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Folk Dance Lavani and It's Classic Features

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Abstract

Lavani dance form is more Natyadharmee, mainly flourished through Tamasha and Marathi Cinema. Great Shahirs and poets have composed Lavanis having great literature value. Now a days Lavani with shringar rasa is performed. Lavani of Tamasha has repertoire. Lavani has three main types such as Shahiri, Baithakichi Lavani and Phadachi Lavani. Phadachi Lavani is more popular and has five sub types. Lyrics, music, dance style, attire makes the performance very catchy and attractive. Gholvan is the different style of dancing method which shows different layers of meaning of word with abhinaya. Many classic features adorn the Lavani dance form. Lavani has great prospects towards establishing as theatrical art.

Objectives: To give a thought to Lavani dance form to adapt more and more classical features

Methods: References from M.A. project work and authentic internet information

Results: Write up covers details about Lavani folk dance history, structure and prospects.

Conclusion: Like classical dance forms, Lavani also has distinctive classic features such as angika, vachika, aharya and satvika abhinaya.

Key words: Lavani, Shahir, Shringar rasa, Nritya, Abhinaya, attire

Folk Dance Lavani and It's Classic Features

Maharashtra has rich heritage of ancient culture and tradition of folk dances. Those are artistic and vibrant in nature. Out of which Lavani dance form is very popular art form and is adorned with many classic features such as lyrical composition, nritya and special acting/abhinaya styles (i.e. "adakari") which is more Natyadharmee.

Lyrical compositions: Great Shahirs (i.e Lavani composers) and lyricists of Tamasha films contributed high literature value compositions which are very catchy. Shahirs and musicians made them very melodious. This is very strong, positive aspect of Lavani. They played very important role in Marathi cinema which cannot be overlooked. These compositions focused on merits and demerits of the behavior of humans with natural emotions, surrounding nature's mystery, resembling it with metaphoric examples mainly through shringar rasa. Though in the initial period Shahirs have written the compositions in bhakti rasa, veer rasa, vatsalya rasa today's Lavani is dominated by shringar rasa.

Shahir Anant Fandi (period 1744-1819) has spoken about changing times drawbacks.

Shahir Honaji Bala (period 1754-1844) was patronized by Sawai Madhavrao Peshwa. He was the first person to set Lavanis using classical ragas and converted Tamashas into musical concerts. He also introduced Tabla in place of traditional Dholaki. He also developed the Baithakichi Lavani- a subgenre which is presented by the artist in the sitting position. He incorporated Tamborin- a musical instrument in the performance.

Shahir Ram Joshi (period 1758-1812) who belonged to brahmin family was also a poet having royal patronage in Peshwa Darbar.



Shahit Haibati (period 1794-1864) saw once desecration of females dancers so he decided to change Tamasha's shringar prominent look. Without changing its mould, he changed the subject giving spiritual touch to shringaric Lavani. He volunteered to become a part of Kalgi paksha (side) that belongs where Prakriti or Shakti is superior than Purusha and Prakriti pleads Purusha. This he did by coordinating with Naath Sampraday and Varkari Sampraday. He was called 'Kalgi Samrat'. He was a great Shahir-poet, thinker and experimental artist who adorned Lavani by Kirtan. He insisted that artist should observe high virtue of values. His contribution towards Tamasha Lavani is unforgettable.

Shahir Paththe Bapurao (period 1866-1945), whose original name was Shridhar Krishna Kulkarni and was a Brahmin. Because of passion towards Tamasha, he left his business and started his own Phad (party or unit) and started writing Lavani. He penned high number of Lavani songs. He is venerable in Tamasgir category.

Latest contributors in Tamasha by Dadu Indurikar, who penned very famous VagaNatya "Gadhawacha Lagna" in which Lavani dancers played a major role. Kalu-Baalu's Tamasha was also one of the renowned Tamasha which gave fame to Lavani dancers.

Tamasha films started from Marathi film 'Ram Joshi' (1947). From cinema named 'Sangatye Aika' (1959) Tamasha and Lavani got the top popularity. In cinema 'Pinjara' the artist Sandhya performed very energetic Lavani dances. Hansa Wadkar, Jayashree Gadkar, Leela Gandhi are the actresses who rendered Lavani dances so attractively that its popularity reached the peak. Because of cinema, Lavani has got status, prestige and has entered middle class and higher middle-class hall of house. Youngsters as well as older ones started singing it with interest and people started receiving appreciation and honour for their skills. Now a days format of cinema has changed. Lavani dances are rarely seen in cinemas. Though it had got royal patronage, its popularity kept on varying.

Poet G.D.Madgulkar (honoured by the title 'Modern Saint Poet'), Sanjeev, P. Savalaram, Jagadish Khebudkar and many more are the talented Lavani composers. Specialized Lavani singers like late Sulochana Chavan, Usha Mangeshkar, late Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Roshan Satarkar who heightened the popularity of songs which is very supportive for making Lavani structure attractive and more lively. And the theatrical performances are welcomed by the audience.

