalu done by Oggollu coming to the houses and the Jaggollu is the use of Jaggu the Oggu Pujaries at different kshetras use jaggu while singing the various songs."⁷

Figure - III.3

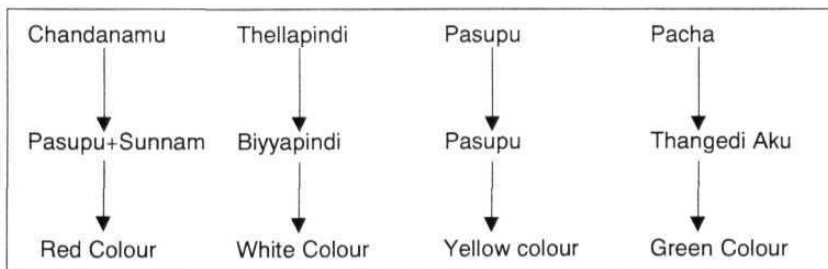
Colour Pattern in the Patnam

Chandanamu = Pasupu + Sunnam

Pasupu - Pasupu

Pacha = Thangedi Aku + Moduga Aku

Telupu = Biyyapindi

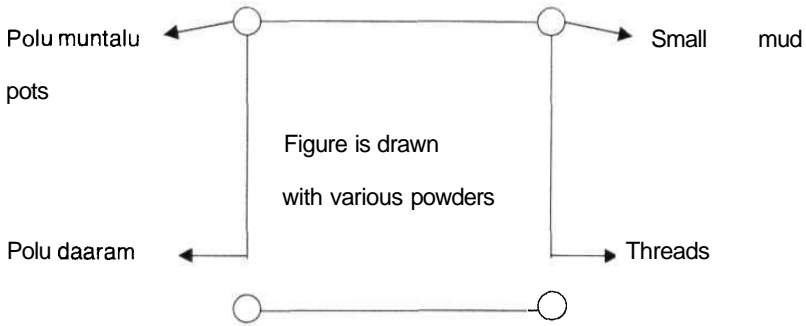


The mukkulu are of different and depend on the type of wishes and beliefs of the Golla community. Usually rituals at households are conducted on the occasions like birth, marriage and death ceremonies. The various types

of patnalulu are maila patnamu, chilukala patnamu, pedda patnamu, inti patnamu etc. The patnalulu are drawn to stand as the place of worshipping the God. A square is drawn with the following materials.

Figure - III.4

Patnam



Wooden slates are used to draw the patnalulu. These wooden slates/palakalu are known as kangollu. The four small pots used as border to the patnam are called 'Polumuntalu' and the thread running across these four pots is called as 'Polu Daaramu'. A pasupumudda or turmeric ball is placed on a tamalapaku or betel leaf and placed on the patnam drawn. This pasupumudda is treated as Gauramma. Dry broken coconut halves are most important articles for this ritual; they are called as kobbare Kudakalu.

Besides the mokkulu and patnalulu yet another occasion of great importance is that of the marriages. As said by Munge Narayana marriages or Kalyanams of both the human and the super-human are conducted by them.

The job of Oggu Pujari begins well before the day of the actual marriage and ends exactly after a week days after the marriage. The marriage described here was conducted by Munge Narayana and his son Munge Pochayya and the details given here are by Sarlandri Balamma (75 yrs) the grand mother of the bride 'Sunita' brides father S. Yadayya yadav's mother and Bola Boyini Lakshamma bride's grand mother Yashodamma bride's mother.⁸ The Oggu Pujaries come home three days before the marriage in the evening when the girl is made 'pelli kuturu'. It is to their drum beat that all the proceedings such as giving the new saree, flowers, bangles etc., to the bride and then dressing of the bride is made. Then they again come on the night before the marriage to perform 'maila polu'. Actually the maila polu is performed by the mangali (barber) he draws a square like figure with jonnalu (jawar) of about 5 kgs and make the girl sit on it. This is called maila polu. While this act is being done the Oggu Pujari should play the Oggu dolu. He heads the pendli melam to the marriage place (function hall). Though we employ the music band it is only a mere ornamentation. It is the Oggu Dolu, which is important for us. At the marriage the Oggu pujari prepares the mutyala polu. Mutyala polu is prepared with rice grains, polu muntalu and polu daram. Beating of Oggu Dolu continues while the dias / Mutyala Polu is prepared. The bride and groom are made to sit on the dias. Though the Bapana Pujari conducts the actual marriage- tying the 'puste' and Talavalu (Talambralu) it is the Oggu Pujari who stands before and after the puste kattadam. After the puste is tied, the Oggollu conduct the Nagavelli. First they sing a song in praise of lord Surya. They make the newly wedded to bow to Suryadeva. It is called surya

namaskaram. Then they make the bride and bridegroom talk to each other for the first time where in they involve the bridegroom's sister as well. They sing songs on Mallanna Pelli like.

"Komarelli Mallanna Pelli Illa inta nedu Golla Ketamma Pendli ill inta nedu". Then they also sing some Jola patalu, mangala aratulu and the like. The Oggu Pujari also announces the details of the 'katnalu' given to the bride and the bridegroom. Their presence is a must both in the 'pedda indulu (vindulu) given by the groom's family and the chinna indulu given by the bride's family. The playing of Oggu Dolu is a must in both these parties. Then they come again on the eighth day of the marriage exactly on the same day after a week days of the marriage and perform gadapa kadagatam (washing the threshold of the house). , Draw the muggu, perform puja and apply 'bandari to all the family members and go after taking their katnam" (plate 5). The role of bapana pujari is dominated by the Oggu pujari in the marriages of the Gollas. Though the ritual practices of Oggu Pujari on other occasions such as birth, bonalu, etc., have got minimized, their significance in marriages still continues.

Other two occasions of the ritual performance of the Oggu Pujari are palu pattu and bonalu. During the palu pattu milk is poured in a bronze vessel and then some songs on Mallanna or Birappa are sung and then the Oggu Pujari drinks the milk. During the Bonalu festival falling in the month of Ashada the pastoral communities perform Bonalu of two kinds i.e. Mallanna Bonalu

and Birappa Bonalu. Bonam means food offered to God. A new pot is filled with cooked food and decorated from outside with turmeric powder, kumkum powder and rice powder. The women of the community wear new or silk sarees, adorn themselves with ornaments, apply turmeric powder to the face and feet, and put a big bottu with red kumkum. They place the Bonam on the head and go to the temple. All the members of the family together accompany them. They are lead by the Oggu Pujari who accompany them by playing the Oggu Dolu. Bonam is also offered as per the wish of the devotees, besides from the ashada masam.

Besides all these household rituals, the annual festival which is celebrated at a grand scale is the Mallanna panduga. Mallanna panduga begins at various kshetras such as Einavolu, Komarelli, Sri Sailam, Odela etc., begins from kartika Amavasya, or 'Satti Amassa'. The Sunday, which comes after this amasa, is called dandi varam or the big week. The devotees take up the deeksha of Mallanna and start their prayers. They fast on every Sunday and Wednesday. They do not eat non-vegetarian food on these days. The devotees who have the mokku go to the temples and ask the Oggu Pujari to perform the patnam. The 'Pedda patnam' is performed on the day of 'Siva ratri'. The Oggu Pujaries who has the right to perform this at that particular temple together draws the patnam. To perform these patnams they go to 'putta' (Anthill) and get the red soil of pit. This soil is called as putta bangaram. They prepare a small stage with the putta bangaram and draw the patnam on it. They ask the devotees to get the Mallanna Bonam and make aaragimpu

(offering of food) to the God. They recite the Mallanna Katha or Birappa through out the night of the Sunday. The Oggu Pujaries invoke the Gods to stay in the patnam, they also invite the Gods on the request of the devotees. If the devotees wish for the invocation of Ellamma, the Pujari invites Ellamma on the patnam. Thus the different patnams are seen on the name of each God or Goddess. The Einavolu or Eileni Mallikarjuna Swamy Devasthanam also comes to life during the time of Mallanna Panduga celebrated from Sankranti to Ugadi.

Though the changing times have decreased the number of occasions for performance of Oggu Pujari and Oggu rituals, the significance of Oggu Pujari in the society during the marriages and Mallanna Pandugalu remains the same. So also the performance of Oggu Katha. The Oggu Katha performance, which was recorded minutely for this study, was done by the Oggu Pujari of Mallikarjuna Swami Devasthanam at Einavolu. The Oggu Pujari performed the patnam as a mokku for a family of non-Gollas from Warangal and performed the Mallanna Katha on the same night.⁹. The participants of this performance were (plates 6,7)

Majjiga Lakshmi Narsayya - Pradhana Kathakudu

Majjiga Bhumayya - Vantakudu

Majjiga Sayilu - Oggu Dolu

Majjiga Mallayya - Talam

Are Mondayya - Talam

As observed earlier both, the Kurmollu and Oggollu perform Oggu Katha. While the Oggollu perform in temples and as part of the rituals, the kurmollu perform it for public and on the demand of the public. Whether the performance is by the Oggulu or the Kurmollu the performance inevitably takes the name of Oggu Katha. This is because the name of the performance is taken from the percussion instrument used by the performers that is the Oggu Dolu (plate 8), hence the name of the art form is 'Oggu Katha'. The Oggu Dolu is a significant part of both the rituals at the household and at the temples. It remains as an identification mark of both the performers and the performance and also for the community.

The performance doubled with a ritual base and religious background slightly varies from that of the secular performance. However, the dramatic input in the narration of the text, and enactment is found intact. The various theatrical elements involved in the performance of Oggu Katha are brought out in the following chapter.

NOTES

1. Interview with Sarlandiri Bamma 75 years of age, a Yadava lady, May 1998, Hyderabad.
2. Interview with Majjiga Chandraiah (80 years), at Inole, October 1995.
3. Interview with Uttareni Komarayya, at Oggripalle village near Warangal, October 1995.
4. Interview with Munge Narayana at Hyderabad, May 1998.
5. A similar practice was seen in the classical dance tradition of Odissi. The practice of performing inside the temple and outside the temple was strictly followed by the Maharis or Devadasis of the temple dancers of Puri Jagannadha Swami Temple. The dancers who perform in the temple were called Bither Gauni and those who perform outside the temple are called Bahar Gauni. They never exchanged their places of performances.
6. Interview with Majjiga Chandrayya at Einavole, October 1995.
7. Interview with Munge Narayana at Hyderabad, May 1998.
8. Interview with Sarlandiri Bamma and Bola Boyini Lakshamma and Yashodamma at Hyderabad, May 1998.
9. The ritual of Patnalu was performed in the guesthouse adjacent to the temple. The family and the relatives numbering nearly 50 have come from Warangal to fulfill their Mokkulu. Majjiga Laxminarsayya

who officiated the ritual was playing the Jaggu, a percussion instrument. As part of the sacred singing, he was mentioning the names of the head of the family who was fulfilling the mokku and glorifying their lineage.

CHAPTER - IV
OGGU KATHA - ITS THEATRICAL
GRAMMAR

IV. 1. Introduction

Oggu Katha as mentioned in the previous chapter is a cultural text of the community, which performs it. It is a cultural text because; it refers to the cultural level of the community with its entire ethos and ideas. Culturally the community of the performers known as 'Oggus' perform Oggu Katha to their patron audience known as Kurumas/Gollas.

As mentioned already Oggus are bards for Kurumas/Gollas and infact perform priestly roles. Oggu Katha is one such priestly role, which is performed to the community to trace out their origins to god. Their profession being pastoralism the performance of Oggu Katha unfolds itself in congruity with their cultural melieu. Therefore the theatrical grammar necessarily has cultural practices as one set of units and on the other the expressive behavioural patterns as the other set of units.

These two sets broadly indicate on one hand the text and its features (speech genres) and on the other the context and its features (performer/audience interactions). In both the cases the narrator remains centric to the narration and shifts his position between actor and character. In the following discussion certain unique features of theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha is given keeping in view of the textual and contextual features as paradigm

which make the form unique. In order to bring out the nuances of different units of the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha, this chapter is divided into 5 sections.

The first section deals with the text and its dimensions, the second deals with the narrator and his role of performer, the third section elaborates the concept of space and the context in which the space of performance is used, the fourth section discusses the audiences and their varied roles, the fifth section in general discusses the significant features of the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha.

A critical analysis of the Oggu Katha performance is essential to identify the various theatrical elements involved in the performance. An Oggu Katha performer (Majjiga Lakshmi Narasayya and his troupe) with unchanged flavour and full of indigenous tint enabled this study to analyse the formulations of a concrete indigenous theatrical grammar developed by this particular Oggu Katha performer and his troupe. As discussed earlier, it is realised to locate the four basic components that make the structure for the grammar of theatre as text, actors, space, (context) and audience.

Now an attempt is being made to analyse the four structural components of theatre that evolve the grammar of Oggu Katha form. This present analysis is based on the caste myth of a pastoral

community in Andhra Pradesh narrated at Inole by Oggu pujaries of Mallanna temple. The troupe led by Majjiga Lakshmi Narasaiah. The caste myth "Mallanna katha" was narrated by Majjiga Lakshmi Narasaiah and his troupe which is drawn from oral tradition. An Oggu Katha performer strictly adheres to the traditions of narrating the story without distracting from the main theme and structure of plot. But as a part of its practice and performance certain inclusions do occur, by the innovative skills of the performers. The inclusions comment on the contemporary situations of their lives. For a comic relief they knit improvised texts; which are called as "Chithra Kathalu"¹. It is quite interesting to note the demand from the audience for these Chithra Kathalu which do not form part of the actual story (myth), and the Oggu Katha performer obliges to this and performs, adds as many as Chithra Kathalu as long as the time permits and these are very well articulated by him, irrespective of the character he is playing i.e., as the narrator, though he plays at one instance Mallanna's role, speaks in their day to day language with English and Urdu words and other than their occupational terminology. The audience do not get confused or distracted from such scenes and languages and feel relished well. This is one of the unique features of the textual relationship between the performers and audiences. Now an attempt is made to further analyse the features and structure of the text of Mallanna Katha.

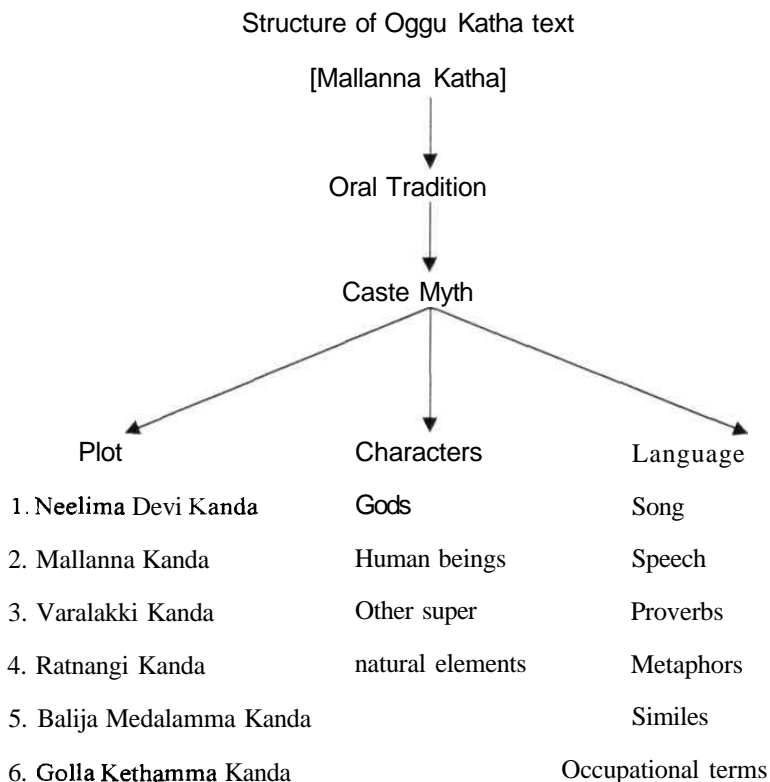
IV.2.. Oggu Katha - And the Text

Drawn by Oral tradition the original story, characters, plot and events are well memorised by the Oggu Katha performer. It is not a written text and is passed down by one generation to the next and the story of this myth and the structure of plot remain unchanged. (Kapilavastyayan 1996: 78). Hence the text of the narration appears to be well prepared and passed on through Oral tradition from one generation to the next. It is a caste myth called Mallanna Katha or Mallanna Puranam. Now an attempt is made to trace out the features of dramatic compositions; the structure of plot, characters and language in the textual analysis.

The story being analyzed here is as narrated by Oggu Katha pujaries at Inole which was documented for this study, in which Mallanna marrying four girls of different castes is narrated; Bapana Ratnangi, Padmala Devi (Vaddera)) Baleja Medelamma and Golla Kethamma. Usual popular version is that Mallanna married five brides. The fifth one is a Vysya or Komati girl Jyomanthaka Mani. This episode was not narrated by the narrators of this present study and confined it only to four marriages conferred it to the Mailaradevudu Mallanna of Einavolu (Inole)

Figure - IV.5

The structure of the text of Mallanna Katha



IV.2.1. Mallanna Katha - Its plot structure

The plot is divided into six acts. Each act here is called as Kanda. This narrative which is episodic, also bears the elements of dramatic composition as found in a formal drama. Each episode or

act or Kanda bears the components of a beginning, a middle and an ending, where in involves the other components of dramatic compositions like, initial action growth of action, crisis, falling of action and conclusion Each Kanda bears a structure of formal drama, but is hidden within the technique of the narrative form. The myth has Mallanna in the lead role, unfolds the different episodes right from his birth to he marrying four girls running through different incidents in a structure. Now a brief story line running through 6 Kandas is as follows.

1. *Neelima Devi Kanda*

The first Kanda "Neelima Devi Kanda" reveals about the life and rich background of Neelima Devi who is childless, her Oath to Lord Shiva that she would respect Jangamayya Devaras, and would not insult him, when she was blessed with boon, she giving birth for six children and then violating her Oath given to Lord Shiva by insulting him who is in the disguise of Jangamayya Devara who in turn curses her to lose everything and then the consecutive sufferings and finally realises her mistake and then again is saved by Lord Shiva.

2. *Mallanna Kanda*

The second act reveals the birth of Mallanna by the grace and gift offered by Lord Shiva (believed to be the incarnation of Lord Shiva) and his cousin Sanganna. Mallanna proclaims that he would reconstruct Kolhapuripatnam and he fulfills it. Then Mallanna helps his parents to marry of his brothers with their uncle's daughters. Mallanna's parents looking for a right alliance for Mallanna to marry, and Mallanna fulfilling the demands and conditions of his in-laws and ends with Mallanna marrying Bhamidikalla Padmala Devi (Patti Kankanam).

3. *Varalakki Kanda*

This "Kanda" reveals, the sufferings faced by Mallanna caused by his eldest sister-in-law, who out of jealousy accuses him of seducing her. Mallanna finally proves his honesty leaves behind the kacheri to his brothers and he is driven to the forest and asked to cultivate the fields there.

4. *Ratnangi Kanda*

This Kanda reveals the suffering of Mallanna's lonely life, his love affair with Bapana Ratnangi who is under safe custody of a demon and then Mallanna killing the demon and marries Bapana

Ratnangi with unni kankanam, on the conditions put forth by the demon.

