

# “The Kannada Theatre Has Had A Huge History- A overview”

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## ABSTRACT

Like the other states of India, Karnataka is also one among them. Every state has its own significance when it is observed based on its regional background. Likewise Karnataka also has its own significance. Karnataka is identified on the basis of its back on the basis of its culture as it is identified on the basis of its topography. It's a particular set of practises, beliefs, rituals and habits define the particular culture, innumerable subjects have been leading them to the forefront. One such naval subject is 'theatre' the origin, growth and development. Karnataka theatre culture is a fantasy. It has story. It has imagination. It has truth. It has falsity as well. Moreover it is cocktail of all these. Likewise the communalism and thinking has not only influenced and played an important role in the theatre culture, but also contributed a lot for its development.

We can introspect the theatre culture keeping all these contents in mind. Because the theatre culture can answer the differently when it observed in different perspectives. Therefore, it is a small effort to study the big theatre culture under the above title. The word 'tripart' in the title means the three parts which indicate the each and every branch has its limitations. Having divided the study of theatre into triparts, it is an effort to focus briefly on the whole concept of theatre. This classification is very important from the point of Karnataka. Since it reveals the activities of theatre and its importance Above all, I have tried to explain and explore the meaning and concept of theatre, besides making it crystal clear for the students when they are trying to study the theatre culture.

Art and culture survive only where there is existence of man. His life reaches the fullest extent through these. They are better companions of his life which directly or indirectly affect. This unbreakable rapport remains till the last breath of his life and man is pioneer of such art who laid the foundation to it. It is still active from the day he wrote prologue to it. Yet its existence differs from one place to another place for which also man is one of the reasons. But environment is an important root cause for this change. Because environment controls the life of man As a result of its control he shapes his life style. Arts are also formed according to his life-style. Therefore regional conditions are clearly reflected when theatre is studied in detail. According to that theatre has formed its own existence. Hence, Kannada theatre is not exception to this. The theatre which comes under Karnataka's geographical frontiers is Karnataka theatre. The prime language which is the outcome of this geographical condition is Kannada. And theatre which functions in this language is the Kannada theatre.

When we start studying theatre its good to start studying the theatre along with these basics of theatre, for the theatre culture is associated with the existence of man. Then only we can understand his artistic taste. Culture and tradition in this environment is a resident of this locality because his origin is hidden deeply in this very environment much before the civilisation. Hence it will be clear that Kannada theatre or Karnataka theatre originates from this background. In this way the theatre which originated along with modernisation is called the Folk Theatre. It can be an overstatement if call folk theatre as the first and foremost branch of the theatre.

### **FOLK THEATRE:**

Knowing the roots of folk is not once cup of tea. One research says that the aspects of the human imagination based on his experience have been useful in various ways, moreover the day they formed specific cult called folk literature although they never appeared to him the sources of folk theatre were among themselves such as games, dances, songs, elocutions, proverbs, riddles, puzzles, ballads and drama. These were not born or all of a sudden directly, instead they were started and formed by influence of the environmental, social, cultural or political factors in the process of dynamic change of time.

As folk theatre is born and brought up in rural areas, it represents the life-style of people, their rules and regulations, their talent, their magic, their values, and their principles as they were. In this regard drama is the mirror to intrinsic life of the rural people. The life of the 'Bayalata' lies here only. Even though it functions on the basis of culture, it has inculcated new changes in womb. Though the widespread folk-dramas seem to be different, the marvel of their unity is that has been tied under thumb rule. And this unity in diversity is beyond expectation. Anyone can witness the selection mythological characters and stories of great leaders and social consciousness as the theme in these. Likewise it is very difficult to deny the deep rooted relationship between theatre and religion without any solid and valid proof.