Nritya: Lavani nritya is prominently played in Tamasha at villages. In Turkey, Tamasha means scene or view or fun. Also, there is an opinion that 'tama' means darkness and 'asha' means hope to go towards light. So Lavani nritya has responsibility to show brighter side of the life. Tamasha has peculiar repertoire and Lavani dancers play important role in it. In Poorva Ranga part (first half) of Tamasha, Lavani which is presented is also called "Rangabaji".

1. At the beginning of the show all artists with Sardar or Nayak on duff sing 'Gana' which is 'Ganesh Stuti Stavan'.
2. This follows introduction of artists
3. Lavani dancers with 'Nachya'(male acting womanish) play 'Gavalan'. This is between Krishna and Gopikas (i.e Gavalani). In this item, Krishna's mischief of childhood and youth with Gopikas is shown.
4. In Batavani, Jokular dialogues are delivered by "Songadya" making performance fun-filled.
5. It follows Shringar rasa Lavani nritya items in series i.e. 'Rangabaji'
6. In Uttar Ranga (second half) VagaNatya is performed by all artists on the issues related to history, society, politics. At the end it concludes with moral of the subject.



Throughout the repertoire, Lavani dancers play major role.

From the point of performance, Lavani has three types.

1. Shahiri Lavani: Shahiri Lavani started in the form of songs in 13th century was sung by Shahirs and dance was not a part of performance. It had Stanzas ('Kavane') praising deities, kings, soldiers, battles, religious and historical places. It has also a form of Bhedik Lavani which is metaphorical and spiritual. For e.g. "Chitta Chetanacha Chuna" (limestone of awareness). Later on, the subjects of shringar, beauty got manifested.
2. Baithakichi Lavani: Lavani dancer sits and performs Lavani songs with fair abhinaya and glimpses of dance. These Lavani performances are accompanied by ragadari sangeet. The artist is known by the name 'Kalavantin'. It was mainly performed in royal families such as Peshwas, Sardars, Landlords, Patils (Heads of the villages). Presently this type is included in the theatrical performance.
3. Phadachi Lavani: Phadachi Lavani which is played in Tamasha is dance prominent, very artistic, stylized with special acting and very energetic. Accompanied by full quorum of artists such as Sardar or Nayak, Nachya, Songadya (delivers jocular dialogues) and other co-artists supplement the performance. In this form the dance is supplemented by dialogues, abhinaya and the main rhythm of dholaki. At the end the dancers do Mujara (salute) to the audience. It has mainly five versions such as:
 - i. Baleghati: Pinning of separation is involved.
 - ii. Chakkad: Full of intensified shringar rasa
 - iii. Sawal-Jawab/Kalgi-Tura: Sawal-Jawab means question-answer on spiritual subjects or it includes the varied points hidden in the reality of nature. Kalgi-Tura has fight and competition between two parties i.e. Kalgi and Tura. Both sub types ultimately reveal the truth/mystery of Prakrkiti and Purusha.
 - iv. Chauka Lavani: This has four stanzas or it changes the tune four times.
 - v. Pratikatmak Lavani: The emotions of male and female are shown using simile or metaphor.

Special acting/ Abhinaya styles: Dancers perform dipping foot movements most of the times, do hastamudra abhinaya and use various Padabhedas resembling with Bharathanatyam. It mainly emphasizes on stylized facial expressions with supple attractive body movements of major and minor limbs which is known as "Adakari". Sometimes the dancers perform in frivolous manner which is not acceptable to elite class of people. Some artists are conscious about the acceptance of adakari by all class of people. In Lavani 'Gholvan' is the item in which for the same word, the dancer performs various acts and show different layers of a particular word with abhinaya. They make use of Ghugaroos to express tempo of emotions cleverly and are continuously supported by musical instruments like tuntune, jzanz (sambal), dholaki, harmonium, sarangi, duff, halgi.

Lavani songs always follow a special musical pattern. Compositions are always in eight matras i.e. "Padmavartan" or in six matras i.e "Bhrungavartan". These matra vruttas or jati vruttas are very entertaining to ears and give mesmerizing effect. The dancers sometimes take 'chakkars' (revolving around self) somewhat like Kathak dancers.

Attire of Lavani dancers: They wear heavy nine-yard saris with jari butti or jari pallus having sail or veil like pallus which they hold with both hands up above their head. They wear attractive jewelry such as bindi, vel, zumka, nose-nath, bugadi, thushi, kolhapuri saaz, long necklace, bormala, bangles, finger rings, vaki, waist belt, toe rings. Their hairstyle is very



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decorative, sometimes big hair-knot (ambada/bun) or hair plait hanging below ambada and flower veni (flowers thickly knitted with string of thread) on ambada.

Like classical dance forms, Lavani also has distinctive classic features such as angika, vachika, aharya and satvika abhinaya. The footmarks of the journey of Lavani dance forms show it has great prospects as theatrical performing art form. The dancers' consciousness about adapting scientific and spiritual approach will add more classic features to the Lavani dance form and higher bliss will be experienced by the artists and audience. Surely the place in the dance culture will be established with greater recognition.

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