5. *Baliya Medalamma Kanda*

This fifth Kanda reveals Mallanna's encounter with the arrogant Baliya Medalamma, in the disguise of a leprosy patient, insulted by her, goes back with a challenge of marrying her bringing another co-wife, comes out of the disguise while going back, which is seen by Medalamma and she repents for the things happened.

6. *Golla Kethamma Kanda*

The sixth Kanda reveals, Mallanna's trails to find out another girl, only to teach a lesson to Medalamma on the advice of Ellavva, finds Golla Kethamma marries her and returns back to Medala Devi when the later repents and he descending at Srisailam as Guru Malayya Devudu.

The sequential order in each Kanda is as follows for further understanding the structure of this myth and the dramatis personae appearing in different incidents. Each Kanda has a beginning, a middle and an ending. A super objective in each Kanda, through a series of events is realised. All the incidents in a sequential order are structured maintaining the dramatic features like loosing and gaining, revelations and realisations.

The sequential arrangements of the episodes bear the features of a well-made play with the five phases of **action**.

- i. Initial action
- ii. Growth of action
- iii. Crisis
- iv. Falling of action
- v. Conclusion.

In each of these Kandas the super objective is common that good wins over bad and that also only by the grace of Lord Shiva's incarnation, Mallanna. The narrator tries to make a point that good prevails over the evil.

1. **Neelima Devi kanda**

i. *Initial action*

In this Kanda, the initial action occurs, when Neelima Devi is in depression for not having children.

ii. *Growth of action*

In the next phase the growth of action is met when she encounters Lord Shiva who is in the disguise of Jangama Devara, who also refuses to accept bhiksha offered by her, since she is childless. Pleased by her prayers, Lord Shiva offers her fruit and consequently she becomes the mother of six male children.

ii. *Crisis*

The crisis is met when she forgets the Oath given to Lord Shiva and also passes a rigid rule of not allowing any beggars in to her town. Lord Shiva in the disguise of Jangama Devara is also insulted and beaten blue and black and is thrown out of the town. Lord Shiva grows angry and curses the lady Neelima Devi. She loses all her rich properties and the city Kolhapuri Patnam is burnt into ashes. This forms the part of crisis the third phase of dramatic progression of the myth.

iv. *Falling of action*

The falling of action in the dramatic progression is met, when the lady Neelima Devi and her children, trying to settle down become nomadic being lost all of her wealth and the dramatic condition is very well established.

vi. *Conclusion*

The final and fifth phase of action, the conclusion is met when Lord Shiva who appears before her, and he saying the morals that repentance is the best punishment and then offering another fruit, who would be the incarnation of himself.

2. Mallanna Kanda

i. *Initial action*

Mallanna's six brothers are engaged to marry their uncles' daughters and Mallanna rejecting to marry the daughter of his seventh uncle.

///. *Growth of action*

Adi Reddy's trials to find a right alliance for Mallanna and on the advice of Lord Shiva find Padmala Devi.

iii *Crisis*

Adireddy meets the parents of Padmala Devi and returns back depressed and expresses his disability to meet the conditions and demands placed by the bride's parents. This phase of drama is completed with Mallanna taking the Oath of meeting their challenge.

iv. *Falling of action*

Mallanna approaching his uncles' place along with Sanganna for getting financial assistance and is rejected.

v. *Conclusion*

Mallanna in the disguise of a Bandit loots the money and wealth, meets the conditions and demands placed by the brides' parents and marries Bhamidikalla Padmala Devi.

3. **Varalakki Kanda**

i. Initial action

Mallanna is now in Kacheri, he is looking after the administration and the welfare of his village people while his brothers are engaged in agricultural activities.

Jealous of his status as the head in the Kacheri, Mallanna's eldest sister-in-law wants to blame Mallanna accusing him by creating a tricky conspiracy, wants to send him to look after the fields, so that her husband alongwith his younger brothers could stay back in the Kacheri and rule.

ii. Growth of the action

Varalakki Devi plays a crooked strategy and makes her husband and his younger brothers believe that Mallanna tried to lure her and shows the pearled cloth Mallanna used to wear on his shoulders as proof.

iii. Crisis

Mallanna escapes from the scene to avoid a fight with his brothers and with the help of Sanganna, hides in the "Odlamanutree" The brothers grow more angry and turn all the fields, paddy godowns yellow grass bundles into ashes only to trace out Mallanna but in vain Now they torture even their mother to know

the place, where Mallanna is hidden. Mallanna comes back to the rescue of his mother; Mallanna politely accepts the resolutions and leaves for forest to attend the agricultural activities leaving behind the Kacheri to his brothers.

iv. Falling of action

The wives of Mallanna's six brothers visit Kacheri to feel pride seeing their husbands in power in the kacheri but are disappointed when they see them beaten up by the messengers sent by their respective parents, asking to repay the amount taken by Mallanna for his marriage. The messengers beat them up when the brothers burn out the letter brought by the messengers.

v. Conclusion

Mallanna comes to their rescue all of his six brothers and their wives pray Mallanna to pardon them and ask him to take over the Kacheri. Mallanna refuses to their proposal and asks them to lead their life separately by taking their share from the wealth and goes back for agricultural work.

4. Ratnangi Kan da

i. Initial action

Mallanna is alone with Bodanna, (in other version is also called as Ontikali Boyanna) taking care of the sheep offered by Lord

Shiva. In the process he needs some fire and goes to a place where he encounters with Ratnangi.

ii. Growth of action

Ratnangi and Mallanna fall in love and decide to marry.

iii. Crisis

Mallanna in the disguise of a golden lizard knows the secret of the life of the demon that brought up Ratnangi and decides to kill the demon to marry Ratnangi.

iv. Falling of action

Mallanna goes to Akkamma Kota, destroys the pillar where the life of the demon is placed and the demon faints - Mallanna asks the demon that he would marry Ratnangi.

v. Conclusion

The demon accepts his proposal but on the condition that he should wear "Unni Kankanam" (Woolen bracelet) made out of wool from the wheel made out of his bones and nerves. Mallanna agrees to these conditions and marries Ratnangi in Kolhapuripattanam. The Gods great the couple

5. *Baliya Medalamma Kanda*

i. Initial action

Mallanna, in the incarnation of Lord Shiva is living with his two wives Bhamidikalla Padmala Devi and Bapana Ratnangi - Now it is the turn of Lord Shiva who out of his affection towards Mallanna as his son wants to marry him off with Baliya Medalamma who is the daughter of Kanchi Varadaraju, his ardent devotee- In disguise of a Jangama Devara, Lord Shiva approaches him and proposes to marry of his daughter Medalamma to his son, Mallanna- The Baliya lingalu insult Lord Shiva. Knowing this incident Mallanna takes the Oath and is on his mission to marry Medalamma and tries to meet her in the disguise of a snake charmer and returns in vain.

ii. Growth of action

Now he comes again in the disguise of a "Puvvaku Vendor" i.e; tobacco leaves vendor, with an ugly face and as a leprosy patient and in the name of Koti Marrisetti. Finding the brothers of Medalamma greedy who offer the mud of the houses in exchange of his tobacco, Mallanna offers the tobacco. The greedy brothers want to acquire the wealth of the sheep Mallanna possessed by playing a tricky gambling Mallanna takes them to the forest and wins in the bet and only gets invalid coins- Mallanna again bits in the gambling with the same invalid coins and in exchange demands to marry their sister Medalamma.

iv. Crisis

Brothers of Medalamma agree to this but on one condition that he should bring the Bandari (the hard turmeric or roots of turmeric) i.e., "Pasupu Kommulu" which are in the possession of Haseen and Hussain in Macca Majjid and Mallanna moves forward to get them.

iv. Falling of action

Mallanna wins over the duo and escapes in disguise of a black dog though chased by the duo till the banks of the river Ganges² Goddess Ganga loses her right hand when she confronts with the Duo and Mallanna posts a stick as a symbol of her hand and resolves to observe a ritual every year in the memory of the goddess Ganga river.

v. Conclusion

Mallanna, approaches Medalamma in the disguise of tobacco vendor again and tells her that if she marries him and touches him with her hairs his ailment would wither away - she insults him and in turn scolds him, saying if that is the case she would feed him with ambali from the seventh storey of the building she is living in.

6. **Golla Kethamma Kanda**

i. Initial action

Mallanna decides and proclaims to bring another co-wife only to teach a lesson to Medalamma and leaves in his original form. Relieved from the disguise, Medalamma repents for seeing Mallanna in his original form.

ii. Growth of action

Renuka Devi, also named as Ellavva appears before Mallanna in the disguise of "Yerukala sani". After listening him, advises him to go to Repallevada where he goes.

iii. Crisis

The shepherds request Mallanna to marry Golla Kethamma. He does so and returns to silver hills.

iv. Falling of action

Kethamma feeds him with Ambali churned out by the golden churner with silver rope.

v Conclusion

Medalamma repents for her arrogant behaviour with Mallanna. Mallanna marries Medalamma and Kethamma and descends as guru Mallayya at Srisailem.

An analysis of the different phases of dramatic progression of the story reveals that the myth has all the features of a continuous progression of the story with casual relationship in between the incidents, which has potentials to be presented as a popular melodrama to the modern audience. From the above description of the structure of the plot, it emerges that the Mallanna Katha is in a dual plot structure play. One, the basic plot which runs the entire Mallanna story from beginning to the end; the second subplots are found in each kanda having a plot structure by itself. The following diagram reveals the existence of the dual plot structure in Mallanna Katha.

In the above diagram on 'Y' axis plot structure as it emerges in the narration is given and on the 'X' axis the kandas in the narration are taken to show how the plot curve emerges in these kandas as sub-plots and how the whole of forms the basic plot curve. Altogether as narrated above these 6 sub-plots in Mallanna katha and all of them have the 5 elements in the structure i.e. exposition, raising, crisis, climax and conclusion.

Unlike in the main stream dramas where the plot structure starts somewhere above the 'O' point of the axis and progresses steeply and falls steadily to a bit, then takes a horizontal curve and stops as shown in the following diagram.

Figure - IV.6

The plot structure of Mallanna Katha

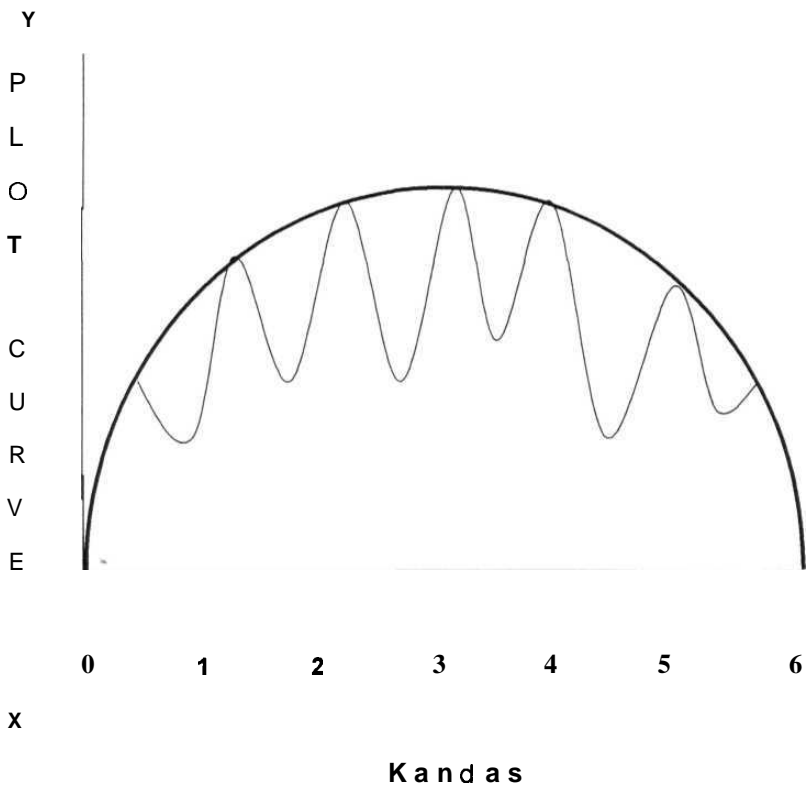
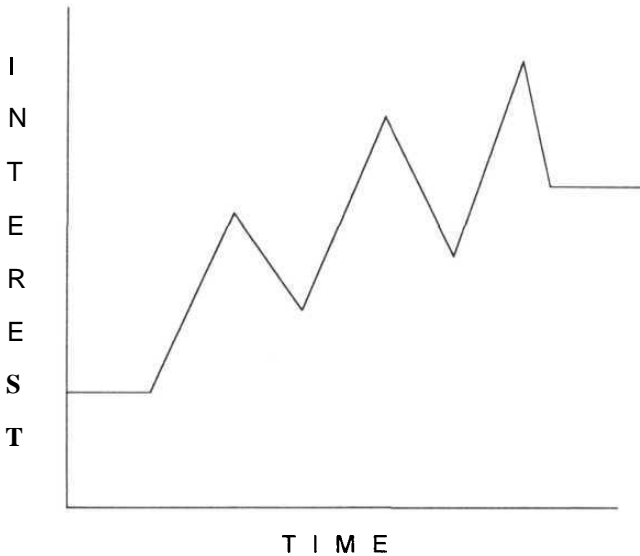


Figure - IV.7

The plot structure of main stream drama



The above diagram based on the western main stream plays is drawn basically taking in view of the interest of the audience and the time of the progression of the play. The whole idea of doing exercise of this kind by the theatre scholars is to draw interest curve so as to make the playwrights aware of the audience responses even before it is played. In other words how a model written drama should evolve is the concern of the theatre scholars who studied the plot structure. Therefore the plots of the western main stream plays started with a minimal expositions then take progression with

certain interesting terms based on the moves of the protagonist and antagonist or vice versa, and reaches a climax where one of them will win (usually the protagonist) and the following of actions take place and then end up with horizontal line always with a higher plain than the exposition horizontal line. (Exception being of those dramas where victim hero is projected as the theme of the drama).

This in a way is meaningfully shown in a standard plot structure owing to the fact that the playwright should possess an objective to take his audience along with him to a higher plain and leave them there so as to make them participants of the theatrical plain. Similarly the Indian Classical playwrights also viewed the play into 5 basic units i.e., Mukha sandhi, Pratimukha sandhi, Garbha sandhi, Avimarsha sandhi and Nirvahana Sandhi³ (Kapilavatsyayan, 1996: 78). These junctions are viewed as the different phases of growth of action of play internally inherent.

Both the Western and the Indian classical theatre has such 5 elements as mentioned above because they are all written dramas for exposing differential themes and contexts. Since they are written dramas a plot structure is mentioned above is conceived as the model to be followed by any play Wright as well as the persons involved in the production.

However, the above plot structure is not viable to a myth or an epic when played as a theatrical piece. The very fact that the myth

and the epic belong to folk genre, a belief system is innately knitted in the narrative and the same comes to life giving the performance in the form of a ritual.

Therefore, the modern anthropologists and folklorists designated them as ritual theatre. Fundamentally the folk narratives (myth and epic) are not written dramas but oral narratives. They come to life only when they are performed and only in the performances the theatrical qualities can be articulated. For this reason the above diagram of Mallanna Katha is shown in the plot structural phenomenon.

As shown in the diagram one can find two plot structures in the Mallanna Katha. The thick line drawn from the point of '0' to X-axis reveals the basic plot structure. There is a blending of the whole narrative in a concave mode suggesting that the narrative has several sub-plots known as kandas, which touch the concave line of the basic plot at each point, and falls. If one can draw the culminating point of each "Kanda" then one can understand that the plot structure progresses in a sober manner.

The basic underlying formula which worked at the culminated points of each kanda is that, the protagonist who always makes the moves and the antagonist (in this case usually the caste community and or bride) only responses to the moves of the protagonist.

This being the case the real antagonist in the form of a villain does not exist in the narrative. This characteristic feature of Mallanna Katha makes the plot curve a concave one.

Another interesting distinguished feature of Mallanna Katha is that it cannot be viewed from a interest vis-a-vis time curve manner, which is applicable only to written dramas but can be viewed only from a plot vis-a-vis kanda curve manner. This is because as mentioned already, Mallanna Katha is a caste myth, which is believed to be the truth of the existence of the community. It is because of Mallanna that the community attains respect and status in the social hierarchy. In other words it represents the worldview of the community which is shared both by the performers and the audience through a made belief system enacted through performance in varied ritual contexts.

To measure the interest of the community in terms of performance is absolute. Similarly the time scale of the performance does not work in the context of Mallanna Katha performance. It is the belief and the world view of the community that act as the driving force of the performance and therefore the audience and the performers are willing to interact in a theatrical situation hours and days together with intermittent intervals. It is believed that to watch Mallanna Katha performance as good as watching their god and interacting with him (which is literally followed through sessions of

ritual possession) which eventually bestows blessings on the community.

This intermixture of physical and metaphysical realms during the performance makes both the audience and the performers share universally the narrative and experience their ancestral god through the performance.

Yet another point to note in the above diagram is that each sub plot (kanda) has the general plot paradigm consisting of 5 units as discussed earlier. Since sub-plots are independent in a way and have potential within the construct a continuum, is achieved by the performers depending on the context present the performance into individual episode i.e., each kanda being as an episode by itself.

Paradigmatically each kanda is a unit by itself based on an event known as marriage. When these marriages that exist in each kanda if syntagmatically presented gives the larger picture of the Mallanna Katha. This feature is note worthy because it founds the crux of the grammar of Mallanna Katha. The audience and the performers can digest a paradigm (marriage) that exists in the paradigmatic structures of the Katha in isolation or when syntagmatically presented they still can understand the larger logistics of the protagonist emerging as god. At the paradigmatic structure level Mallanna appears as hero and at the syntagmatical level he appears as god.

It is because of the theatrical grammar of Mallanna Katha, such plot structure emerges which in an overall makes the performance an unique form by itself to which the community can cling to as their own.

After having discussed the ingredients of the structure of the plot involved in six Kandas it is now to the turn of the characters as a part of the theatrical study.

IV.2.2. Mallanna Katha - its characters

The characters found in this caste myth are quiet down to earth. Their behaviour reflects the traits of this particular community, their beliefs, customs and other emotional patterns. The relationship among the characters establishes the nature and behaviour of their household relationship of this pastoral community. The sentiments and customary relationships, the characters maintain do reflect the many a traits of this community. The characters also reveal the relationship of this community with other communities and castes. All the characters reflect the behaviour and attitudes of this pastoral community.

The characters in this caste myth could be classified as the following-

- (i) Gods
- (ii) Human beings
- (iii) Other supernatural elements

In the first category Gods and Goddesses in general and Lord Shiva in particular appear as the key characters of this myth. Several other Indian deities. Gods, sages, Jangamayya Devaras are often referred for eg. Sages asthadiggaja pathulu, Rama, Narayana etc.; The characters divine in nature behave quite down to earth. They are delineated so native that they are easily identifiable by the community. Mallanna who is believed to be the incarnation of Lord Shiva is also seen behaving as neighbour at the next house of our day to day life. Still he is attributed with of having the divine power of behaving in disguise of the several other characters and also in the disguise of a black dog. Golden lizard etc. Mallanna with his strong determination always wins in the end but is not spared without him being in the crisis and struggle. His logical behaviour witty and wisdom and being trickster nature of making strategies to achieve the super objective show his divine power. All the characters in this myth are purposeful. Though certain characters are spontaneously improvised by the performers they would be justified by the performers linking them to the objectivity of the story. All the characters that come across in various situations of the story reflect traits of this pastoral community; their beliefs, customs and other emotional patterns.