The main types of the folk-theatre at present are Moodalapalya, Gombeyata, Sannata, Doddata, etc. probably these forms having originated in the ancient times, have still survived by utilising one particular theme, costume, make-up so and so forth facilities. But these types, in order to in the present, have taken a lot of help from small sketches, songs, music and dance, etc. the reasons for all these to be so helpful are the more practised human customs, worship and the notion of divinity which have got a strong religious and social foundation. They had their own life-style, dreams and aspirations, values and ideas, having the desire to bring out their internal to external. When their feelings were being represented on the stage, their day today life itself was reflected on the stage including the changes of their life. Therefore it can be clearly stated that the folk theatre did not only under patronize but also an event of entertainment to the people.

In the later stages folk theatre became worldwide due to entertainment and some other reasons. As it expanded it required more and actors As a result this art was more organised and its history that it became a type of professional art. The car- festivals play an important role in development of folk-theatre. Probably there is no village without celebrating a car festival. One or the other festivals of one or the other deity definitely takes place. Hence regions festivities are not restricted to the region only. Therefore neighbouring village people gather there without any invitation. However folk-theatre turned to be a medium of entertainment. To entertain the people gathered in the car-festivals professional and amateur troupes were ready to entertain them.

Hence the folk-theatre continued to be perfect heaving taken the direct or indirect support of a troupe of actors. The theatre and the troupe maintained harmony between them while presenting. In to it is essential to notice that all these continued on the basic of regional divinity and regional folk community. It has become a system to introspect theatre without considering the cluster and community. Therefore it is very apt to study professional theatre like the folk theatre. At last, professional theatre became modern form of theatrical form of performance in the Kannada theatre. It's clearly visible that no art form inculcated the characteristics of modernisation except the theatre which later came to known as professional theatre in the later stages. Hence professional theatre forked out as a second branch of theatrical performance.

### **PROFESSIONAL THEATRE:**

While discussing the modern phase of Kannada theatre it not only reveals the aims and objectives but also its origin, birth and advancement. This modern phase of Kannada theatre was born slowly compared to regional languages. That it became the most useful in the last decades of the 19th century.

When Karnataka was coming in the contact of modernity various fields of life like transport, medical field, education, technology, industry, printing and so on so forth all these became a part and parcel of the life of people, at the same time professional form of theatre too entered India as a gift of modernisation. As a consequence of the Marathi and Parsi theatre put the foundation stone for professional theatre in Kannada. It's a record that newly born Kannada called professional theatre came into force by imbibing the style and stances of Marathi and Parsi theatre with the originality of Kannada taste. The term like profession and theatre has got a special meaning. It is called professional theatre since the activities of theatre are nothing but profession and this profession is a life-line to one's life.

Soon the professional theatre became a famous matter of discussion in everybody's mouth throughout the region in 19<sup>th</sup> century, besides being a source of income. And the number of theatre grew rapidly as they went on performing according to the taste and needs of people. Therefore we see a number of innumerable professional theatres like 'Gadugina Veeranarayana Krupaposhita Krutapura Nataka mandali' which was

commemorated in 1877 and onwards. To name some of the most famous and best theatres are as follows;

1. Shree Channa basaveshwara Nataka Sangha.
  2. Kannuru Company.
  3. Shrihatti Company.
  4. Ratnavali Theatrical Company.
  5. Dattatreya Sangeeta Nataka Mandali.
  6. Mohammed Fir Nataka Mandali.
  7. Master Hirannaiha Mitra Mandali.
  8. Chamarajendra Karnataka Nataka Sabha.
  9. Shakuntala Karnataka Nataka Sabha.
  10. Shri Chamundeshwari Karnataka Nataka Sabha.
  11. Ranadhani Karnataka Nataka Sabha.
  12. Shreekanteshwara Nataka Sabha.
  13. Rasika Manollasini Nataka Sabha.
  14. Yalanduru Nataka Mandali.
  15. Karnataka Nataka Company Gadag.
  16. Ranennuer Vishwagunadarsha Nataka mandali.
- And
17. Halasiddheswara Prasadita Sangeeta Nataka Sabha, etc

Suppose we go observing the history of above-mentioned troupes struggle, it is somewhat special. We need to take into consideration of the activities of these companies. These are important sources.

