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FOLK ARTISTS PERFORMING THE 'SAMATA SAMBRAMA' AT DHARWAD

BASAPPA Y. BANGARI

PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE VICE CHANCELLOR
KARNATAKA JANAPADA VISHWAVIDYALAYA, GOTAGODI

Abstract:

A state level function of folk arts held in Dharwad on 28th July 2007 at Kalabhavan. 'Samata Sambhrama' a two days folk festival and folk artists came to Dharwad and performed their skill. The Dalit artists participated activity in this folk festival.

The 'Pooja Kunita' headed by Hanumant Nayak of Kanakapur, veeragase, headed by Miss M.Shilpa and her team of Chikamagalur; Dollu Kunita by Phaniyamma and her team of Shimoga and Jaggalige vadana by Shivappa Malagi of Dharwad were attracted the public even if there is raining their enthusiasm was high level.

M.P. Prahalad Joshi inaugurated two days folk festival by beating 'Jaggalige' K.T.Chikkanna, Commissioner, Dept. of Kannada and Culture welcomed the folk artist who gathered here from different corners of state. Folk culture is foundation for all other cultures. Folk art forms are still with us yet there are various modern art forms and modernization. Folk arts are so strong. They do not lose their importance and existence. Although we have to conserve them. Chikkanna expressed his opinion.

District commissioner M.S. Shrikar told that Rs.9.55crores to be spent for such programmes, welfare of folk artists and revival of folk art forms which are deterioration.

Folk arts folk dance, Kavighosti, Vichara Sankirna, Kavya-Gayana-Kuncha etc., programmes held at Dr. Mallikarjuna Mansur Kalabhavan.

KEYWORDS:

Folk, Folk Arts, Samata Sambrama, Folk Dance, Folk Festival

INTRODUCTION:

There was a perfect platform for the rural talents. Folk artists from different places of Karnataka gathered at one place and exhibited their art forms.

Goravara Nritya, Sobane Pada, Lambani Nrithya, dollu Kunita, veeragase, Jaggalige etc., were the major events. Kamsale nrithya performed by Mahadeva Murthy and his team of Bengaluru and the Folk dance of Kalanidhi Cultural Academy were the central attraction of the function.

Further chittimela headed by Kumariah and his team of Hassan, Gumate Nrithya of Mangaluru were also amused the public.

He said that there was an urgent need for identifying folk talents and giving adequate publicity to the neglected art forms. "This will go a long way in saving folk arts which are on the brink of extinction," he added. Speaking on the occasion, former minister and writer B T Lalita Naik said that a man's roots were in the folk arts. It was a healthy sign that the government was trying to protect native art forms by holding festivals.

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Next in Mysore Deputy Director of Kan nada and Culture Department K H Chennur read a message by Minister for Kannada and Culture Mahadev Prasad in his absence. "The next Samata Sambhrama will be held in Mysore. The government has released Rs 9.55 crore for encouraging Dalit artistes and reviving the folk art forms in the State," Chennur said, quoting the Minister. North-West Karnataka Road Transportation Corporation Ashok Katawe, Hubli Dharwad Urban Development Authority chairman Lingaraj Patil, Deputy Com missioner M S Shrikar and others participated in the inaugural function. Kannada and Culture Department Commissioner K T Chikkanna welcomed the gathering.

A Record of Devils at Udupi :

Devils created a record on 29th July 2007 at Udupi. More than ten demons including female devils gathered on a stage at Ambalapadi temple to amuse the audience.

Laxmi Janardhana Yakshagana Mandali of Ambalapadi celebrated its golden jubilee by conducting a two days workshop of Badagatittu bannada vesha (rakshasavesha). It was an historical event where devil characters of Tenkutittu and Badagutittu gathered at once on a stage.

Audience recognized the slight alterations made in costumes compared to the devil characters long back. Two artists of Yakshagana created a ferocious scene whose costumes are so nice and apt to the character. All devils performed their skill and talent.