The emotional pattern of Neelima Devi is very well delineated in the following incident.⁴

Lord Shiva in the disguise of a Jangamayya enters into the city of Kolhapuri patnam and reaches in front of the palace of Neelima Devi where her six sons will be playing, after seeing Jangamayya, frightened by his appearance run to their mother and complain about him. Neelima Devi enraged by her sons' complaints, grows very grim and gets him thrashed by her servants. Neelima Devi once an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva, when she was childless now ignores him and also his other devotees and behaves like the women of this community.

The ethos of the characters also are established in varied incidents. One such example could be the following situation.⁵

Varalakki alias Onamala Devi the eldest sister in-law of Mallanna out of jealous wanted to get rid of him throwing him out of the Kacheri; plans a conspiracy. When all the six brothers leave for agricultural work, the eldest sister-in-law calls Mallanna and cries for help saying that there is a big snake in her house. When Mallanna is about to go, Sanganna warns him not to go predicting some evil-minded conspiracy behind this and also says that this would not be fair to enter into her house when her husband is absent. But Mallanna argues that it is nothing to do with that and the principle of morality is only to save one's life when he or she is in danger and enters into her house. Varalakki when found him alone

in her presence insists him to satisfy her lust to which Mallanna refuses. She holds his pattu sella, when Mallanna flees leaving his "pattu sella" in her hands. Then she calls her husband and his five brothers and says that Mallanna wanted to seduce her. In these conflicting situations, the behaviour of Mallanna, Sanganna and other characters stand as per the propriety of the characters. The ethical values, sentiments, emotional patterns are delineated very earthly and truthfully in this myth,

The relationship among the family members do establish the several other customary and traditional values. The following incidents in the cast myth surface this statement.⁶

Mallanna is on his way to invite his aunts before informing his uncles. He justifies it that since aunts are from outside and uncles are part of within the family and hence he wants to visit and invite the aunts at the first.

This above cited incident is placed to show that the characters of this myth are delineated naturally, earthily and with much native traits.

The attitudes of the character and their other traits are established through different situations and acts to maintain the propriety of their behaviour. Their socio, physical and psychological dimensions could be felt by their appearance in all through the theatrical expressions. (Plates 9 to 21 for characterizations)

Table - IV.3

The list of characters found in each act (Kanda) of Mallanna Katha.

S.No.	Name of the characters enacted	Acts
1.	Adireddy	1 Neelima Devi Kanda
2.	Neelima Devi	
3.	Jangamayya (Lord Shiva in Original)	
4.	Sons of Adireddy	
5.	People to whom Adireddy tries to sell fire wood	
6.	Servant Maids	
7,	Neelima Devi	2. Mallanna Kanda
8.	Akumanchi Devi	
9.	Mallanna	
10	Sanganna	
11	Adireddy	
12	Bhatti Kesavaraju	
13	Bapana Peddi bhotla	
14	Kolimi Katala reddy	
15	Machani Devi	
16	Kalaapu Jogaiah	
17	Mallanna's maternal uncles	
18	Uncles' wives	
19	Mallanna as bandit	
20	Padmala Devi	
21	Mallanna	3. Vara lakki Kanda
22	Sanganna	
23	Mallanna's brothers	
24	Varalakki (Onamala Devi)	
25	Neelima Devi	
26	Messengers sent by Mallanna's Uncles	

S.No.	Name of the characters enacted	Acts
27	Muslim Jawans	
28	Mallanna	4. Bapana Ratnangi Kanda
29	Bodanna	
30	Bapana Ratnangi	
31	Brahmins	
32	Priests	
33	Jangamayya (Lord Shiva in disguise)	5. Balija Medalamma Kanda
34	Mallanna	
35	Kanchi Varadaraju	
36	Balija Lingalu	
37	Medalamma	
38	Mallanna as snake charmer	
39	Mallanna as Tobacco vendor	
40	Mallanna as the one with leprosy	
41	Mallanna	6. Golla Kethamma Kanda
42	Renuka Ellavva	
43	Gollas	
44	Golla Kethamma	
45	Balija Medalamma	

In the above table the characters in the Mallanna Puranam are listed more or less as they appear in the narrative. The whole narrative is built upon the formula of Dyad movement. The whole narrative is based on this principle because the narrator is the chief enactor who shifts his positions between himself as narrator and the characters of the narrative. What is interesting to note here is that

the narrator when shifting between the characters develops a dialogue, which progresses the narrative. This being the case each character is voiced in the narrator's perception and therefore they appear earthly which is intelligible to the community, which is akin to their life style. All the characters named as to their onomastic systems of belief. In other words the characters are named very much like their names and could easily be personified when narration progresses, despite they being overtly pronounced in the narration.

It is also evident from the above table that the actions of the characters in the narration are tuned to perform the roles, which would develop in turn the role of the protagonist. For this reason in every kanda mentioned above, Mallanna becomes the foremost and initiates action, which would in turn evoke responses from the other characters.

Thus the protagonist centric play-plot becomes the formula for the narrator to unfold the characters one after the other in the progression of the narration. Looking from this viewpoint the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha lies in the foundation of characterisation of the protagonist who assumes different roles in the course of events of the narrative. This can be best understood when the performance of Oggu Katha is witnessed. Almost 70%-80% of the narrative revolves around the enactment of the actions of the protagonist by the narrator. Quite often than not in the

process of narration, the narrator himself takes the position of the protagonist and voices the concerns of the community which he represents. (As a narrator and as a protagonist/ character)

Another interesting feature that can be brought forth from the above table is that the whole narrative of Mallanna Katha revolves around gender relations. Though the Katha seems to be attributed to establish the divine realm of Mallanna, their ancestral god characters do not correspond to the celestial realm. They appear most mundane in their relationships. All the six kandas speak for one ultimate action i.e. the marriage. The familial realm is thus created in all the kandas so as to meaningfully construct the existing gender relations in the community into the narrative. The male and female characters all are viewed from a gendered perspective. Gender relations are basically a social construct and therefore it is not simply the male and female divide that is important, but the social role that each character plays is important which is the crux of the narrative. In other words the whole narrative is based on gender relationships, because the theme of the narrative itself is "marriage". In any given native communities' social system "marriage" becomes central because it is the marriage which sustains identity and which demarcates that community with that of others. Therefore to protect the identity of the community bondages at familial level is construed through kinship relationships on one hand and on the other the matrimonial relationships. For this reason in the above table, the kin groups of

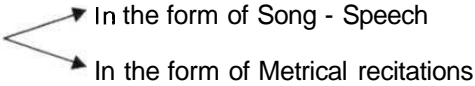
Mallanna appear as characters on one hand and on the other those belong to the brides'. One can find hardly any characters not belonging these two groups appearing in the narrative. However gods, and donor characters such as animals though do appear so as to build up context of the event of marriage.

Another interesting feature is that Mallanna though belonging to the pastoral community marries the brides of the other communities, Vaddare, Brahamins, Balija and Vysya. Therefore the characters that appear in the narrative primarily belong to the pastoralist on one hand and caste order on the other. It is the protagonist who represents the pastoralist, wins over ultimately the caste people. Therefore, the protagonist character is pastoral centric, the speech and actions are also tuned around the pastoral community. In the following section on language this phenomenon is brought forth elaborately.

IV.2.3. Mallanna katha - its language

It is the usage of the words and the arrangement of the words in different rhythmic segments which makes a narration understandable and it is obviously the rhythm in the organised words of the lyric which make the narration interesting and moving. The language used in Oggu Katha is vernacular as the whole performance is addressed to a particular community/Pastoral

community. The metaphors used, comparisons held come from within the daily life and house chore activities. The language used can broadly be distinguished into three types.

1. General narration 
 - In the form of Song - Speech
 - In the form of Metrical recitations
2. Dialogues in the form of Metrical recitations.
3. Dialogues between the characters in the form of prose.

1. General Narration

The language used for description of the situation is usually set to a particular rhythm and this rhythm will remain the same for almost all the entire description. The following lines refer to this.⁷

" **OM ! OM! Ani Annada ! Omkaramu chesena!**

A line frequently repeated before the arrival of Paramasivudu

Ayyo Angitla phalamaina yestavunnadu

Alla Devara Parameshwarude Rama Rama

These lines are from the description in the Neelima Devi Kanda where Parameshwarudu gives the fruit to Neelima Devi.

" **Kattelammaa Pota Vunnadu aa Adireddi**"⁸

These lines are also from the first Kanda where Adireddi goes to sell firewood. These descriptive lines are mostly set to the four beat but sound different and specific because of the arrangement of the words and mode of singing. With in the narration there are speeches, which sound like lyrics, but they are not sung but recited

The following lines of the above quoted song stand as the fine example of such recitations.⁹

**" Sankalona Mopu Chesukuni Adireddi
Chaudari matramaina
Mutyala Chella teesi matramaina
Chutta batta chesukunnadu
Nettina chutta batta petti kattela
Mopu petti matramaina"**

And when the descriptive narrations are said as simple speech, the vanthas/ accompanying artists emphasis the speech by saying a lyrical "Aa—" after each line. This lyrical "Aa---" is also used in lyrics.¹⁰

**"Aa natta naduma bodraayi kaada
Oka Komati Seelamma Ani Oka
Komtame beedasturalu
Aameku matramu vunde sthalam ledu
Yedu Pendalu Yedu Kamamu
Aa.....
Atuvanti matramaina needa Vesukuni
Aa—**

The descriptions are always in lines with the intensity of the situation and mode of singing specially the speeds used - first; second and third speeds add emphasis to the description. For instance in a particular episode of the Neelima Devi Kanda where the sons of Neelima Devi work in the fields and when the harvest is made to disappear by Parameswara, the farmer beats the six male children with sticks.¹¹

**" Alalla Alla Nerello!
Alla Nerello Nirmalallo!
Adavi Lona Vunna Maraju
Chudu nirmala lo
Gira gira gira tippu tunnadu**

Nirmalilo

Karra chetulla pattukunnaadu nirmalalo".

While this song describes the farmer coming with a stick in hand. The following song which is sung in three speeds actually describes the six sons working in the fields, and the behavioural traits are given very clearly.

**" Kanduleri bukku tunnaru
Kadupu challaa iga chestunnaru
Kadupu challa iga chestunnaru
Kadupu challa iga chestunnaru"**

This song depicting Neelima Devi's sufferings of labour pains is very naturally described. The lady counts each second of her suffering and expresses her desire to eat different dishes.¹²

**"Ayyo Kanipenchina ma tallulara
kattamulu kallachudaramma"
"Ammamma ika taala lenu
nenu baadhalu bharimpa lenu
amma Okka ghadiyaa nindinaadi devudo narayana
Okka ghadiyaa nindinaadi
Naaku Opika Karuvaayenamma
Rendosi ghadiyalu ninde naku rotte
Tina buddhayenamma
Amma.....mudu ghadiyaalu nindenayo
Devudo narayana
Mudu ghadiyalu nindinayi nadku pappu
Tina buddha yenamma"**

2. Dialogues in the form of metrical recitation

Then there are lyrics which are dialogues. The scene where Neelima Devi suffers from labour pains is thus recited.¹³

**" Naaku neppulemo yekkuvavuta Vunayi
Ituvanti kashtamu neneruganamma
Naaku matramaina
Golluna Pegulu Polladinattu matramaina
Kadupulo naaku maatramaina

Gubbullu Gubullu Puttabattenu
Aagalenu iga tallularaa
Ayyo niluvalenu iga niluvalenu
Nimushamu iga cheruvaina".**

As the song and recitative words are all strunged together so also the characters. Within the general narration there are also popular poetic verses used as quotations One such example is

**"Gaadida ke meruka gandhapu Vaasana
Ganta Kadite mosugaaka
Dunna potu ke meruka pinnala iluva
Muriki madugu chusi murusugaaka"**

This verse says that what does the donkey know about the odour of sandal all that it knows is to carry the sandal sticks heap on its back, so also what does the bull know about the value of a rich bungalow all that which counts to it is a watery, muddy pond. This

verse is used to denote the mental status of the brothers of Mallanna who aspire for his seat in the kacheri.¹⁴

Thus the verses used to add an emphatic note either to the actual status of the situation or the personality traits of each of the characters are not straight forward statements but carry a suggestive pun in them. There are also dialogues in the form of words and also in the form of. prose.

3. Dialogues between the characters in the form of prose. 15

“Kaavalidarulu: Eyy! Jangamayya! Aagu! Aagu!
Eyy! Jangamayya! Evadavayya nuvvu
Nayana?
Eh desamunnadi ? eh rajya munnadi?
Ayyaa yendadi mi bhujam meeda !
Baabu, niku seluvu ledu idi ledu gatlane
gantalu sankulu pattukuni vachina daarine
ellipo!!

Jangamayya: "Ayyalaara ! nenu maryaadaga
mesalatanni,

Eemi ! oorla mediletoni, ee ooru naadi "

Besides the above discussed songs the most interesting feature of narration is the activity songs. Lyrics regarding various day to day

activities such as lullaby songs, (jolapata), pounding songs, (dampudu) patalu also feature in an Oggu performance.¹⁶

Jolapata

**'Jo achchutananda jo jo Mukunda!
Ra ra paramanda ramani govinda Rama govinda!
Niku nillosi nillangi todigi
Niamma palla sara neeku techero! Neeku techero !
Nillangi thodigi !
Edavaku Edavaku
Erri naa tandri
Eediste ninnevaru ettukuneru ettukuneru
Palamma mi amma patnamelindi patnamelindi"**

One of the lines in this lullaby says that "do not cry little one who is going to carry you if you cry. Your mother gave you bath dressed you and left to the city to sell the milk'. The occupational activity of selling the milk is shown here as the duty of the child's mother.

Yet another activity song while pounding during **Mallanna's** wedding is as follows.¹⁷

**" Suvvi Sovvanna lala suvvanna laala Suvvanna laala! "
"Suvvi Suvvani nenokka Pata Padanga PotuVeyanga!"**

Thus the language used in Oggu Katha either in the form of songs, speech or metric recitations is charged with emotions and conveys

the meaning to the audience the enacted events in the narrative. What is interesting to note in this is it is rich with Metaphors, Euphemisms and Similes. Since the entire language used in the performance is set in dance drama style, in incongruous with the footsteps, it proceeds the narration. When the songs are sung, the language rendered follow the rhythm of the drum beats and cymbals. When the speech portions are delivered the language comes down to the natural ways of speech of the community. When the metric recitations are rendered the specific speech act that follows in proverbial usage or tongue twisters usage or riddle usage is adhered to. Therefore, the language of Oggu Katha expresses itself in versatile manner encompassing differential genres within the performance. This is one of the reasons why, the concept of theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha is argued for. A grammar that exists in differential context, contextual speech modes, more or less qualify such speech modes into groups thereby genres. Oggu Katha though a performance encompasses different speech modes within while it is being narrated. As shown in the above discussion such speech modes are grouped paradigmatically and down syntagmatically to bring out the generic types that exist in the Oggu Katha. These genres are basically found in the community in their verbal acts.

Another interesting observation with regard to language especially when the dialogues are performed between the characters and narrator with regard to scenic content and events is

that they reveal underlying formulae that the narrator uses. A formula is one such speech act which repeats itself to a given situation or event or describing about a person. When the narrator describes Mallanna or Beerappa or any such prime character he uses time and again a set of words, which describes the person. Similarly when scenes such as journey, war, marriage, forest, hills and hillocks are described such formulae are used. These formulae are also known as multi forms. They are descriptive elements expressed in the same meaningful utterances and or certain syllables, which carry no meaning. Even in singing such formulae are visible. The formula in singing would occur as repetitions or incremental repetition. The use of the formulae is two fold. One is to the narrator who memorises the text, not in its entirety but in a capsule sequence. When he performs he brings forth the text by means of formulas; The other is it sets the style of the performance which the audience could easily recognise and comprehend to. The formulas are also played by the narrator to suit to his musical accomplices in order to make the audiences lively. Thus the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha uses language as a powerful vehicle to transform the narrator into the character on one hand and on the other transport character into the hearts of the audience. Audience in the process experience the characters as well as the events of the myth and quite often than not personalise them. This way the myth through language transcends from metaphysical to physical realm. Therefore, gods become human and humans become gods. Such is the power of the language of Oggu Katha.

In the following discussion, the usage of language with regard to their professions, daily life speech activities etc., are given so as to drive home the point, that it is the language of the Oggu Katha in its true sense of its grammar belongs to the community and therefore they own it and share it.

The folk life, mundane activities of the folk and the pastoral community in particular are reflected in the language used. The language is full of very much Vernacular words like:

<i>Manda,</i>	<i>Mandakallu,</i>	<i>pidakalu,</i>
<i>Ambali,</i>	<i>Ingulam,</i>	<i>Boyinam,</i>
<i>Rokkam,</i>	<i>Taguru,</i>	<i>Gampa,</i>
<i>Karre Avu,</i>	<i>peda gampa,</i>	<i>Kandukam,</i>
<i>Santu,</i>	<i>Bonkatam,</i>	<i>Ambatala</i>
<i>laggam,</i>	<i>logili,</i>	<i>Bicham,</i>
<i>Jole etc.,</i>		

The above given stand as right examples of the occupational vernacular kind. So also we can find words with Urdu influence being frequently used are as follows:

<i>Bazaar,</i>	<i>Darwaaza</i>	<i>Darbaar, Galli</i>
<i>Jawaan</i>	<i>Salaam etc. are of such kind</i>	

Coming to the poetic usage of language lot of proverbs and beautiful metaphors and similes can be found as part of the narration. The similes used are very native. For instance Neelima Devi adored with gold jewelry is described as

Pusina Tangedu ole puttedu sommulu Petukoni

The tangedu flowers are yellow in colour and when the tree is full of flowers the whole tree looks yellow. Here Neelima Devi is compared with a tangedu tree which is full of blossomed flowers.

“Dummi kinda pandi kokkulu podichi nattuga”.

As the pandikokulu beneath the rice grain is pierced, so did they with him.¹⁹ This is also an example of similes used. A beautiful poetic expression while describing the passionate feelings of Onama Devi, the Sister-in-law of Mallanna is:²⁰

“Madana masti kandla kavaramu”.

To describe the richness of the house and the snake in the house a poetically rich phrase used is.²¹

"Ponnaru logilla munnaru Nagasarpamu".

While narrating the labour pains of Neelima Devi in her own words Neelima says that.²²

"Kondavole neppu lostavunnavi Teppavole Telipotavunnavi"²

The pains start as hills and move away as the little boats in water.