No sooner do we remember drama, we recall their performance shifting from place to place, region to region, going to various people and presenting to according to their tastes, many working hands for this system, so and so forth in terms of words. From canvassing, street to street, issuing and selling tickets, arranging seats, to make up behind, costume designing, lights, stage decoration, background singing, directors, proprietor, actors and actresses, cooks, one or two, in to they create an artificial, luxurious and unimaginable heaven. They feed the sumptuous food of entertainment. Though they had a millions of problems, they never showed them to the people and stood determined to entertain their audience. It may not be an overstatement if I say that they made the professional theatre an everlasting in this way.

There were no burdens to the professional theatre till the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Instead it paved the grand-road wherever it went. But it's a universal truth that everything should have an end on this earth. I think it applies to the professional theatre too. By the emergence of the new form amateur theatre, the luxurious old form of professional

theatre troupes and theatres lost their glory. As a result a new era of theatre performance began. This new era is the third Brach of theatrical performance.

### **AMATEUR THEATRE:**

Amateur theatre is somewhat rather different than the two forms discussed above. As the very name itself indicates, it is for habitual performance, and for the entertainment, it known in public with new concept theatre. The activities of ADA, troupe started in Bangalore in 1904, were somewhat different and the united efforts of the literate in cities which means the hard struggle of the educated ones the amateur theatre sprouted. The same efforts spread in other cities too. The middle class which came to be existence became a centre of all activities.

On the other hand assure that the existence of activities of amateur theatre was seen since time immemorial. E.g. when the folk theatre and the professional theatre were started, they were amateur theatre's activities only. Through the passage of time their activities dependent on trade, family and races due to socio-environmental mindset, support and the receptiveness.

The proceedings of amateur were going according to the tastes of the troupe or audience. But at the time of 30 and 40 decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century, amateur theatre also started having new perspectives. Besides, T P Kailasam, the father of humorous plays in Kannada, entered the amateur theatre recently. The amateur theatre started having new stands and viewpoints as his plays and presentation styles were entirely different. Namely, this sort of theatres started not only to entertain but also to alert people and correct the society. Consequently, the aims of amateur theatre were towards society. Eventually innumerable theatre-performers entered the theatre. So they became the reason for establishment of various amateur theatres.

According to the nature and function of theatre actor and troupes, and the way they dedicated themselves to the society, by barrowing various themes from the popular elder writers like Shriranga, Parvatavani, Jadabharata, Kurtakoti, Kuvempu, Da Ra Bendre, Masti Venkatesh Ayyangar as well from the young writers like Girish Karnad and Chandrashekar Kambar, P Lankesh, K V Subbanna, the amateur theatre proceeded towards its golden age.

The aims and objectives of this amateur theatre have broadened due to this golden which has become a cause of lateral thinking in this field. As result it reflected itself as society-oriented theatre. When the life mankind stabilized in society, the amateur theatre went on functioning with its vivid objectives having branched into different groups like street theatre, environmental theatre, absurd theatre, children theatre, so on so forth. It succeeded in this regard. This type of proceedings is still going day today in amateur theatres.

The amateur theatre, which grew only with regional environment with social characteristic features, can condemn any sort of harassments of any corner of the world. Wishing the welfare of regional environment supports the harmonious life of these people. Kannada amateur theatre has got a special place in this regard. The great leaders who in this regard have rendered their service with this intention have not been awarded Ramon Magsaysay and Jnanapeetha but also they have made them, the feather to this field.

## CONCLUSION:

It is evident that the Kannada theatre has had a huge history. Above all there is a chance to use it as a source of information while focussing on language, life-style, region and community. Sometimes it seems difficult to introspect certain difficult concepts due to lack of sources. Then we can assume that while recording the history of any one art form on its cultural standpoint, it helps to construct other forms of art. So it is good to classify Kannada theatre or Karnataka on the basis of above bifurcation. Moreover, it is helpful the students of theatre. There is a possibility that it can be still segregated into separate units by collecting enough proofs to the above classification. And it is crystal clear that their importance can be studied still deeper level.

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