Practical Lessons :

The artists of Yakshagana not only performed their talent but also conduct practical session where they taught audiences who showed interest in it.

Usually the artist prepare and ready at the place called 'Chauki' but here they applied colour and wore consumes just in front of the audiences. All the participants of workshop especially children got a wonderful experience.

Variety :

In the workshop artists and experts of Yakshagana found out variety in characterization. Each and every devil showed different shade. Ferocious, cruelty etc were there as mentioned in mythology and also there were micro changes.

Experts and senior artists guided other artists in order to popularize and give an artistic touch to Yakshagana.

After this workshop many more artists showed their interest in Yakshagana. Organizers decided to conduct 10 days training camp at Yakshagana center of M.G.M. College with remuneration. It was an effort to conserve the folk art forms and popularize in the modern era. The researcher witnessed the event and had first hand experience.

Food Festival at Hubli :

Folk foods like Besan undi, chakkuli, palak, tomato huli, ragi sandige, akki sandige, hunchi tokku, karindi, shyavige, badami powder, bili shyavigi, chatni pudi, chigali antu, shenga holige, ellina holige etc attracted the people of Hubli-Dharwad during July, 2007.

The students of K.L.E.s College of Business Administration organized a unique food festival where they gave space to the folk foods along with modern food items like pizza, sandwich, burger, chocolate etc.

People liked more our traditional foods called home made products rather than modern food items called fast foods.

Now a days public have been realizing the importance of our traditional foods and their nutrition value and also realizing the adverse effects of fast foods.

Everywhere there is knowledge explosion. Due to modern media globe is becoming smaller than smallest. Although traditional media is playing its role in rural areas where the modern media are yet to influence folks.

Government of Karnataka tried to communicate and sow the messages of family planning, literacy, health and hygiene, rural development programmes etc among the people especially who are living at country side with the help of traditional media viz. Lavani, Gee Gee pada, Yakshagana, SriKrishna Parijata, Radhanata etc.

Dept. of Information is hiring the folk artists in order to convey one or many messages among the

folk. A prior training is must to the artists. The folk artists are active and clever they have been grasping the ideas given by the officials of Department of Information and inserting them in their art form whether it is Lavani or Yakshagana. Artists cease a particular opportunity to convey such messages to the audience.

In Karnataka information services started in 1930 and grown grandly. According to P.Nagachar, "The information services in Karnataka, erstwhile Mysore, came in to existence in 1930s and was called the Department of Publicity". Gradually the department was expanded and it became independent in 1950. In 1955, the publicity wings of Labour, Health, local self government and others were brought under the wings of Department of Information. Initially tourism was part of this Department, but, was bifurcated in to two Departments namely, Department of Information and publicity and Department of Tourism in 1974.

Now the Department of Information and Publicity is called as Department of Information. It is also one of the independent organizations coming under the direct control of the state government.

The primary function of this Department is to give publicity to the plans, policies, programmes and activities of the state government. It also functions as a liason agency between the government and the press including electronic media. This Department collects information, feedback of various programmes implemented by the Government. It is conducting various programmes, functions, workshops, exhibitions, poster and slide show, songs and drama forms along with publication of periodicals called 'Janapada' (Kannada) and 'The March of Karnataka' (English).

These two periodicals depict the developmental activities of state Government. These are focusing on rural health, education, literacy, conservation of forests and afforestation, exhibition of social evils etc.

Further these monthlies we giving wide publicity for the programmes launched by the state and central governments in a simple way so that the moderate folks can understand clearly.

Information and awareness of HIV/AIDS, social evils importance of education, health and hygenity, rainwater harvest, maintaining bio-diversity etc., have been given to the public through folk media.

It is true that today the folk media have been loosing their significance and few artists are also showing their reluctance to perform them. Although Government of Karnataka is trying to popularize the folk media.