"Enuganta Padamu yedepai mopindu".²⁴

Many such lucid descriptions using similes and native proverbs can be found through out the narration. Integration of their life world and the nature is poetically highlighted in the narration. Native proverbs are inevitably part of

the narration. A list of the proverbs used by the troupe led by Majjiga Lakshmi Narshaiah is given here under

- a) **Bangaru simhasanamuna sunakamunu kurchunda bettinattu**
- b) **Choppi chesina paniki chedutanamu ledu**
- c) **Moratuganikemi telusu mogalipuvvu vasana**
- d) **Paduguru adumata padimandi lo chellu**
- e) **Varusaki peddodini vayasuki chinnodini**
- f) **Bichcham pettani avvaki muchchatlekuva saddi gattani avvaki sagadolu tekkuva**
- g) **Peyyanta koste peruku kotta pedda ledu**
- h) **Adabidda gunam aralugannagunam magabidda gunam motugunam**
- i) **Ninnuganti nee raata kanaledu**

IV.3. Oggu Katha and the Actor

The second primary source that initiates the grammar of theater is Actor. The actor in Oggu Katha form is very energetic, dynamic and is capable of exhibiting his skills in all the dimensions of the varied characters. In other words the performers with the help of their dynamic acting skills shape this form. It is the actor's world, who presets the images, words, emotions, meanings and

actions of the characters through out his performance, in the sense this form is seen only through the medium of acting skills:

Such is the responsibility of the actor in this form and he fulfills it well and satisfies the challenges of the form all through his performance in narrating the story, thus by strengthening the structure. This Oggu performer of this present study does not possess extra paraphernalia, i.e., the elements like, set designs, lighting, costumes, make-up etc. He is there to hold the narration with out these elements and performs exploring his acting skills to substitute all these things. In the recent times, a change is noticed in certain other Oggu performances using make-up costumes, adding colour to the form Chukka Sattaiah is one such example.²⁵

The present study is made only of one troupe as mentioned earlier, to emphasise or unfold the traditional and native character of the form.

The set of performers of this present study are led by

1. Majjiga Lakshminarasaiah - Kathakudu and followed by
1. Majjiga Bhumaiah-Vanthakudu
2. Majjiga Sailu-on Oggu dolu
3. Majjiga Malliaiah-on thalam
4. Are Mondeyya- on thalam the set consists of 5 performers in number.

This set of performers could be divided into two.

The first set includes two performers i.e. One Kathakudu, the main narrator and the Vanthakudu the follower or helper.

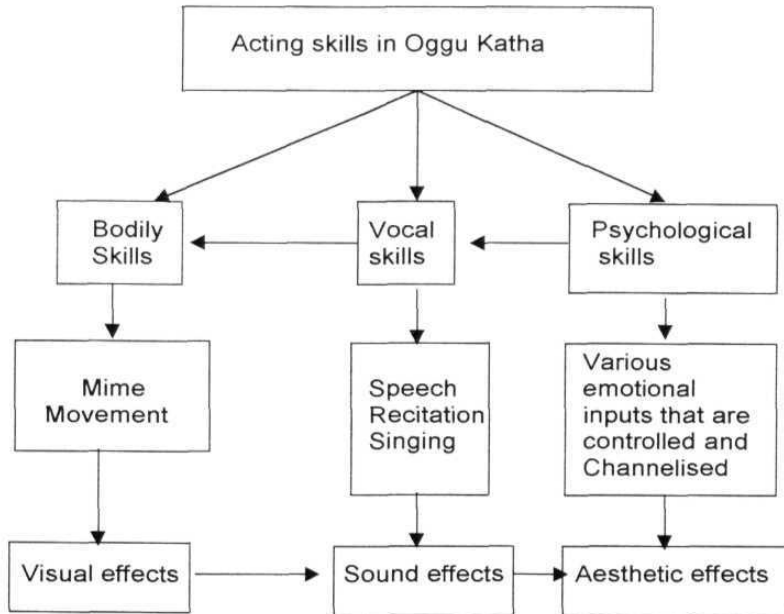
The second set includes 3 performers who are musicians. One performer is on Oggu Dolu, another on cymbal [thalam], but would also be helping the main set lending his voice by repeating the ends of the ragam (alapana) occasionally joins himself as an actor when third character is needed in the performance.

This is the way the set is orchestrated well to the demand of the performance. All the episodes of the story and often-increased chitrakathalu in all their emotional, sensitive and other related traits that create the texture of the scenes are all handled by this set of five performers. The performance is totally dependent only on his body, vocal and psychological energies to establish and communicate all those features of inner environment of the character and the outer environment of the character in which they move, without depending on the other theatrical elements like sets, lights and so on.

This Oggu Katha performer's role is a challenging one. The performer shifts his role from as a narrator to as an actor and vice versa.

Figure - IV.8

The Oggu performer's acting skills



IV.3.1. Bodily skills

The Oggu Katha performer explores the art of using his body, intelligibly in the process of mimetic dramatization. Material culture and its functional categories are disposed by mimetic exposition in the performance.

A) Mime

The indigenous technique of mimetic improvisation stands as a specimen for his imaginative skills.

This art of mimetic improvisation is exploited by the performer to the demands of various incidents that are narrated; shifting of the energy and weight in the body, gaining and shifting of attention holding the balance and the rhythm are maintained by the performer, which are the basic properties of mimetic art.

This mimetic improvisation done by the Oggu performer could be classified into three kinds.

1. That part of mimetic improvisation where the performer's body is used to create the images of the varied locations and other inanimate properties. The following incident is placed for reference:-

Mallanna to fulfill his Oath given to his father Adireddy of satisfying all the conditions put forth by parents of Padmala Devi goes to seek financial assistance to his seven Uncles,

but is rejected by them. Then Mallanna in the disguise of Bandit enters into the bedroom where his aunts and uncles are resting and loots the money.

While narrating this incident of entering into the bedroom, the performers use their body in creating an illusion of a cot and the aunt and uncle hiding themselves under it. (Plate 22).

2. That part of mimetic improvisation where the performer uses his own hand properties which form the part of his usual costumes for the performance such as Rumalu, Vaani (oni), Chinna cheti Karra and Aashique / Gua Gutka Packet.

The following incidents are referred here where this kind of mimetic improvisation is done during the narration of the story.

- i. Vaani

The performers wore a dupatta, which is normally pronounced as oni in Telugu language.²⁶ The three performers Kathakudu, Vanthakudu and the helper wore the Vaani in three different colours green, pink and black.

Whenever they need to improvise different articles and hand properties, their Vaani was utilised in creating the needed effects. These Vaanis are rotated to the other characters apart from the

main narrator. In other words these coloured Vaani's are used by all the three performers, not fixing the same coloured Vaani for each of them.²⁷

While impersonating the characters they used to exchange them to the need of the characters they were portraying.

Vaani as saree is used for the following characters:-

- a) Neelima Devi, and the lady who wants to buy Kattelu from Adireddy in Neelima Devi kanda (the I kanda of the story)
- b) Akumanchi Devi, the sister of Neelima Devi who brings up Mallanna in Mallanna Kanda (the II Kanda of the story). Maternal uncle's wives etc., in Mallanna kanda).
- c) Padmala Devi, Mallanna's first wife (Mallanna kanda the II kanda of the story)
- d) Varalakshmi, the sister-in-law of Mallanna and in Varalakshmi Kanda (the III kanda of the story).
- e) Bapana Ratnangi, Mallanna's second wife in Ratnangi kanda (the IV kanda of the story).
- f) Balija Medalamma the third wife of Mallanna, an old lady who wants to buy pogaku from Mallanna who is in disguise of an ugly faced leprous and pogaku vendor (Koti Marriseti), all the characters in Balija Medalamma kanda.
- g) Ellavva, Mallanna's sister, and Gollakethamma in Golla Kethamma kanda (the VI kanda of the story).

The performers used Vaani to portray all the female characters mentioned above. (Plate 23 for Vaani as Saree)

The same property the Vaani is used as turban to portray the following characters whenever they appear in the respective scenes.

- a) Vaani as turban for the following characters Adireddy in Neelima Devi kanda, Mallanna's brothers. Mallanna and Sanganna in Mallanna kanda. Bodanna in Ratnangi kanda pogaku vendor in Baliya Medalamma kanda. (Plates 24,25,26 for Vaani used as turban for various characters).
- b) This property Vaani is also used as cradle, in Neelima Devi kanda where the scene of Mallanna's birth is shown — characters Neelima Devi and Akumanchi Devi present here, swaying the Cradle (Plate 27 Vaani as Cradle - Mimetic improvisation).
- c) As huge tummy of Koti Marrisetti (i.e., Mallanna in the disguise of this pogaku vendor.)

ii. Rumaal (hand kerchief)

Another property, which is improvised for many a needed hand properties, is rumaal. The following properties are improvised using rumaal.

- a) Neelima Devi holding a baby in Neelima Devi Kanda-
- b) Letter read out by the messengers from Mallanna's uncle's court to the brothers of Mallanna, at their Kacheri in Varalakki Kanda (the third kanda of the story). (Plates 28 and 29 rumaal being improvised as the needed hand property)
- c) As Taraju used by the Pogaku vendor Koti Marrisetti (Mallanna in disguise in Baliye Medalamma Kanda (V kanda of the story.)
- d) Rumaal as Koppu when the scenes of female characters are impersonated.

iii. Gutka Packet

This gutka packet is improvised to show the characters, Mallanna's sisters –in-law, moving to Kacheri, to see their husbands after being made-up, this gutka packet is improvised to the poolu in koppu (flowers in their hair dressing).

(Plate 30 Gutka Packet as Poolu in Koppu (flowers in the hair))

iv. Chinna Cheti Karra (small hand stick)

Another property which is extensively improvised during the performance is chinna cheti Karra (a small hand stick) in many an incidents.

- a) As Kodavali when portrayed as the sons of Adireddy in Mallanna kanda (the II kanda)
- b) As heap of sticks when Adireddy moves in streets to sell the fire wood (Neelima Devi Kanda, (I kanda) (Plate 31).

- c) As the reins of the horse when shown Mallanna going to see his uncles - (Mallanna kanda, the II kanda) (Plate 32).
 - d) As knife used by Mallanna in the disguise of a Bandit to get money and ornaments from his aunts and uncles (Mallanna kanda the II Kanda) (Plate 33).
 - e) As pounding sticks, when depicting the women folk, preparing Bandari for Mallanna's marriage (Mallanna Kanda, the II Kanda)
 - f) As chameleon, when Jawans from Mallanna's uncles come to the Kacheri and threaten the sister-in-laws of Mallanna (Varalakki Kanda) (Plate 34).
 - g) As tarazu (balance) when depicted Mallanna in disguise of a pogaku vendor, while selling the pogaku. (Plate 35).
 - h) As Magic stick when depicted Mallanna in disguise of a snake charmer in Baliye Medalamma kanda. (Plate 36).
 - i) As flute when portrayed Mallanna in the disguise of a snake charmer in Baliya Medalamma Kanda.
- v. Long bamboo stick
- a) Taken from the audience used during performance and was improvised as a pounding stick in Mallanna kanda, when shown women preparing bandari for Mallanna's marriage with Padmala Devi in Mallanna kanda (Plate 37).

- b) As the sticks of shepherd, Bodanna in Ratnangi Kanda while he being with Mallanna in the fields, looking after the sheep offered by Lord Shiva and Parvathi (Plate 38).
 - c) The third kind of mimetic improvisation is unlike the above two kinds.
3. This part of mimetic improvisation is same but without using any kind of properties, but is done with gestures
- a) When Lord Shiva appears as Jangama Devara in Kolhapuripatnam in Neelima Devi Kanda, the I Kanda playing Sankham. (Plate 39).
 - b) When depicted Lord Shiva offering a fruit to Neelima Devi; giving boon of bearing children in Neelima Devi Kanda, the I Kanda. (Plate 40)
 - c) While depicting the sister-in-laws making up themselves combing before a mirror in Varalakki kanda. (Plate 41)
 - d) Depicting women folk weaving the thread from cotton in Padmala kanda. (Plate 42).

B) Movement

The second property in the bodily skills is the extensive movement this Oggu performer displays. The movements animated by this performer, create several lines as part of the compositions in terms of spatial relationship.

The movement done by the Oggu performer could be classified as two kinds

- 1) General movement
- 2) Rhythmic movement

I) General movement

The general movements are there with no specific trait in making the movement and are like plain moves taken by the performers to the needs of the scenes and the characters.

General movements are made by the performers, when the scenes are in prose and demand a spontaneous improvisation. (Plate 43).

2) Rhythmic movement

This kind of movements are made set to the Rhythm of the narrative and are animated by the performers stamping their feet and thus create the needed visual effects (Plates 44 & 45).

The metrical lines followed in the text of the Oggu Katha initiate the performer to move unlike the general movement. Hence they could be called as rhythmic movements. They are made by this performer stamping their feet at times on heels and on toes and create the needed visual effects.

The lines of the text of this troupe of Majjiga Lakshmi Narasaiah were either in four beats or in three beats and often in

varied paces. Rhythmic movements are made by this performer when these parts of text of recitation and that part of songs in the narrative are performed.

Both these above cited two kinds of movements animated by the performers create several lines as part of the compositions in terms of the spatial relationship. The patterns that are created by the animation of the performers are classified as under

a) circular b) horizontal c) diagonal d) vertical.

a) Circular movement

The circular patterns of these movements could be further of 2 kinds

- i) Performers moving round to make circular pattern in the space given (Plate 46).
- ii) performers revolving around themselves.

i) The first kind of movement is done to establish the following things.

- a) To establish the arrival of a character.
- b) To convey the emotional conditioning of a character.
- c) To describe a locale of the action.
- d) To convey the emotional condition of a particular situation involving tensions and dense mood.

ii) The second kind of circular movement is often done to convey the following things.

- a) change of role from one character to the other character.
- b) Change of role from narrator to the character and vice-versa.

Through this way of using movement in the above said circular patterns, the performers communicate to the audiences, who are surrounded by the latter.

The other three kinds of patterns made by the performers are explored to the demand of the compositional needs of a particular scene involving the characters of different nature, by the Oggu performer, spontaneously.

These movements are not pre planned or pre-rehearsed, but are spontaneously composed which is inherent in the enactment of the narrative keeping in view of the audience and the space given for their performance.

Since these things form part of the elements of composition, which in turn are related to space, this aspect would be further discussed in the segment of space in this chapter.

The above discussed aspects of movement are the important and vital components of this narrative form, which are also **as** important in theatrical performance.

IV.3.2. Vocal Skills

The vocal skills of the Oggu performer could be analysed in terms of his role in the narrative form. The Oggu performer's role in this narrative performance is of two kinds

1. As Narrator
2. As Varied characters.

The performer maintains his tonal values being energetic in performing both as a narrator and in varied characters.

The pitch, tempo and pace are maintained at one level while narrating and when he shifts his role to enacting the varied characters, brings out different vocal traits suiting to the demand of the dimensions of the characters in different situations.

A) Speech

The performer explores his vocal skills in a different way to a different character with his lucid speech. The kathakudu and the two Vanthakulu exchange the roles during their performance depending upon the situations of narrative, the main kathakudu immediately shifts to the role of narrator and one of the two vanthakulu becomes Mallanna.

This exercise continues all over the performance, and the audience do not get confused. Though this kind of shifting of the role happens, the performers maintain the vocal traits and speech

that are meant for each of these characters. Even this is maintained in differentiating male to female characters. All these varied characters like gods, supernatural characters and human characters are delineated with different kinds of vocal traits and speech.

The following characters in their respective scenes are given for the reference, where the performers maintain typical vocal traits and speech.

- a) The woman who attempts to buy the firewood sold by Adireddy in Neelima Devi Kanda.
- b) The conversation between Mallanna and Sanganna - Here the performers inter exchange the roles, and maintain the needed vocal traits in delivering the speech.
- c) The brothers of Mallanna in Varalakki kanda.
- d) The Muslim Jawans threatening the sister-in-laws of Mallanna in the kacheri to maintain the dialect and vocal traits suiting to the demands of those characters.
- e) Bapana Ratnangi conversing with Mallanna in Ratnangi Kanda.
- f) The vocal traits and speech for the character Bodanna, who accompanies Mallanna in Ratnangi Kanda.
- g) The snake charmer's role in Medalamma Kanda.
- h) Kotimarrisatti, the pogaku vendor in Baliya Medalamma Kanda.

B) Recitation

The recitation part also draws a creative exploration of the vocal skills from the Oggu performers. In fact recitations form the basic aural factor of this narrative form, which grabs the attention of the audience - there will be a continuous beat on Oggu Dolu and Thalalu often with variations on rhythm and tempo. Against this back drop of rhythmic beats the performers recite the lines accordingly, exactly following the variations on the rhythm and tempo. This exercise of recitation following the beats demands creative exploration of a musical sense from the Oggu performer.

The following lines are given as few examples, which are recited in a typical way and this recitation of lines forms the basic factor of performance of this narrative form. The narrators recite the following lines while describing Lord Shiva, who will be coming to help Neelima Devi in Neelima Devi Kanda.²⁸

i) "Endi kondala vunde Jinka Tholu kattu koni

Paadalaku bangaru kadiyam vesukoni

Chethi lona aggi gajaa surini pattu koni

Koppu Ippu koni.....Aha"

Narrating Mallanna and his inner qualities the performers recite the following lines.

ii) **"Thandri Racha Thandriki unchindu Thana Racha Thanu Kattu kunnadu"**²⁹

These following lines are recited by the performers as characters, unlike the above lines.

- i) Lord Shiva recites the following lines advising Neelima Devi (in Neelima Devi Kanda).

**"Repati kalla kalla kaliyugamuna mugguru
threemoorthula Ioni matti Bommalu manava Jeevalye
ettedunnadi".**³⁰

- ii) Lord Shiva advising Neelima Devi in the same Kanda (Neelima Devi Kanda).

**"Hara Hara Anna Ayyala Maravaddu Shiva Shiva Anna
Shivuni Maravaddu Poddeedu Snanam Seyyala."**³¹

C) Singing

Singing forms the major element in exploring the vocal skills in terms of musical sense and tonal variations. The entire performance in a way is sung except those parts of incidents that are enacted. Right from the invocatory song in the beginning till the end of the performance with Mangalam, singing places itself as a major component of the vocabulary of this narrative form. The different 'ragas' which are very much indigenous and native, explore vocal strength in the Oggu performer with vibrant music.

While the narration continues, by providing the needed mood and other related effects of the varied incidents, with abundance of descriptions with native flavor of metaphors, riddles and proverbs, music and singing become the prime source of the theatrical vocabulary of this narrative form. All the performers do sing follow the pitch and variations in tempo and rhythm. The variations do occur, suiting to the demand of the event, situations, characters and the emotions built in it.

Invocatory songs, songs depicting the pains and pleasures of the various characters, songs describing the locations and time, songs depicting the valorousness of the character, apart from other sentiments, are sung by the Oggu performers, proving their energy, with clear vocal skills. The performers maintain to orchestrate their vocal skills and establish the contrast when needed. The songs can be classified into three kinds.

1. Songs sung by the narrators.
2. Songs sung by the characters.
3. Songs sung by the narrator and the characters.

The following two songs refer to the respective categories as an example. The songs in this narrative form usually end in each line with the words.

"Rama Rama" the ending note are words are followed by the other helpers i.e., vanthakulu elongating it set to the respective rhythm and tempo.

1. Songs sung by the narrator

a) Kanduluri Bokkuthunnaru

Kanduluri Bokkuthunnaru

(This song is sung in three speeds building the tempo to the need of the scene that is narrated.³²

b) Aaruguru Ega Kodukulaina

Adavilo Malla Balayya

Kali kooluthunnado Rama Rama

Bhaggunna Mantalu Mandena Rama Rama.³³

c) Alalla Alla Nerellolo"

Alla Nerellallo Nirmalalo"

Advilona Chinna Maraju Choodu Nirmalalo

Doddu Karra Theesi Chetha Battindu Nirmalalo

Gira gira gira thippu thunnadu nirmalalo.³⁴

2. Songs sung by character

a) Amamma ika tha lalenu Devudo Narayana

Amamma ika Thalalenu

Nenu Badhalu Bharimpa Lenamma,

Amma Oka ghadiya nindinadi Devudo Narayana

Okka hadiya Nindinaadi Naku Opika Karuvayenamma.³⁶

**b) Edavaku Edavaku Eka Kumara Edisthe ninnevaru
ethukuntaru Jo.....Hayee³⁸**

**c) Suvvi Suvva nanna lala suvvanna lala lala
suvvi suvvana Nenokka pata padanga Potu Eyang³⁷**

3. Songs sung by both the narrator and the character.

**a) Ellipora Jangamoda Rama Rama
Ellipora Jangamoda Rama Rama³⁸**

**b) Chempala Juttu Lekunda Joodu Lekunda Joodu
Ethu Nosalu Lekunda Joodu Lekunda Joodu
Ethu Bhujalu Lekunda Joodu Lekunda Joodu
Naalika Macha Lekunda Joodu Lekunda Joodu
Eepuna Sudi Lekunda Joodu Lekunda Joodu³⁹**

D. Sound Effects

Another major component in this narrative form is "sound effects". The Oggu performer by exploring his vocal skills in creating different sound effects, do achieve the atmosphere of both temporal and spatial dimensions. These effects created by the performer intelligibly at the backdrop of a continuous rhythm on Oggu dolu and thalalu, by exploring their vocal skills and mimicking talents, create the needed mood.

Table - IV.4

Sound effects created by the Oggu performers

S.No.	Sound Effect	Image
1.	Bhom Bhom Bhom	Couch
2.	Gana Gana Gana	Bells
3.	Bhaggu Bhaggu Bhaggu	Fire
4.	Me. . . . Me. . . . Me. . . . Me	Goat
5.	Guyeen Guyeen	Snake charmer's wind instrument
6.	Gira Gira Gira Gira	Rotating, revolving Moving round & round
7.	Pala Pala Pala Pala	Chanting Hymns

IV.3.3. Psychological skills

The Oggu performer holds the performance in dual role i.e., one as the narrator and other as character. In other words he acts at a time as both a narrator and as varied characters.

This exercise of narrating the events, emotions of the characters and moods of scenes invites a greater attention on the psychological skills and energy from the Oggu performer.

The characters also are of different nature in emotional traits. The performer adheres to the emotional needs of the characters. He performs at ease and is truthful in his behaviour while portraying

the characters. He turns out to be clownish and slapstick when he portrays such character suddenly transforms into the character of a bitterly crying woman and after the end of the scene again becomes the narrator.

The performer discharges his psychological skills suiting to the demands of both the contexts of he being a narrator and as an actor, using a characterization, He is totally involved in performing the narrative having a clarity in his mind that he is surrounded by audiences and discloses the event, creating the aesthetic experience with them.

The complexity in narrating the story lies totally in the psychological skills of the performer. To understand the psychological skills operated by the Oggu performer his role in conducting the show could be analyzed as under.

1. As the narrator showing the emotions.
2. As the actor doing the characters; showing the emotions.

This dual-role held by the performer demands a greater amount of psychological skills and energy. The following varied scenes depict the above said complexity as a performer of this narrative form, one holds in his psychological skills and energy.

Table - IV.5

The characters enacted by the main artistes I & II in each act

S.No	Names of the character Enacted by performer I (Pradhana kathakudu)	Characters enacted by Enacted by performer II (Vanthakudu kathakudu)
Act I		
	Jangamayya	Neelima Devi
	Neelima Devi	Adireddy
	Women to whom Adireddy tries to Sell Fire wood	Neelima Devi's sons Maid Servants
Act II	Akumanchi Devi	Neelima Devi
	Mallanna	Mallanna
	Adireddy	Sanganna
	Machani Devi	Bhatti Kesava Raju
	Bandit	Kolimi Katala Reddy
		Kalapu Jogayya
		Mallanna's maternal Uncles
		Maternal uncle's wife
		Padmala Devi
Act III	Mallanna	Sanganna
	Neelima Devi	Mallanna's brothers
	Mallanna's brothers	Mallanna's sister's in-law
	Mallanna's sister's in-law	Onamala Devi
	Messenger sent by	
	Mallanna's maternal	
	Uncles muslim Jawans	
Act IV	Mallanna	Bodanna Bapani Ratnangi

Act V	Mallanna	Kanchi Varadaraju
	Jangamayya	Baliya Lingalu
	Snake charmer	Medalanna
	As tobacco vendor ladies of the Harem	
	Leprosy character	
	Ladies of the harem	
Act VI	Mallanna	Renuka Ellanna
	Baliya Medalamm	Golla's
		Golla Ketamma

(1) *As the Narrator showing the emotions.*

- a) **Bhaga Bhaga Mandinada Rama Rama**
Bhaggunaa bhasmamayino Rama Rama
Choopulu Baga Maarindu Rama Rama
Rudra Devudayenu Rama Rama
Japa Patamulu Maarchi chandrudu lekunda chesi
Jabba ulupuga mari
Kudi bhujambunna Rudraksham
Peyi Meeda Vesindu
Edama Sankana Endi Jole, Kudi Sankana Bangaaru jole
Esukuni
Amma ! bhujana ganta pettindu Rama Rama
Chetula sankhamu pattindu Rama Rama
- b) **Jangamayya vaddaki chera vasthavunnad**
Jangamayya vaddaki chera vasthavunnadi

Jangamayya vaddaki chera vasthavunnadi
poraka katta Chethoola sye sye ga Battina"
poraka katta Chethoola sye sye ga Battina"
Eevuru annadi... Ee Rajyamannadi
Nee manda Aavulekkada Vayu guruvulekkada
Unde thalamekkada Ooru peru ekkada⁴⁰

(2) As the actor doing characters showing the emotions:

- a) Aadi Narayanudu Narayanudo"
adigoche brahma deva brahma deva
Memu andari vole putta leda bhagavanthudo
Bhagavanthudo
Memo andari vole melaga leda melaga leda
Maaku thalli entha noorindo! Ponninado
Maaku brahma entha raasindu raasindo
Bhagavanthudo.⁴¹ (Neelima devi kada when her sons are
beaten by landlord.
- b) O! Thalli Neelamma! Thalli Neelamma!
Andari vole memu puttaleda! O! Thalli Neelamma!
Kondari vole peraga leda O! Thalli Neelamma!
Nee papa Dharmamulona! O! Thalli Neelamma!
Eee padu puttukalu mammenduku puttinchinavu
Kanna thalli neelamma
O! Thalli Neelamma!⁴²

(Neelima Devi kanda the six sons of Neelima Devi bitterly crying, when they are beaten blue and back by the *rytu asami*).

Thus by exploring his acting skills as discussed above the Oggu performer maintains to create the needed visual, aural and aesthetic effects.

The Oggu performer transferring himself from the narrator's role to the character, and vice versa shows out the energy he is possessed with it is unlike the performer, one finds in other forms like Burrakatha Sarada Katha and the like in terms of the theatrical elements.

IV.4. Oggu Katha - and the Space

The third major source for evolving the grammar of this narrative form is space. Exploring the given space the performer finds the space through his progression of narration. The performer creates performance space within the given space. The performer creates several compositions by animating the characters energetically and brings out the kinetic and dynamic values for the narrative form. All visual images, spectacles are clearly conveyed intelligibly by the performer who finds and defines the space by the way of his compositions.

The Oggu performer finding the space and transforming it into the performance space is the third major source of creating theatrical vocabulary for this narrative form. This narrative form demands this creative aspect of transformation into the narrative's space and the performer and the audience respond to this. This response establishes the flexibility of the space found by the performer.⁴⁵ (Plate 47 shows where the performance was held).

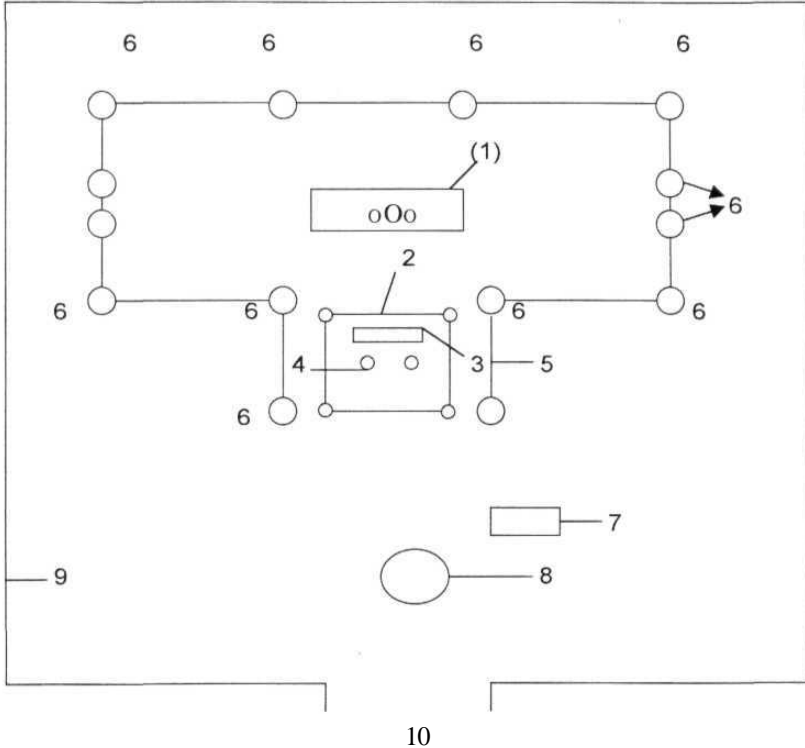
The three kinds of spaces, the performer suggested, are by three different shapes and dimensions.

1. The first one under a tree in the corner of the street suggests no specific demarcation of the space for the performer and the audiences.
2. The second one in the premises of "Satram", also under a tree but is surrounded by a compound wall.
3. The third place was in the premises of the temple.

The compositions are indigenously created by Oggu performer by animating the lines and mounting the mass, that are demanded by the content of this narrative form.

Figure - IV.9

The ground plan where the performance was held



1. Main Deity Mylaaru Devudu/Mallanna accompanied by Golla Kethamma, Balija Medalamma
2. Mandapam - Roofed with 4 Pillars
3. Vayidhyakarulu - orchestra people in chairs with Oggudu, and thalalu
4. Performers Kathakudu, Vanthakulu
5. 3 Feet height wall surrounded
6. Pillars holding the roof
7. Rock on which the inscriptions were inscribed.
8. Dhvajasthambham
9. Compound wall
10. Entrance gate.

Through the dynamics of movement and mimetic improvisation, the space is explored by the Oggu performer, which forms the important source for the liveliness of this narrative form.

The factors in the narrative form that act as the key to the performer for finding the space are the need.

1. To establish the shifting of his role from being a narrator to the character and vice-versa.
- 2 To establish the locations of different episodes.

The different kinds of lines and mass are explored to establish the above said factors, which stand as the primary sources of theatrical compositions. This exercise of finding the space for these theatrical compositions forms the basis for the evolution of theatrical grammar in terms of the space, in this study of narrative form.

An attempt is made to explain the exploration of space by the Oggu performer keeping in view of the above said aspects.

1. Finding the space to establish, the shifting of his role from being a narrator to the character and vice versa.

The following incidents that are established through finding and exploring the space stand as the reference.

**"Atuvanti Shiva Sankarudu Bhoom! Bhoom!
Shanku chethabatti atuvante gokula kolhapuri
cherindu**

(As narrator continues).

**Kadapu gadapa vada vada galli galli, bazar bazar,
Illu, Illu, thirigi Madhya ranga, Boddu kadi Moodu
vadala kadi kochi ganta kotti bhoom! Bhoom! Ani
shankham oodinadu! Ayina Mana Santhanam leni
Bhavanam Ekkada unnadani alochinchinadu !
Atuvanti Mathraminaa! Parameshwarudu
Mathimaina pachchani pandiri lo ayamma Neelima
devi paadala nadakalo! Logi valoloki aiyana
atuvantii shiva sankaradu vachi"**

(The narrator begins to sing describing the entrance of
the character Lord Shiva)

"Ganagana gantalina Jangmayya Gotteno....."

"Ganagana gantalu kotti.....

**Bhom! Bhom! Bhom! Shaye! Pattina shankunadam evaru
vinnarayya! Bangaru Logillalona Bhama Neelima
Deviro!.....**

Neelima Devi eppudithe vinnado!

The narrator shifts into the character with vanthakudu as helper.

Vanthakudu as Neelima Devi and the narrator transforms into the
character Lord Shiva in disguise of Jangamayya.

Now in the characters and the dialogue continues

Neelima **Devi:-"Ayyoo Evaro" Deva Jangamayya Vachindayya!**

Nenu

Nenu vachina vaniki bikshamu aiyetha pedatha!

Narrator- Annukoni! **Suryanadilo snanamu chesi**

naravannacheera katti jama pattu cheera raika

thodigi

(the discription continues how Neelima Devi prepares to offer
"bhiksha" to the Jangamaiyya.

**Darvaja dhati mathara maiyana pachani pandirla krindiki
vasthunnadhi! Ela Anna! Pallem! Chembu pathukoni padivela
pabbati patti! Kanna thali eppudu itta vachindo!**

Narrator transforms with the help of Vanthakudu, he being in the
Jangamayya and Vanthakudu as Neelima Devi

Vanthakudu in the role of Neelima Devi: - **Ayyaa! E! Desamu? Ea!**

Rajyamu!?

Neevunna bhoomulelekadaa?

Mahaadeva? Swami! Jangamaa?

Meedi Ee Rajayam unnadi?

Ea patnam unnadi?

Neevunde stalam ekkada?

Ooru peru?

Kathakudu in the role of Jangamayya replies:-

Marie! Nee! Perentamma?

Neelima Devi - **Naaperuu! Gokula Kolhapuri patnam lo nunna**

“Neelima Devi ”...

Vanthakulu in the orchestra continues to repeat the last line
"Neelima Devi".....

The dialogue between the character Neelima Devi and Lord Shiva
in disguise of Jangamayya continues:-

The narrator and his follower i.e.,
the kathakudu and vanthakudu respectively share the space while
narrating the story and continue being in the character.

The performers move in straight lines forward and back ward while
narrating (Plate 48 refers to the space found)

The performer turns round to establish of their shifting from
narrator to being the character and stand in half strong positions
and continue their dialogue. (Plate 49 refers to the space found).

The performer moves round in the given space at the
beginning and at the end of each scene, and establish the given
space by their circular movement. (Plate 50 refers to the space
found)

2. The second factor that initiates to find the space is to establish the location of an event.

The following incidents refer to the above factor of finding the space

- a. Adireddy trying to sell the fire wood (Neelima Devi Kanda) (Plate 51 refers to the above said factor of finding the space).
- b. Lord Shiva appearing before Neelima Devi to offer another fruit after she repents and prays for him. (Plate 52 refers to the above said factor of finding the space).

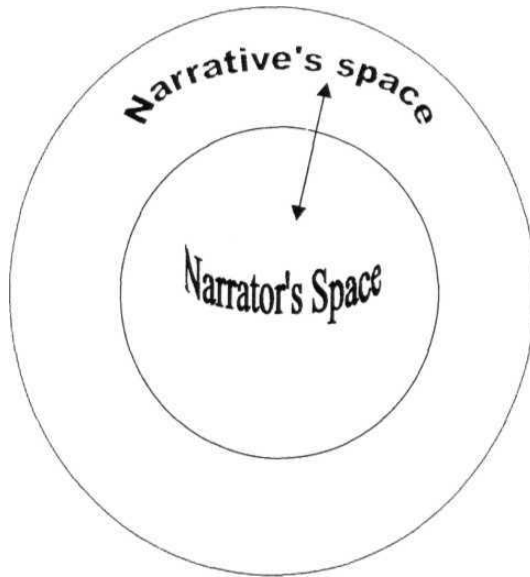
The following figure IV.10 shows the space found and its transformation from given space.

Narrator's space refers to the given space where they narrate the story. The given space transforms into the space of narrators, while they space themselves in movement and composition suggesting their roles as narrators.

The transformation takes place where the narrators shift their role in to the varied characters that appear in different scenes, into the narrative's space.

Figure - IV.10

Space in Oggu Katha)



The given space transforming into narrator's space, again transforming into narrator's space again transforms into the narratives space and vice versa.

The conjunction of both narrator's space and the narrative's space is the finding space in this narrative form, where the narrator

would also be in the characters and thus bringing both the spaces found into one.

All these three phases of transformation of a given space into the narrator's space, narrative space, when do occur simultaneously become the space found in or the performed space in other words.

This transformation of the space involves the creative process of the narrators who establish these above said stages of transformation involving the different elements of compositions, spacing, movements, dance and pantomimetic dramatization. As discussed earlier the space is the third major component that evokes the grammar of theatre in their narrative form.

IV.5. **Oggu** Katha and the Audience

As discussed earlier the fourth major component in the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha is audience. Since a theatrical performance is incomplete without audience the discussion is furthered to understand their importance and role. Though the narrative is a caste myth as a part of its content, as a form, it is received by the audience who include in many a cases, the other sections and castes of the society.

This narrative form in its development widened its contexts of performance from its ritual linked and community related one and thereby also widened its groups of audiences. This is evident from the context of the performance of this form apart from its regular, usual ritual linked events to the other context of festivals conducted by different governmental and non-governmental organisations. They even use it for propagating various social issues, policies, and ideologies of their organisations. Hence in the process of its development from the context of the rituals of the pastoral community to the other contexts cited above, it is reaching to the audiences of main streams of the society, through live performances and also through other electronic media, irrespective of its content. While the context is changing the content of the form is also changing according to the demand and so also its grammar. This facilitates to evaluate the structure of the grammar of theatre of this form, at the level of its functioning. One at the level of text and context and the other at the level of performer and audiences. It is the mutual relationship at different socio, political and religious levels of the performance and the audience that strengthens the structure of its grammar. While the performance of this narrative form is being conducted in various contexts, the issue of patronising is also to be considered, which many of times influence the performance, the context, and its duration, which in turn effect the temporal conditions of the audiences. Patronage offered by the pastoral community as part of its rituals conducted both at

household and temples, varies in the patronage offered by the other organisations suiting to the demands of the context.

Hence, to estimate the role of the audiences in the structure of its grammar of theatre, Three cases of performances are taken for study. The three performances were conducted at different places by different troupes in different contexts.