'Due to traditional mass media characteristics it was impossible for the audience to join adequate in the process and rise to more than a simple receiver. Technological which broke the traditional one-way model of mass communication introducing two-way or even multilateral interaction between different numbers of communicators. Burning conventional dithotomy between producers and receivers of the information is one of the main features which differentiate the online medicated communication from the mass communication'.

Government has also realized the importance of mass media and using them to achieve their goal along with folk media. Government of Karnataka and other states have been adopting new strategies to convey messages to the public about the developmental activities and programmes etc. Folk media are able to reach a small group at a particular time and place. If the same folk media appear on T.V. it can reach the mass at a time. It ceases area and time. Anyway the message should be reached to the people. Still there are alterations and advanced strategies are coming up in this regard.

Government of Karnataka also supported to the non-government organizations to achieve the same goals. Various NGOs are collaborating with Departments of State Government in order to deliver the messages.

Folk art forms are the apt media to reach the mass from which people's attraction can be drawn in order to feed the messages. Local art forms and local language are most useful to convey the messages without any hurdle and ambiguity. Inter-personal communication plays an important role while importing messages to the audience in villages.

Yuva Dharwad Utsava :

The two day cultural extravaganza, the 'Yuva Dharwad Utsav 2007', came to an end On Tuesday (9-10-2007) evening. This two-day event was held at the Janata Sikshana Samithi (JSS) College campus at Vidyagiri in Dharwad Nearly 2,200 students comprising of 482 teams from 90 Pre-University and degree colleges in the district participated in this two day cultural extravaganza.

Speaking during the valedictory function of the 'Yuva Dharwad Utsav- 2007', Deputy Commissioner M.S. Srikar, the man behind the success of this youth cultural extravaganza stated that the 'Yuva Dharwad Utsav', which had turned into a platform for the youth to exhibit their talents, would be every year from now on wards. Moreover he stated that the 12 teams who had emerged the winners in different categories 'Dharwad Utsav.2007', would be allowed to exhibit their talent at the 'Dharwad Utsav',

which was being held in Dharwad for three days from November 16. On the occasion, Mr Srikar felicitated JSS College Principal Ajit Prasad for helping the district administration in Conducting the 'Yuva Dharwad Utsav -2007' successfully. It was literally a riot of colours and talent par excellence which was depicted by the youth, which literally reflected the culture, folklore, and tradition of the land. The folklore dances and songs especially attracted more attention as it reflected the rural essence of the land. The drama Propagating national integration which was staged by Sathya Sai Baba Home Science girls received much admiration from the audience. The Bharat Natya from the Students of different colleges also earned accolades along with the skits and mimicry who sent the audience into raptures. At the valedictory participatory certificates were given to the participants.

Kadambotsav :

Banavasi is a historical village 24 kms., from Sirsi. Madhukeshwar Temple and Madhumati (Parvati) Temple are summit of Kadamba art. The tall Nandis of the temple are famous. The honey coloured Madhukeshwar linga shines even in darkness. Another attraction is a stone cot (Royal Cot) carved from a single stone and many statues of sculptural beauty. There is also a museum. The river Varada flowing in front of the temple adds to the ambience. The Pampavana is adding its beauty to the surrounding.

The 4th Century AD. saw the advent of Kadambas in Banavasi in North Kanara District. Mayursharma was the first great leader to raise the banner of Kadambas. Banavasi was their capital and hence they were called Kadambas' Banavasi. They had an emblem of lion and flag with a picture of Vanara (monkey). Banavasi was referred as 'Vaijayanti' or 'Vanavasa' in Mahabharata. The Greek Geographer Ptolemy who had visited India had referred 'Vaijayanti' as 'Byzantine'(Greek word) in his geographical outline. During the Kadamba dynasty ruling from 4th to 14th century (peak ruling from 6th to 8th century) developed cities like Govakapuri, Belgaum and Banavasi. They encouraged Kannada and Sanskrit languages. Literature reached its height of glory. Hinduism was popular religion. Jainism and Buddhism were also protected. Kadamba kings patronised music, paintings and architecture. The temple statues have been evidences of the artistic excellence of those days. The gigantic Bhairava statue at Goa which is of the same period, is very beautiful and artistic.

The Kalleshwara temples of Halasi, Jain basadis, the Madhukeshwara temple of Banavasi belong to Kadamba period. Temples and Mutts were the chief educational centres. Everybody had an opportunity to get the education he liked free of cost.

Kadamba kings used to celebrate 'Madhumahotsav' or 'Vasantotsav' as per their dynasty custom, with all splendour for the rejoice of subjects. When the kings failed to celebrate that Utsav then the people took the celebration tradition in the same way as they used to be. In 10th century, then great Kannada poet Pampa described and lauded the Madhumahotsav in his writings. That showed how the festival was celebrated and his concern for such art and culture. In reminiscence of Madhumahotsav' or Vanamohotsav', in 1992 Banavasi and Sirsi local youths organisations under the guidance of elderly persons started a week long celebration at their own. Later, this Naadahabba was christened Kadambotsav by the state government which took on the responsibility of celebrating it.

Karnataka's prestigious Pampa Prashasthi, which used to be given to the noted Kannada poet in Bangalore, gained its importance when the government started to confer that Prashasthi on the noted Kannada poet at Banavasi. Kadambotsav a two day festival celebrated was at Banavasi, by the state government to recapture the past glory of the erstwhile Kadamba dynasty on its full scale. On both days gala of cultural programmes were arranged which attracted a moderate number of connoisseurs of art and music. Artistes from local, state level and outside state were invited to give variety of performances at the festival.

Pampa Prashasthi is known as the Gnanapeetha Award of Karnataka. In two days the festival included books exhibition, painting exhibition, country sports, adventurous water sports, inscriptions exhibition, Nrutyanjali, Janapadahini, Krushi mela, kavigoshti, theatre shows, Kuchipudi dance, Naga nrutya, Yakshagana and the like entertained one and all. Sound and light a cynosure and thrilling event was presented, which left the indelible moment in the minds who attended the festival. This year festival, in all was an attempt to bring back the glory of Kadamba dynasty and cultural integration and pride in its deserved passion.

Hampi Utsav :

Hampi Utsav, a three day mega cultural festival of dance, music and drama will held every year during November at the world famous Hampi, was another attempt by the State Government to recapture the past glory of the erstwhile Vijayanagar Empire. The connoisseurs of art and music, who had gathered in large number, were treated to a great cultural feast during the three days. A host of artists of national and

international fame, from different parts of the country, in addition to several well-known artists of the State were invited to give a variety of performances at the cultural festival. Colorfully decorated stages were erected and named after the great poet saints. "Purandhara Dasa' (The main stage opposite to Lord Virupakasha Temple), Kanaka Dasa (within the precincts of Virupaksha Temple) and another stage, exclusively erected adjacent to Sasivekalu Ganesh, the monolith idol, for staging plays named after Bellary Raghava, a renowned playwright and theatre personality of yester years. The location of the main stage was very attractive with the illuminated rocky terrain forming the backdrop.

Vijayanagar Vaibhav a light and sound programme organized by the Song and Drama division of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, near the Elephant Stables was the main attraction of the cultural festival. The sprawling open space in front of the Elephant stables and the guards room was made best use to erect the stage and also use these two monuments as the backdrop.

There were wrestling matches and rural sports dismantling and rejoining the bullock cart wheels, lifting of boulders, breaking of colour water filled earthen pots hanging about 15ft high, and the like which entertained one and all.

Display of fireworks and the colourful Janapada Kalavahini, in which around 400 artists of various folk forms, participated in the over a kilometer long procession, left the moment evergreen in the minds of those who attended the Hanipi Utsav. Depiction of the history of Vijayanagar Empire through laser beam was introduced for the first time in this years cultural festival.