1. The performance arranged exclusively for this study and which is not linked with their usual rituals. This was conducted at Inole on 4th and 5th of October 1995 (Plates 53 & 54 for audience).
2. The performance conducted at Mallanna Temple of (Khandoba) tradition at Bagh Ambarper, Hyderabad on 15.6.97, which was linked with annual ritual of Mallanna Kalyanam.
3. The performance conducted at Ellamma temple at Balkampet on 30.7.97, also linked with the rituals usually under the patronage of the temple authorities was not done in this context -. The community and the other devotees of the deity made it on their own.

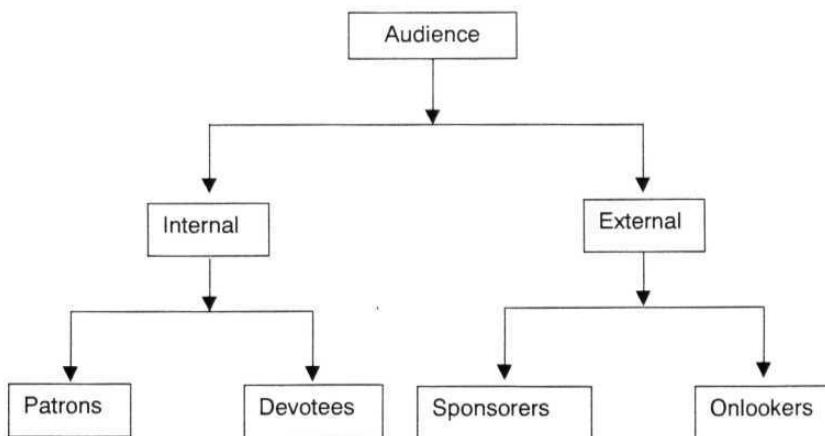
In these three cases of performances, three different caste myths were narrated.

1. Mallanna Puranam at Inole, Mallanna Temple.
2. Beerappa katha at Bagh Amberpet Mallanna Temple.
3. Ellamma katha at Balkampet Ellamma Temple.

However, despite of the variation in the content of the myths the form that is Oggu Katha becomes central to the performance. Viewing audience from this stand point it appears that in all the three case studies as mentioned above, the relationship between the performer and the audience reflect as duality in the group of audience. One group of audience can be termed as internal audience and the other as external audience. The following diagram shows the diversity of audience for Oggu Katha performance in general.

Figure - IV.11

Diversity of Audience



The internal audience view the performer not simply as the narrator but the very fabric of the narrative itself. The narrative

being sacred, the narrator becomes the executor of sacral act. Therefore he performs the role of a priest who officiates and mediates between them and the gods. In order to perform the ritual in the form of Oggu Katha, the performers depend on the community since their main occupation is the ritual performance. Therefore the performers (bards) having a right to invoke the gods to bless the community enter into a dual relationship with the community while it attains the status of audience. In other words the audience are created and related to the ritual performance as binding. Once the community is transformed into audience the performer makes them partake in the performance as internal audience. Here he manipulates the internal audience to shift between the two realms, one as patrons and the other the devotees. As patrons it is the family or a group of families and occasionally the entire community exercise their right to watch the performance through ritual situations such as rites of passage, territorial rites etc. During this occasions the internal audience who make the ritual performance possible show off as patrons. In the sense it is they who invite the bards and pay them to perform the ritual. Wherefore, the performers to satisfy such groups in the internal audience cautiously knit them into the narrative as well as to the gods. For instance as family of Kurmas/Gollas when arrange a performance to the occasion of birth of a child, the performers while performing the ritual of "Mallanna Kolupulu" they overtly uplift the family by relating them as the elders of the marriage of Mallanna, while the narrative progresses. Similarly when the

community performs as a whole the rituals connected with the wedding of Mallanna, the patrons are intrinsically treated in the text analogous to the characters in the discourse time of the narrative. Being created such made belief situation the performers transform the internal audience to devotees and help some of them to get possessed by the spirit of the gods. Once a devotee is ritually possessed by the spirit of Mallanna or Ellamma the performer takes the role of Shaman and officiates a mediation between the devotee and the spirit of gods. He also helps the spirit possessed person to come back to normalcy.

Both as patrons and devotees the audience contribute to the progress of the performance in two ways; Firstly as providers of the hand and stage properties (functions of the stage manager) contribute the progression of performance; Secondly as critics they decide the duration and the level of the narrative. As providers of the properties the internal audience if necessary give away their gold ornaments, garments sticks, gunny bags, chairs etc., as it is demanded by the performers to the progression of the performance. Once a performance is over they take back their articles.⁴⁶ What is interesting to note here is that the articles used in the performance lose the property value and are treated as stage and hand properties. Unlike in the main stream theatre where they remain as properties meant to use for other productions. Simply by decontextualising the article it loses its value as property. This observation is important because in folk theatre, as already discussed every unit of grammar of theatre only where

contextualised becomes meaningful and otherwise not. The fluid status of all the units is the prime nature of the folk theatrical grammar. Similarly the audience are also in fluid state and therefore they shift between the patrons and devotees and between the critics and the stage managers.

As critics the internal audience negotiated with the performers to fill up a particular Kanda of the text of Mallanna katha as the theme of performance. They also decide the magnitude of the narrative to effect the duration of the play. They also as critics challenge the narrator to bring out the innate talent of the performers. As already stated the performers being sensitive to the comments of the internal audience they improvise on stage the performance on one hand and on the other by stretching or condensing the scenes in the episodes. In this sense the scenic continuum of the narrator is achieved through the contribution of the internal audience as critics.⁴⁷

The other segment of audience as shown in the above diagram pertains to external audience. External audience are those who are not in the habit of internalising the text. There could be two groups within the external audience. One may be the non-kurma/Golla community people who neither own the text nor ritually incorporated to the text. The other group could be the people of the same community of kurma/golla yet do not show the sense of

belonging to the narrative as they may be effected by the modernity.⁴⁸

On the whole the external audience could be deviled into two kinds: based on the positions they take in relation to the performance; one as sponsors either the non-kurma/golla community people or those who belong to the same community who do not show the sense of belonging for various reasons may sponsor the performances for the benefit of the larger audience through electronic media or through folk festivals etc. The academic community may also sponsor the performances only to study them in which case induce a context with small group of audience when the performances may occur.⁴⁹ The remuneration in these cases is fixed not by traditional negotiations between the audience and performers as it is the case with the ritual performances but much depends upon the purposes of the sponsors. The other group of external audience can be termed as onlookers. As on lookers the audience only watch the performance for an entertainment thrill or while away the time. In both the cases the external audience show not much interest in the content of the narrative but the form of performance. Since they are interested only in the form, the time they spend to watch the performance *varies*.⁵⁰

Since the audience do not form a monolithic group but vary ranging from devotees to onlookers the performer needs to cater the demands of various audiences. This being a Herculean task the

performers strategically adopt the techniques which can be termed as panoptic vision to draw the attention of various audiences. The concept of panoptic vision refers to the controlled gauge of the performers, who by using such strategies not only control the narrative, but also the audience by incorporating them into the narrative. This concept further elaborates that the controlled gauge of the performers over the audience makes them sensitive to the responses of the audience as they are revealed through their movements. The panoptic vision of performers in a way construct the performance itself by making a direct intra and inter relationships on one hand with the narrative and on the other hand with the audiences.

IV.6. Oggu Katha and the Semantics

As described in the foregone sections of this chapter, the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha is constructed fundamentally on four units viz., text and context (space) and performer and audience. However the units themselves do not give complete meaning to the performance but only when they are found as combination. That is to say that the units are interrelated the semantic value that the performance gets can best be understood. The relation between signifier and signified in the process of signification is not unitary in the Oggu Katha performance. The signifiers intrinsically built within, the process of signification are the

one which create the meanings. In this sense signifiers have a multiple meaning as the way they are interrelated. This dimension of Oggu Katha performance is the crux of the semantics of this theatrical grammar. This feature is central to the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha, because the interaction of each unit with the other itself is in fluid state. The fluid state here refers to a state where in a fixed state of combination, do not occur but a state of possibility of occurrence of multiple combinations. In other words the nature of the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha rests on the interaction of the units in a multiple way so as to communicate "Polysemi" through performance(s).

An interesting feature is that each unit in the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha has in itself dual nature. In the text unit the dual nature occurs in the plot situation; in the "actor unit" the dual nature occurs in the roles of actor being taken between narrator and character; in the space (context) that the dual nature occurs between narrative's space to the narrator's space and in the audience unit the dual nature occurs between the internal and external audiences. Thus the dual nature is the basis for creating the fluid state to the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha.

As stated already, the actor becomes central to the Oggu Katha performance and every other unit which he manipulates justly fall in line by way of creating various combinations and thus create semantics of the performance. The actor is central because it is he

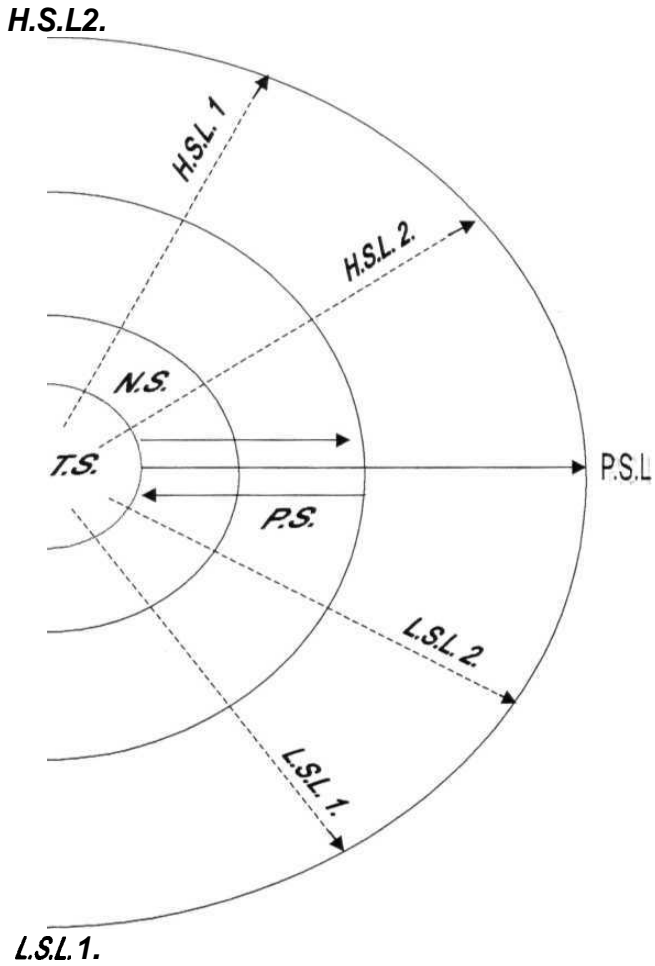
who being belonging to the community of bards (Oggu Pujarulu) exercise right to perform the cultural text, Mallanna katha to his community who invariably becomes the audience. In this sense actor becomes central to the performance because but for him the text fails to manifest itself into visual, without the visual, the audience neither can relate themselves to the text nor to their ancestral gods to whom they owe their existence. In other words it is the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha that distinguishes between the 'self (community) and 'the other' (other communities).

The following scheme is conceived based on the above discussion and presented in a diagrammatic manner to understand the semantics of Oggu Katha.

In the following diagram textual space (T.S) refers to the commonly shared text of Oggu Katha (be it Mallanna katha, Ellamma katha Beerappa katha etc.,) in its oral and aural form. The T.S. also refers to the narrative time wherein the characters through their interaction display meanings. In other words T.S. in its oral or aural form has a content value i.e., the basic story line. Being in this state T.S. refers to the plot structure of the story line. It is the actor who by virtue of his skills transforms text into narrative thereby changes its nature from oral and aural to narrative and performance text. In order to transform text into performance he shifts between narrator's space (N.S.) and performance space (P.S.).

Figure - IV.12

The semantics of Oggu Katha



In the narrator's space the actor informs the story line and in the performance space he enacts the actual events of the story. As narrator he uses panoptic vision as a strategy to control the audience. As performer by stepping into the role of character he instills interest in the audience to watch his performance. On the whole the actor by using narrator's space and performance space enters into audience space and incorporate them into textual space. In the process the audience oscillate between higher special level (H.S.L.) and lower special level (L.S.L.).

At H.S.L. the audience transforms themselves into patrons and sponsors. At L.S.L. they experience themselves as devotees and onlookers of the performance. What is important to note in the above diagram is that the actor initially places his audience on parallel spatial level (P.S.) and then manipulates their status between H.S.L. and L.S.L. In the theatrical grammar of the mainstream theatre in most cases the audience are placed at the receiving end therefore always lower to the actor. In other words the didactic component of the performance privileges actor over his audience. This brings the case the audience at any given point of time during the performance will not have any control over it. Neither their criticism nor their resentment or applaud will effect the duration/quality of performance. However in the case of *Oggu Katha*, the actor being free to shift his roles between narrator and performer manipulates and manifests the textual space so as to enter into audience space and transforms them by relating them to

the text. What is important to note here is that all the units of the theatrical grammar being in fluid state variously interact and create multiple meanings to the performance itself. Therefore every performance becomes unique and draw attentions of the audience thereby giving scope for repetition of performance. This quality of theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha makes it as a tradition by itself. As tradition it becomes an identity of the community. Oggu Katha therefore as form represents the community of pastoralists and its theatrical grammar informs semantically their worldview, which is central to distinguish their 'self' and the other.

NOTES

1. Chitra Kathalu - Stories or anecdotes which are narrated in between the main story for maintaining the interest with wit and humour are called chitra kathalu. When asked for the importance and role of these chitra kathalu Narasaiah told that "it is only to make the performance interesting for the sake of the audience, the chitra kathalu are rendered. In fact the audience ask for more such kathalu for they are already aware of Mallanna Puranam (Interview with Majjiga Lakshmi Narsaiah at Inole, October, 1995).
2. Ganges, Gangamma or river ganges when referred by the Oggu performers does not necessarily mean the actual river ganges, any river which is existing locally is treated as Gangamma. An obeisance is paid to Gangamma before the beginning of the actual performance as well by the performer.
3. "Most important is the concept of the sandhis (joints, junctures. How are all these elements of progression, permeation and proliferation from the point of view of hero, theme etc., to be joined together and juxtaposed? This time the implicit metaphor is that of the purusa (man) or vaguely, even architecture. The constituents are Mukha, Pratimukha, Garbha, Vimarsa or Avimarsa and Nirvahana. The literal translation of these terms- mouth, progression (literally counter mouth) womb, pause or complexity and resolution - will perhaps give us a clue to the nature of the terms employed. The first three are metaphors of the body. The latter two suggest movement. Finding exact English equivalents is not

easy. This is loaded terminology, which emerges from Bharata's understanding from the body system as also as familiarity with the methodology, viniyoga, of the yajna. . The analogy of the itivritta as the sarira (body) at its grossest and subtle levels of drama alludes to the nature of interconnections and the movement of time within the dramatic structure. It is the dynamics of movement and nature of inter connections which are suggested through the terms Mukha, Pratimukha and the more complex but fundamentally germane levels of movement within garbha (in the womb- unmanifest but dynamic) to further complexities (vimarsa) and again final resolution".

4. Neelima Devi kanda in Mallanna katha performed by Majjiga Lakshminarsaiah and his troupe at Inole, Mallanna temple on 4th and 5th October 1995.
5. Varalakki kanda, Ibid.
6. Mallanna Kanda, Ibid.
7. Neelimadevi Kanda, Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Mallanna kanda, Ibid.

18. Neelima Devi kanda, Ibid.
19. Varalakki Kanda, Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Neelima Devi Kanda, Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Adding coloured costumes is a change now occurring. Chukka Sattaiah of Kuruma community adds wigs, ornaments and colourful costumes in his performances. In the process of field study for this study an Oggu performance was witnessed at Balcampet Ellamma temple, Hyderabad, July, 1997 where this element of colourful costumes, hand properties were added by these performers. Even the number of performers is also enhanced to 12 to 14 and all of them were made up with bright and coloured costumes with sparkling ornaments head gears and also hand properties like trisoolam, gada etc., However, the present study is made only of one troupe as mentioned earlier, to emphasise or unfold the traditional and native character of the form.
26. The performers when asked in the interview, about the pronouncement of Vaani as it would be in English as (watts) responded and answered that normally we pronounce since we are used to. But in general telugu language that particular piece of cloth which is normally worn by unmarried young girls in Andhra Pradesh is pronounced as "Oni" as in English words like "open\Own" etc. This may be the dialectical difference in pronunciation though the functional aspect is the same.

27. When asked about the use of Vaanis by all of them in the performance Majjiga Narsaiah said that they are not particular about the colour and material of the Vaani and brought those which are handily available to them. So also they do not fix up each Vaani to each of them but take up the one which is within each. Hence the Vaani which was used by one narrator in one scene was used by yet another narrator in another scene.
28. Neelima Devi kanda, in Mallanna katha performed by Majjiga Lakshminarsaiah and his troupe at Inole, October 1995.
29. Mallanna kanda, Ibid.
30. Neelimadevi kanda, Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Mallanna Kanda, Ibid.
38. Neelimadevi Kanda, Ibid.,
39. Mallanna kanda Ibid.,
40. Neelimadevi Kanda Ibid. describing Lord Shiva appearing before Neelima Devi to offer her boon to bearchikldren.
41. Neelima Devi's six sons wailing. Neelima Devi kanda the six sons of Neelima Devi bitterly crying, when they are beaten blue and black by the rytu asami
42. Ibid.

43. Neelima Devi suffering from labour pains, Ibid.
44. Rythu asami while beating the sons of Neelima Devi in the forest Ibid.
45. These Oggu performers led by Majjiga Laxminarsaiah, when asked where do they perform? He replied " anywhere, here, there, or there in the temple, showing the three kinds of places, which were different in terms of their physical dimensions. When asked "where do you perform usually, he replied "usually we do in the temple premises, for the devotees who come to fulfil their 'Mokkulu" and we are not supposed to conduct the performance in the villages, and are responsible to perform the rituals and the narration only in the temple premises. The three kinds of spaces, the performers suggested, are in three different shapes and dimensions.
- i) The first one under a tree in the corner of the street which suggests no specific demarcation of the space for the performance and the audience.
 - ii) The second one is the premises of Satram (inn/choultry) also under a tree, but is surrounded by a compound wall.
 - iii) The third place was in the premises of the temple. (Interview with Majjiga Laxmi Narsaiah and his troupe who performed at Inole, October 1995).
46. Balkampet performance held in July 1997. The female members of the audience even gave away their golden ornaments to the performers and took them back after the performance. The performers used those ornaments as part of their makeup and costumes.

47. *Peddapatnalu Chesetappudu Inka baaga cheptharu - Aade Chitra kathalu –manchiga vuntayee*. They perform better when they officiate Peddapatnalu and with more and better chitra kathalu. (Interview with the audience, at Inole, October 1995).
48. Though the audience belong to the same community who are not acquainted with the kinds of rituals and performance and are in the system of modernity, and are departed from the systems of their life. (Interview with S.S.Yadav and his sons, Hyderabad, October 1998).
49. Contexts which were made, when they are sponsored in the festivals-
50. Onlookers were observed and interviewed and they did not respond since they wanted to leave for their works.

CHAPTER - V

CONCLUSION

V. CONCLUSION

Oggu Katha is a myth of a pastoral community in Andhra Pradesh. It is performed as a narrative so as to establish the relationship of the community with their ancestral god namely Mallanna. The dry agro-pastoral eco systems of the Telangana and the Rayalseema and uplands coastal regions gave rise to pastoralism as a mode of production. The hilly terrains and the foot hill regions facilitated the growth of pastures. The upland regions and the Deccan plateau being dependent on monsoon, which is scanty and erratic, remain mostly as a rain shadow region. Some of these pastoral groups practice as mixed economy of dry farming and sheep / goat husbandry. The semi arid region is suitable for dry farming (millets and grams) and predominantly sheep goats pastoralism. With the result agriculture could not be sustained in these strips of lands and hence substituted with an economy dependant on pastoralism. These groups of pastoralists who are settled in the villages also maintain a few herds of cattle. The husbandmen and shepherds who are involved in grazing the animals formed into Jathis (caste) in these regions. Two important castes namely the Kurmas and the Gollas adopted to pastoralism. Gollas is an endogamous group whose chief occupation is grazing the cattle. Kurma on the other, formed into another occupational group based on grazing sheep. In due course golla and kurma synonymically hired in the local records and popular versions. The pastoral community is distinct from other agricultural communities in their respective traditions and material culture. Their lifestyle infact makes them a distinct ethnic aggregate. In order to demonstrate their distinct character, one of their prime narratives namely Oggu Katha is taken in this study.

Oggu Katha is basically a theatrical performance, performed by Oggus to the Kurmas / Gollas. Katha literally means narrative performed by Oggus; therefore it is called Oggu Katha. Oggu literally means the Shiva's percussion instrument known in the classical version as Dhamaruka. Those who play the instrument are named after this instrument as Oggus. The very fact that they play the instrument, Oggu while narrating the tale of Shiva not as in the classical version but in folk version which is utmost akin to the community. Therefore the protagonist of this katha is Mallanna literally meaning the lord of mountains. Shiva in the classical versions also carries the same image of the Lord of mountains.

The pastoral community whose lifestyle is connected to hillocks and hilly terrains not in a sedentary fashion but in a semi-nomadic mode, evolved a cultural hero for themselves who is able to use wit and trick as strategies to conquer the other communities and incorporate them into their neighbourhood. If needed he conquers his enemies and protects the wealth, cattle and sheep. Such idiom of the pastoralists is expressed in most of their traditions be it verbal or non-verbal. This in due course became their identity and a community of specialist in the form of minstrels emerged within them to perform the idiom of cultural hero, in this case Mallanna. Oggus, as bards therefore became minstrels of the Kuruma / Golla jathis (castes).

Oggus are recognised as pujaries, that is priests by the Kurumas / Gollas, since they perform rituals connected with purity pollution both at familial and communal levels. As part of the rituals the Oggu Pujaries perform Oggu Katha for various occasions such as rites of passage and fairs and festivals. Oggu Katha therefore being a ritual performance and performance being in the theatrical form it can be conceived as a ritual theatre of the pastoralists.

The concept of theatre changed over a period of time in the discipline of performing arts or theatre arts. Initially theatre used to mean a place or structure, which in houses the play production which can be viewed by audience. In later course theatre started encompassing apart from plays of enactment, other elements such as the play (a text) a production (performance) and the whole range of related units ranging from persons behind the stage, on the stage and out side the stage. In other words the concept of theatre alienated itself by from physical to mental, construed level. This widening of the definition of theatre facilitated to look for continuation from pre-production- production- post-production levels of interaction between the producers, performers and audience. This mental construction of theatre changed the very grammar of theatre, in the sense that it is not simply the play production level that theatre communicates, but the very process of production on one hand and on the other, responds to communicated whole through production. This drastically changed the position of theatre from metaphysical to physical and romanticism to realism. The objective of the theatre therefore became the audience and their expectations. Thus actor-audience interactions through a text in a given context became the horizon of theatre. Each unit in theatre starting from selection of a text to the responses of audience is worked out carefully so as to establish it as a specific expressive genre of culture. The generic features of theatre is virtually the sphere where the actors enact a play through a system of signs of verbal and non-verbal in nature. The verbal component basically forms dialogues in the play, which are artistically communicated as solos and dyads. The non-verbal component mostly found through body kinetics and properties. Usage of both verbal and non-verbal components in a spatial relationship forms the basis of grammar of theatre. The space here is used in the sense as linear or vertical

construction in narrating a play. The vertical and linear spaces are organised in such a way that they can be shown as high, low and deep, in relation to the placement of properties and characters, while communicating the text of the play. Text as already stated is not simply written or verbal format but is a sequence of images, be it (audio/visual or both) which can transmit a meaning that is intended by the speaker (performer) to the hearer (audience). Viewing from this point the text of the play becomes nothing but an enactment of artistic communication. However artistic may be the communication of the performers, if audience fail to appreciate then such performances cannot survive for long. To overcome these inherent hindrances in the play production context is used as a remedy.

The concept of context (or space) has dual meaning; one the context in which the play is produced i.e. the physical context the other the context into which the play is produced i.e., the social context. The physical context refers to not only the place of production but also the time in which the production occurs. The time and space as general cognates relate the expectations of the performers and audiences and give larger meaning to the text enacted. In other words the theme of the enactment gets shared commonly between them. This common understanding of the theme unites the audience and their performers into a community. This observation is quite important because it is the physical context that not only identifies the play or the production but also the community itself. The social context that unfolds the text in sequence gives polyseme to the individual audience. In other words social context is a context of the events of the play or the inner textual plots of the play. What is being enacted as a text in a physical realm escapes itself from the boundaries of the time and space and

gets into the hearts of the audience, who actually experience the text, so as to make it as their personal, therefore their own. Each one of the audience experiences the text differently because of their own personal experience of the events which are being narrated in the play. Therefore, both the physical and the social contexts significantly influence the other elements of theatre grammar. When the text is getting enacted elements that are internal and external to the text play an important role in making communication between the actors and the audience. The internal elements such as verbal expressions, body kinetics, and other cognitive senses unfold the narrative in its progression. Verbal expression in the form of speech, diction, recitation and other sounds form an important element. This actually determines the level of performers as good, better and the best. Body kinetics in the form of movement, gestures and other special compositions determine the nature of the performance. Cognitive senses in the form of facial expressions and postures inform the event of the text and communicate the meaning to the audience. Cognitive senses determine the level of experience of the narrative both by the performers and audiences. Thus the internal elements in general are interior to the textual enactment in unfolding the narrative. They are interior because unless otherwise they are expressed they fail to give the meaning to the narrative. Performers therefore give much importance to the internal elements which intact tie their audience to the performance by instilling interest.

The external elements in the form of music, sets, lighting, costumes and make-up contribute much to the textual enactment of a play. Intact they add flavour to the theatrical production and inform at every stage the progression of the narrative. They also become important factors of identification of the

scenes/events in the play. The depth of the performance is quite often than not felt by the audience through the external elements mentioned above. The three-dimensional time and space conceptual psyche is created with the help of these external elements. Both for the realistic and non-realistic plays therefore external elements contribute much to determine the nature of presentation of the plays in terms of the category to which they belong realistic and non-realistic plays. However, external elements being external to the text privilege the director over the actor and bring forth the innate skills of director so as to communicate the tempo of the play. On the whole both the internal and external elements narrate the play audio-visually, by creating theatrical optical illusions of line, mass, colour and texture. Orchestrating of these theatrical optical components in general, voice the feel of the play. Therefore, in theatre grammar the interplay of actor and audience in a given context of textual enactment the internal and external elements determine the level of production and communicate varied meanings as desired by the producers of the play, whatever be the theatre genre (folk, classical, modern, avant-garde and postmodern) its grammar is intrinsically formed due to the correlation between the basic units such as, performer and audience, text and context. The alignment of these units be it syntagmatic or paradigmatic, form the core concern of the theatrical grammar. This finding itself is crucial to the present study because it gives a better understanding on a folk performance such as Oggu Katha of a pastoral community in Andhra Pradesh.

One of the main concerns of this study is to view Oggu Katha as a theatrical performance and therefore deserves attention from the scholars of theatre discipline to draw lessons from such folk performances which despite

changing times remained popular and being played for ages. Thus far, the theatre discipline in its subject matter relied mostly on the western theatrical paradigms as well as examples from the western dramas and plays. In the process folk performances as theatrical productions are totally undermined by the scholars related with the theatre discipline. So far no research has been done in this direction. The scholars who worked on folk performances viewed them as either folk narratives or folk arts. This premise made the scholars to view folk art and folk narrative as the arena of folklore/folk-culture. Performance studies as part of folklore field showed much interest in bringing out variations and versions in the textual enactment based on oral tradition. Contextual theories in performance studies contributed mostly in the dialogue of versions and variations in the folk performances. Nevertheless they by and large confine themselves to their own generic boundaries so as to make them acceptable as study material of the other disciplines like theatre arts. This basic perspective directed the present research to take up a folk performance like Oggu Katha to understand the innate theatrical qualities of the performance and to relate them to the grammar of theatre. This exercise is conceived as worth pursuing, since the indigenous techniques of presentation will come out and demonstrate to the persons involved in theatre either as practitioners or as researchers/scholars. As stated already the study emphasises on cutting across the disciplinary boundaries in the subject matter like folk performance. The inter disciplinary approach alone would bring to light the names of the performance like Oggu Katha which is being in practice for several centuries. This observation prompted the present study to look out for the inherent strength of folk theatre, which sustains despite the onslaughts of modernity and technological advancements. What really made the folk theatre to sustain over the years?

The above basic question guided the present study throughout and led to the finding that the folk performances like Oggu Katha also have their own grammar like that of the theatrical grammar. As explained already in the foregone passages, theatre grammar is the nerve that sustains different units in the play production. The performance of Oggu Katha also has different units and in the process of correlation the narrative emerges as a living theatrical tradition.

Oggu Katha in its theatrical implications reveals a deeper structure on the lines of grammar of that is based on certain rules and regulations, codes and conducts, and conventions and usage. The grammar of theatre surmised in the II chapter of this study fundamentally centers around the interaction of four basic units namely, Actor-audience and Text-context. The performance of Oggu Katha centers around these four basic units. Some interesting findings connected to these four units are observed in this study.

V.1. TEXT

In the first unit i.e., the text the following observations are made. After having analysed various versions of the Oggu Katha texts it is found that Oggu Katha is a form in which text related to Mallanna Katha, Beerappa Katha, Yellamma Katha, Nallapochamma Katha and Yerrapochamma Katha figure prominently. Oggu Katha is a performance form which is mostly identified by the external elements, such as music, in which oggudolu, drum figures out as an identity marker. Narrative is basically a song dance sequence form and the context makes it identifiable as a ritual practice. The text of the oral tradition remained unchanged and is basically constituted by its internal elements through which the performer and the audience interact. Therefore Oggu Katha

as a form is a broader spectrum in which various textual enactments inform the audience of the narrative which is being performed. As a form Oggu Katha basically depends upon a chief narrator who is invariably the bard and accompanied by his fellowmen as actors /performers /musicians and chorus singers. On the whole the troupe would consist of five to seven persons. In the texts of Oggu Katha, Mallannakatha predominates and is usually performed for various occasions of rites of passage.

V.1.1. NATURE OF TEXT:

The text of Mallannakatha is perceived as a cultural text for the reason that both the performer and the audience know the sequence of progression of the text. Since it is a cultural text it exists primarily in oral. The bards (Oggu Pujaries) have an exclusive right to perform the text of Mallanna in the Oggu Katha form. The right is inherited from generation to generations and therefore is initially memorised as a mnemonic text and later performed as a performance text. Therefore the oral text metamorphoses into a performance text through aural text (sruthi text) and mnemonic text (smruthi text) In the process of textualisation versions and variations occur due to inventions and improvisations or due to loss of memory of the narrator. Nevertheless the audience i.e., Gollas / Kurumas receive the text as one i.e., coming from a shared knowledge of the community. It is interesting to note that written text does not have any influence over the oral text. Some of the written texts of Oggu Katha for the sake of mass media productions though prevailing they remain as parallel texts. Since the text of Mallanna Katha is basically an oral text, it remained as anonymous. Only as performance text they are identified with bards i.e., narrator.

V.1.2. STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT:

Whosoever is the narrator when Mallanna Katha is presented in Oggu Katha form, the narrative unfolds in a scenic sequence. An important finding with regard to the textual enactment is that the narrative has a plot structure, which is unique and does not in any way resemble the plot structures of the main stream drama. This observation is important because the indigenous narrative craft with all its ethnic flavour comes to life only when it is performed. For this reason the bards exercise a sort of monopoly over the art form. The plot structure of mallanna Katha is not in unitary but multiple in nature. In general the whole mallanna Katha is identified by the community as one that comprises of six kandas. Each kanda has its own plot structure which more or less consists of five phases of action i.e. Initial action, rising of action, Climax action, falling of action and concluding action. It is important to note that these five actions are visible only when each kanda is presented as a separate story for various occasions. Usually not all the six kandas are presented in a single performance. In fact it is performed when demanded, as series of performances running for six to seven nights (each performance with a duration of roughly six to seven hours). When all the kandas or at least two or three kandas presented in a single performance on demand the plot structure varies and do not have the sequence of the five phases of actions mentioned above. Such performances do not negotiate the traditional norm of the interest curve which starts as exposition then progresses, reaches the climax and fall to attain a resolution. Therefore Mallanna katha as a whole appears to have a different plot structure which is multiple in nature. It is multiple because due to scenic continuity to each of six kandas it blurs the initial actions of each kanda as well as the concluding action. The following of action infact becomes the initial action

of the next **kanda**. Therefore it appears as a rising action itself from this view. The Mallanna katha does not keep in conformity with the plot structure of the main stream drama. In other words, initial action and concluding action become buffer zones or neutral zones. In the plot structure. On the demand of the audience the narrator manipulates the performance and dictates the course of plot structure. Usually in the main stream theatre the plays confine to a fixed plot structure. In the case of Mallanna katha the inherent quality of flexibility that the narrative has the narrator manipulates it with the consent of the audience. This shows that the narrators are sensitive to the context. of the performance as well as the response of the audience. The flexibility of the narrative lies in the very content of the story. It is basically the story of a person who belongs to the community of shepherds rose to the level of a cultural hero and marries brides of different caste people. So it is the story of matrimonial which is devoid of any known antagonist. For this reason the narrative is not structured on the action and counter action sequence and therefore do not follow the main stream drama plot structure which has visibly demarcated angles in course of its progression. Therefore the curve of the plot in mallanna katha structure appears as smooth bends informing the smooth blending of the narrative itself in course of its progression within kanda and from one kanda to the other.

V.1.3. TYPE OF CHARACTERS:

The Mallanna Katha being the tale of marriages of Mallanna, the characters appear down to earth in the sense that as mundane as the people of their community. Even the names of the characters and the suffixes or prefixes of the characters are in no way dramatise but resemble to those of their own community. Suffixes like Renuka Ellawa, Varalakki etc., remind one of the

normal ways of calling people in the daily life, similarly prefixes such as Golla Kethamma, Bhatti Kesavaraju, Balijalingalu etc refer to the family or caste name of the people with which they are identified exoterically.

Another interesting feature is that the characterization in Mallanna Katha is protagonist centric. The whole narrative and every character in the narrative contribute to the development of the character of Mallanna. Unlike in the modern theatrical plays where characterization is perceived as analogous to representation and therefore construed typically keeping in view of the differentiation of the characters. The narrator as one who represents the entire community constructs the characterisation in Mallanna Katha. All other characters contribute for such representation. In other words, the characterisation in Mallanna Katha is monolithic unlike in the modern plays where it is polyvocal.

It is found from the analysis of the characters in Mallanna katha that marriage being centrifocal to the narrative, the ethos of the characters are depicted at the familial level in which most inter and intra-personal relationships, aspirations, and desires etc., are delineated. The community to which Mallanna represents is depicted itself as a family and therefore the characterisation of Mallanna pervades the entire narrative. In the process the gender relationships that exist in the community are brought forth to various characters. An interesting feature in this regard is that the gender relations are construed not on male female dichotomy but on a symbiotic relationship that they are projected.

V.1.4. FORMS OF LANGUAGE

Since the characters are mundane and present themselves as insiders to the community, the language they speak in the textual enactment is in accordance with their characterisations. The language is also natural that one can hardly distinguish it from the language that is spoken in their actual social context. It is totally devoid of any dramatic element in the sense that one can find in the classical theatre where in the character speaks which is not used in the actual social context. The whole text unfolds itself through song-speech-sequence. Therefore, the texture of the text follows both the rhythm and rhyme on one hand and on the other dialectical usage netted fully with pun, metaphor, similes etc.,

These textual features of the text in Mallanna Katha reminds of the audience of their usage in the actual social interactions which is normally filled with jokes, proverbs, riddles and other forms of expressions, such as exclamations, queries etc. Another interesting feature in the language of the play itself that it is textured so as to accommodate the very theme of Mallanna Katha, which is based on matrimonial. Marriage being a social event, involves the people of community in various roles. The characters in Mallannakatha appeared to replicate such roles through the usage of language in a highly normative way as one can find in the actual social event of marriage. This being the case, the propriety of the characters is maintained true to the characterisation through the language that is spoken by the persons performing such role in the daily life. For instance, the female characters that take up the roles as mother, brides, mother-in-law and sister-in-laws etc., speak the

language in accordance to the roles they are performing. Similarly the characters of Tobacco vendor (setty) bandit etc., are depicted from the community's viewpoint what they think of such characters. This form of thinking is clearly marked out by using the language that suits to these characters. It is important to note that language being the medium of expression, it is expressed artistically to communicate the narrative through song-speech continuum. Songs are used in such a way that it forms the core of events in the play. In other words a basic narrative structure is netted through song sequence. The speech on the other is used to inform the audience of various actions involved in an event of narrative. The dance in the sequence fulfils the rhythmic tendency of both the song-speech only to fulfil the intensity of the actions in the narrative. This being the case the speech is more flexible and therefore takes liberty in interacting with the audience by way of jokes, chitrakathalu (short stories) proverbs, riddles etc. This is done in an utmost spontaneous improvisation form. Dialogues / monologues of the characters in the narrative belong to the sphere of speech and therefore remain flexible. Songs in the narrative follow metrical style which infact give an identification of the narrative of the genre known as Oggu Katha. This metrical form determines the rhythm of the musical accomplices such as oggudolu which is the prime instrument that makes the bard identifiable as oggus. Therefore song-speech-dance continuum becomes core of the genre of Oggu Katha, without which the genre loses the very identity as a form of narrative.