Janapada Loka :

Folk Culture is essentially of the people, by the people and for the people", said T.S.Guster, the well-known folklore expert. Our folk culture is an important constituent of native culture. It can be said that this culture came into being with the birth of man. Representing the tradition, lifestyle, religious practices, festivals, dance, music, literature, painting, sculpture of the common people of the bygone era, it slowly receded to the background after the Industrial Revolution. However considering its vital link in the evolution of the society, few enthusiasts in Europe established the Folk art museum.

In our country, the museums of Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai had a separate wing for the Folk art. But the first exclusive folk arts museum was established in the Kuvempu Kannada Adhyayana Samsthe of Manasagangothri University at Mysore in 1967. In the campus of Kannada University Museum and at Kuppalli 'Sahyadri Desi Vastu Sangrahalaya' started during 2008. The other folk art museums in our State are Manjusha' at Dharmasthala, Govinda Pai Research Institute at Udupi and Janapada Loka near Ramnagaram. Janapada Loka is situated at about 53 Kms away from Bangalore on the Bangalore - Mysore highway. The brain child of Shri H.L.Nage Gowda, it began with a corpus of Rs. 1 lakh donated by him. On March 14, it was dedicated to the people of this state after surpassing many hurdles in over a decades period. It is spread over an area of about 15 acres. Greenery abound here. The comple houses museums of folk objects, an open-air theatre, a studio, an art gallery, a lake with boating facilities and space reserved for seminars, discussions and such other activities. The 20 feet wide main gate is a sight to hold. It has war horns and a shield (Harige) depicting Vishnu. By its either side lie 26 feet high pillars called 'Nadidwajas'. About 5000 art facts highlighting the life and arts of various tribes and native people spread throughout the length and breadth of our State are displayed in the museums.

These museums display puppetry dolls, Yakshagana costumes, weapons, kitchen utensils, wooden bells, mouse and pig traps, earthen pots, weights and measures, agricultural implements, swords, daggers, musical instruments, photos of Lambanis, Kodavas, Kinnari Jogis, Halakki Vokkaligas and other tribals in their colourful attires, sati, hero stones, inscriptions, guns and other items. The museums have attractive names- Lokamata Mandir, Chitra Kuteera, Lokamahal and so on.

Plans are afoot to construct a big campus on the lines of Thai Village in Bangkok and Polynesian Cultural Centre in Hawaii. It will have a College of Folk Arts imparting teaching, research and training, a modern library and a studio with Film making and recording facilities. The collection of audio and video tapes here is good. Many programmes are conducted throughout the year to conserve the folk art. As a subsidiary of Karnataka Janapada Parishat, Janapada Loka has become a hub of activities. Its a dream to come true for Nage Gowda, who has dedicated his life for the preservation of the folk art. In these days of Globalisation, all out efforts should be put to sustain and nurture the unique, native art forms to promote indigenous culture.

Museums like 'Janapada Loka' have power to influence the mass. The name 'Janapada Loka' itself recalls our experience, things related to folklore. After glancing over the items preserved in the museum we do proud of our ancestors who used them and maintained traditional knowledge. In modern era such may seem like fancy, but such items do not disappear from our mind. Our folklore has a mesmeric power of communication.

CONCLUSION:

Samata Sambhrama, a cultural festival aimed at encouraging folk arts, traditionally pursued by Scheduled Castes and Tribes, got off to a colourful start at Kala Bhavan in Dharwad on Saturday. The two-day event, organised by the Directorate of Kannada and Culture in association with the district administration would provide a forum for artistes from oppressed classes to exhibit desi arts, which are not so familiar. Inaugurating the festival by beating the traditional instrument (Halige), MP Prahlad Joshi said that it was the responsibility of the society and the Government to preserve and promote traditional art forms, which had been an indispensable part of man's life for centuries.

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