V.2. ACTOR:

This dual-role held by the performer demands a greater amount of psychological skills and energy. The following varied scenes

depict the above said complexity as a performer of this narrative form, one holds in his psychological skills and energy

The second unit is 'Actor' in the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha. Actor in the theatrical grammar is the means through which the narrative is communicated. In Oggu Katha the narrator himself is the actor and performs various characters. In other words the narrator-character continuum becomes the realm of the enactment. The shift of the narrator from the character and vice-versa is the crux of the theatrical form in Oggu Katha. This finding is important because unlike in the regular main stream theatre where actors form a separate slot and represent the character which they are playing. In Oggu Katha the narrator combines in himself the performative skills and represent not only the character which is playing but the very narrative which he is interpreting. This actor-interpreter composition of the narrator is unique to Oggu Katha performance and forms the basis of the theatrical grammar of this genre. For this reason the narrator represents the narrative from a performer viewpoint and at the same time interprets it from an audience viewpoint. Therefore every performance becomes unique. Nevertheless what is common to every performance is the skills of the actors. In other words actor becomes the common trait in every Oggu Katha performance.

As stated already, the narrator shifts himself from the character and vice-versa through the expression of his skills related to body, voice and psyche. Through these skills the narrator informs the audience of the characters which he is playing and also the events of the narrative which he performed. The acting skills of the narrator with the help of mime-movement, song-speech, emotion-mood create visual effect, sound effect and aesthetic effect to the

narrative and makes the performance live. What is interesting to note here is that the performer unlike in the modern theatre does not take up a secondary role in manifesting the text but becomes a text by himself, therefore becomes a prime unit in theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha. As an embodiment of the text, the narrator performs the text by shifting himself between the roles of narrator and character. The very circular movement that predominates in the performance reveals the centrifocal position of the actor in the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha. The circular movements of the actors either done by revolving around himself or moving round to make a circular pattern posit the text of Oggu Katha as one which is actor-centric. The vertical or horizontal lines are used in the theatre mostly as to convey the spatial relationship between the characters and events in the play. In Oggu Katha this being void the actor creates spatial relationship of the character through the skills as mentioned above. Therefore in Oggu Katha the power of narration lies in the actor and authority of the characters depends upon the acting skills of the narrator. For this reason a limited number of properties are used by the narrator while depicting the characters and events of the play. These properties are quite simple and common and do not occupy much space as they do usually in the main stream theatre. They are void of any decor. Yet when used as properties in the narrative they occupy larger spaces at the mental construction. The images created through these properties by the narrator as representing a character gives dignity and decorum to the scene he is performing. Therefore actor becomes the means or vehicle in communicating the text.

V.3. SPACE

The third unit is space in the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha. In the process of communicating the text the actor (narrator) uses space as advice to create meanings to the text. Space here refers to two types of which are used in general theatrical and performance studies parlance as context. As mentioned in the discussion on theatre grammar in this study the context refers to two types. One is the physical context and the other is social context. The physical context of Oggu Katha refers to the actual place of the performance and the social context refers the places of the narrative. This being the case the narrator manipulates two types of spaces in course of performance. They are narrative space and the narrator's space. Narrator's space is one where the narrator shifts from the role of the actor and character. The narrative space is one which where the characters played by the narrator move. However, the movements that occur within the narrative space and narrator's space or between them actually further the performance. In fact it is not the tale that progress the narrative in the performance but it is the manipulation of these spaces that progress the narration into a performance. This is the unique feature in the Oggu Katha performance because; the spatial movements as manipulated by the narrator become the zone of interaction between the performer and the audience. This interaction is crucial because Oggu Katha as stated already belongs to the ritual theatre. Without the participation of the audience the Oggu Katha performance will not progress. Only when the narrator manipulates the space, the audience find themselves relevant to the performance and therefore do not hesitate to participate in rituals narrated in the performance. The theme being the mallanna's marriages the performer becomes the pujari and the audience become invitees. The whole drama transcends from the physical

realm to the metaphysical realm during the performance by intelligent manipulation of space by the narrator.

These skills of manipulation of space are inevitable for the narrator to incorporate the audience into the spaces of performance for meaningful participation. Unless and otherwise, this is achieved the performance itself loses its validity and therefore its very existence. The concept of space becomes the vital nerve for the performance because it is a space which is nothing but the embodiment of context of both physical and mental and incorporates on a linear plane, the performer and the audience. Once this is achieved the performers through performance manipulate vertical and horizontal line relationships with their audience during performance.

V.4. AUDIENCE

The fourth is audience. For any ritual theatre audience will be of two types and also is so in Oggu Katha form. One the internal audience the other the external audience. The internal audience are the community of the folk who own the text and therefore exercise knowledge over the performance sequence of the text. They are internal also because it is through text that they maintain relationship with the narrator. It is not only the story of their god but also it is their story. Performance therefore for them is nothing but the manifestation of the text. The narrators being the manifestoes assure their internal audience a blissful state in which both share a sense of experience in their god. This phenomenon is crucial to demarcate audience between internal and external. The narrator who invariably the bard, and therefore has a right to perform the text of the audience, manipulates the events in the text so as to transcend their

audience to different levels of experience. These experiences during the performance manifested through the actions of the audience in terms of participation in the performance. The internal audience oscillates their positions while watching the performance between the devotees to donors. As devotees they fulfil their vows during performance and seek blessings from the narrator who takes up the position of priest. As priest the narrator officiates the ritual possession and mediates between the spirits of the gods and the devotees (audiences). In this state spatial relationship between the performers and the audience is of vertical where in the performer / narrator as priest elevates himself to a higher position than to the audience. As donors the audience contrary to the former position exercise higher positions than the narrator / performer during the performance. At the events of marriage of Mallanna the internal audience offers gifts both in kind and cash. Traditionally known as Katnams to the narrator / performer. In fact the narrator infuses a sense of belonging to the audience who perceive themselves as the invitees to the marriage and to express that status they offer gifts. In between these two levels the audience oscillate to varied positions and express themselves as critics, and contributors to the performers by way of supplying hand properties when needed, suppliers of the refreshments to the performer / narrator, suppliers of finances to the performance etc. It does not mean that all internal audience change their positions but a few according to the need oscillate between these levels. In other words internal audience do have a hierarchy within them. As sponsors and during ritually possession some of the internal audience rise themselves into higher level than the others. Yet all the internal audience experience the performance as if it belongs to them and by virtue of creating varied levels within these audience, the narrator through the performance

reaches the audience. This varied levels are created by the narrator intentionally so as to ensure as sense of aspiration, among the audience.

The external audience are those who do not belong to the community of Kurumas / Gollas or those mentally do not associate themselves with this performance. By being external to the performance, as audience they do not share the sense of belonging to the text and to the events of performance. Mostly as by standers they watch the performance and comment on it. They do not part take in the rituals as devotees. Yet their presence also makes an impact over the narrator. To reach out the larger audience the narrator also tries to gratify these external audience through the performance. In this sense the role of audience by being internal and external in Oggu Katha performance appear as the notable feature culminating in a fusion along with narrative, narrator and the performance. The fusion in the sense that it takes place between the traditional and modernity, conventions and inventions and devotion and entertainment.

To surmise, the Oggu Katha performance is structured on a theatrical grammar of its own with the combination of four basic units such as performer audience and text and context. All the four units are equally important and therefore maintain a unitary relationship with each other on a linear basis. Only the observer be it audience, researcher, academician, theater practitioner, etc., perceive a vertical relationship between these units by virtue of being in a position while watching the performance. The vertical relationship intrinsically means positioning a hierarchy within these four units. For this reason every study of every performance looks differentially and yet contributes to the general epistemology in theatre grammar.



.1 . Entrance gate of the Mallanna Temple, **Inole**



III.2 Mallanna Temple, **Inole**



III.3. Inscription in Mallanna Temple, Inole



III.4 Rites performed at the Choultry, Mallanna Temple, Inole



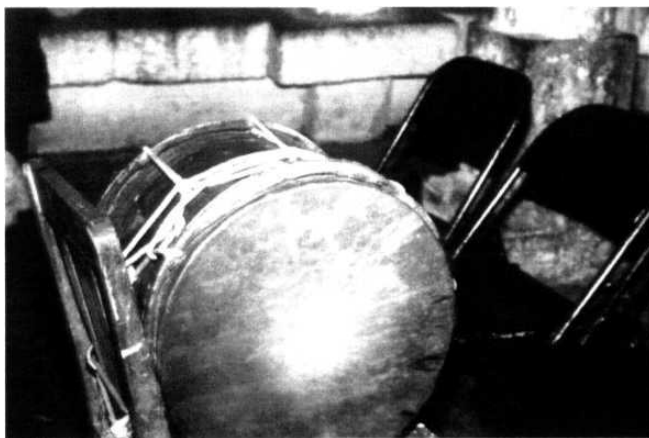
III.5. Oggu Pujaries conducting the marriage (laggam)



III.6. Jaggu



III.7. Rites performed by the **Pujaries** at the Choultry, Mallanna Temple, Inole



III.8. **Oggudolu**



IV.9. Kathakudu as Neelima Devi in labour pains and Vanthakudu as her friend



IV 10. Kathakudu as Akumanchi Devi asking for child and Vanthakudu as Neelima Devi



IV.11. Kathakudu as Mallanna and Vanthakudu as Sanganna



IV 12. All the narrators in female roles (Mallanna's aunts)



IV.13. Kathakudu as bandit (Mallanna) in disguise. Vanthakudu as Mallanna's aunt



IV 14. Kathakudu as Muslim messenger and Vanthakudu as Mallanna's sister-in-law



IV.15. Kathakudu as Mallanna's brother and Vanthakudu as his sister-in-law



IV.16. Kathakudu as Mallanna's brother and Vanthakudu as his sister-in-law



IV.17. Vanthakudu as Mallanna



IV.18. Kathakudu as Mallanna and Vanthakudu as Bapana Ratnangi



IV.19. Kathakudu as Mallanna and Vanthakudu as Bapana Ratnangi



IV.20. Kathakudu as Kotimarri Setti and Vanthakudu as Balijalingalu



IV.21. Kathakudu as Kotimarri Setti and Vanthakudu as Balijalingalu



IV.22. Aunt of Mallanna hiding under the cot



IV.23. Vaani improvised as saree



IV.24. Vaani improvised as turban



IV.25. Vaani improvised as turban



IV.26. Vaani improvised as turban



IV.27. Vaani improvised as cradle



IV.28. Rumaal (hand kerchief) improvised as baby



IV.29. Rumaal (hand kerchief) improvised as letter



IV.30. Rumaal improvised as koppu and gutka packet as flowers



IV.31. Chetikarra (hand stick) improvised as bundle of firewood



IV.32. Chetikarra (hand stick) improvised as reins of horses



IV.33. Chetikarra (hand stick) improvised as knife



IV.34. Chetikarra (hand stick) improvised as garden lizard



IV.35. Chetikarra (hand stick) improvised as tarazu



IV.36. Chetikarra (hand stick) improvised as magic stick



IV.37. Long stick and Chetikarra (hand stick) improvised as pounding shafts



IV.38. Long stick improvised as used by the shepherd



IV.39. Mimetic improvisation of shankam (conch)



IV.40. Mimetic improvisation of giving fruit



IV.41 Mimetic improvisation of mirror



IV.42. Mimetic improvisation of weaving thread



IV.43. Performers doing spontaneous movement



IV.44. Performers doing rhythmic movement



IV.45. Performers doing rhythmic movement



IV.46. Performers doing circular movement



IV.47. Place of performance



IV.48. Straight lines formed by the performers in the space



IV.49. Half strong positions of the performers in the space



IV.50. Performers making circular movement in the space



IV 51. Location of an event in the narrative



IV.52. Performers creating the space



IV.53. Audience at Inole



IV.54. Audience at Inole

GLOSSARY

<i>Aaragimpu</i>	Food offering made to the god
<i>Ambali</i>	Rice soup
<i>Ambatala</i>	Evening time
<i>Ashta Diggajapatulu</i>	Eight demi-gods who rule the eight directions viz., Indra, Agni, Yama, Nyrana, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera, Eesana
Bali	Trading caste
<i>Bandari</i>	Turmeric powder which is used in worship and believed to be auspicious.
Bapana	Brahmin caste
<i>Bicham</i>	Alms
<i>Biksham</i>	Alms
<i>Biyyappindi</i>	Rice flour
<i>Bonam / Bonalu</i>	The pot in which the food offered to god is taken during certain rituals. The Bonam is carried on head.
<i>Bonkatam</i>	Bluffing
<i>Bottu</i>	The vermilion mark on the forehead, put on by Hindu women (not widows). Widowed women are forbidden to apply the mark.
<i>Boyinam</i>	Food
<i>Butti</i>	Basket made of bamboo staves

<i>Chandanam</i>	Sandalwood paste
<i>Chilukala patnam</i>	One of varieties of sacred design and drawn on the floor by the Oggu pujaries.
<i>Chinna indulu(vindulu)</i>	The small dinner that is followed after the wedding ceremony in Golla community.
<i>Chitrakathalu</i>	Different anecdotes that are narrated by the Oggu performer for the comic relief. These are knitted in between the main story and are essentially improvised texts.
<i>Dandivaram</i>	The Sunday which comes after the Kartika Amavasya or Sat tiamasa is called Dandivaram or the big week (dark moon day in the month of February (magha maasa).
<i>Erukalasani</i>	Fortune teller (Erukala is a caste and their women often referred to an Erukalasani are sooth sayers - They make predictions which are called godi or gadde: The character of Erukalasani very common figures in several folk narratives in Andhra Pradesh.
<i>Gadapakadagatam</i>	A purification wash of the threshold by the house on various occasions.
<i>Gauramma</i>	Goddess Gouri
<i>Golla</i>	A pasioral community in Andhra Pradesh.
<i>Ingulam</i>	Fire

<i>Intipatnam</i>	The sacred design. drawn in household rituals by the Oggu Pujaries.
<i>Jaggu</i>	A percussion instrument, which is called as Damarukam in classical version.
<i>Jangamayya Devara</i>	Jangama is a saivite mendicant Jangamas are priests to lingayts
<i>Jolapatalu</i>	Lullaby songs
<i>Jole</i>	A cloth sting bag usually carried by those seeking alms
<i>Jonnalu</i>	Jawar
<i>Kacheri</i>	A village level court
<i>Kanda</i>	An act in the Oggu Katha is called as Kanda.
<i>Kandukam</i>	A moat around a fort
<i>Kangollu</i>	The wooden slates used to draw patnal.
<i>Karri aavu</i>	Black cow
<i>Katha</i>	Story.
<i>Katnal</i>	Gifts given to the bride and bridegroom after the wedding ceremony.
<i>Kattelu</i>	A wooden shaft and also fire wood.
<i>Kobbera kudakalu</i>	Dry coconut shells
<i>Komati</i>	Vysya caste
<i>Kumkum</i>	Vermilion powder

<i>Kurumaguda</i>	A ward where the kurumas live
<i>Kurumollu</i>	A subsect in the pastoral community in Andhra Pradesh.
<i>Laggam</i>	An auspicious time fixed to conduct rites such as marriage, thread ceremony, entering into new house, naming the new born etc.
<i>Logili</i>	Courtyard
<i>Mailaru Devudu</i>	God Mallanna is referred to as Mailaru Devudu in Inolu.
<i>Mailapatnalu</i>	A kind of patnam drawn for purification of the precincts of the household for performing the rituals)
<i>Mallanna Panduga</i>	The festival of Mallanna celebrated from the time of Sankranti to Ugadi (January 12 April,7)
<i>Mallanna Puranam</i>	The myth of Mallanna, the caste deity of the pastoral community in Andhra Pradesh.
<i>Manda</i>	Herd of sheep, or goats or Cattle
<i>Mangalaaratulu</i>	The songs sung when the aarati or lighting of camphor is offered during rituals.
<i>Mangali</i>	Barber
<i>Moduguku</i>	A leaf whose powder is used for drawing patnam

<i>Mokkulu</i>	Vows taken by the devotees on the name of god to obtain rewards.
<i>Mutyala polu</i>	The patnam drawn with rice by the Oggu Pujari in the mariages of the pastoral community (Muthyam is a pearl)
<i>Nagavelli</i>	A rite observed in the wedding ceremony of gollas conducted by the Oggu Pujaries.
<i>Oggonipalli</i>	A village near Warangal which takes the names of Oggu, because the residents of the village are Oggu katha performer and village is a single segment.
<i>Oggu dolu</i>	A percussion instrument used in Oggu Katha.
<i>Oggu pujari</i>	The performers of Oggu Katha, /who officiate the rites of passage of kurumas/gollas
<i>Paadalu</i>	Feet
<i>Pacha</i>	Turmeric powder Green colour
<i>Palakalu</i>	Slates
<i>Palupattu</i>	A ritual practice seen in the wedding of gollas dring which the milk is poured in a bronze vessel and then some songs on Mallanna or Beerappa are sung and then the Oggu Pujari drinks the milk.
<i>Pandugalu</i>	Festivals
<i>Pasupu Mudda</i>	A daub of turmeric powder made into a conical shape.

<i>Patnam</i>	A sacred design drawn by the Oggu Pujaries to conduct various rites. The patnam is believed to be the place or dias where the god or goddess is invited to accept the offerings.
<i>Pattikankanam</i>	Bracelet made of cotton.
<i>Peddu gampa</i>	Big basket.
<i>Pedda indulu (vindulu)</i>	The big dinner arranged after the marriage ceremony in kurumas/gollas community.
<i>Pedda patnam</i>	The several patnams drawn collectively by many Oggu Pujaries during the Pedda Panduga (Sankranti to Ugadi) in the various cult centres.
<i>Pendli kuturu</i>	Bride
<i>Pendli melam</i>	Music band used in marriages
<i>Pidakalu</i>	Cowdung cakes used to lit up the fire.
<i>Polu daram</i>	The thread running across the small mud pots used as borders in patnam.
<i>Polu munthalu</i>	Small mud pots placed at the four corners of the patnam.
<i>Puste</i>	Wedding locket tied around the neck of the bride by groom at the time of marriage.
<i>Puste kattadam</i>	Tying the puste
<i>Putta</i>	Termite mound/snake mound/ant hill.

<i>Puttu bangaram</i>	Soil taken from snake mound is called bangaram or gold which is believed to have medicinal and ritual properties.
<i>Puvvaku</i>	Tobacco leaves
<i>Rokkam</i>	Money
<i>Santu</i>	Progeny
<i>Satram</i>	A choultry where the devotees stay.
<i>Satti amasa</i>	Kartika Amavasya (it falls on dark moon day)
<i>Suryanamaskaram</i>	The Oggu Pujari makes the newly wedded couple to bow to the surya deva or sun god which is called Suryanamas karam
<i>Tagaru</i>	Gold
<i>Talavalu</i>	Rice mixed with turmeric powder used in marriage which is placed on the heads of the bride and the bride groom by each other. Talavalu is called as Talambralu also.
<i>Tamalapaku</i>	Beetel leaf
<i>Tangedaku</i>	A leaf of <i>Wrightia tinctoria</i> whose powder is used in drawing patnam.
<i>Thellapindi</i>	White powder
<i>Trisulam</i>	Trident
<i>Unnikankanam</i>	Bracelet made of wool.
<i>Vaani</i>	Half saree .

Vaddera

An occupational caste of stone cutters

Vanthakudu

Accompanying artiste who usually supports with the chorus and also performs various characters

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