

REDEFINING FOLK DRAMA: SPECULATIONS OF SIRI SAMPIGE

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Abstract: *Modern Kannada dramas raise new questions as to the constructions of fiction in hopes of building a new cultural history. As narratives are reinvented from neglected roots, the epitomes of cultural history evolve in the process of redefining. Life experiences of intellectual minds resulted in different ideas. Worldviews, attitudes, stances, rationality, reading, observation, scenes, reactions, characters, dialogues and acting in the plays are reshaped. While modern Kannada dramas in the process of redefining cultural history, deliver great success and there are some distinctly different achievements in that regard. The muscle centric hegemony made India a single garland of the same composition but its originality lies in its plurality, Karnataka is not an exception for this. This article focuses on India's plural interests. Pluralism and its stand are discussed. Folk is one such neglected field of which has went through significant change over and adapted as a powerful media of expression in the modern times. Siri Sampige is one such drama written by Dr. Chandrashekar Kambar the texture and the text adapted from the folk and delivered through addressing the values like stream of consciousness, myth of Narcissus, feministic aspects, dramatic monologues and Yakshagana techniques. All these issues by befitting in new narratives defends the redefining of drama.*

Key Points: *Redefining, marginalised, drama, humanity, duality.*

Introduction:

One folk story line by the veteran A. K. Ramanujan for two extraordinary writers tanked-up the modernity and its values. The two come up with two different master pieces. Chandra Shekar Kambar with Siri Sampige and Girish Karnard with Nagamandala both are the feathers in the crown of Jnanapitha award for their achievements respectively. Among all literary components, the drama is the latest inclusion in Kannada literature but this form grown into a gigantic pace because of the powerful plays, their performances in theatre. Today in Kannada backdrop, drama discussions, their confrontations with existing norms, performance and questioning the society about its follies are all made dramas more relevant. Beginning of the century witnessed many western ideologies conditioning us through this powerful medium of expression, playwrights redefining the Indian psyche by reaching forbidden corners of the wretched, one-sided, biased mentalities and prejudiced lives of India. Conquering of the bents, the upheaval of protests were all discussed under close vigilance of humanity and gave importance to the side-lined, communally degraded, biased possibilities by redefining folk drama.

Often dramas are regenerated or recreated according to the new norms of society. Generally, folk dramas embody old mythological stories and historical shreds of evidence within the folklore. These plays tried to redefining by understanding the modern-day problems and confronting grievances of pressure in the modern period.

What are the questions rises by the selected play? In the present article analysing different issues, are associating with same event, fact, object, and person. Resistance with the base of monarchy and religious authority were analysed, fidelity of woman and personality of man and his wilderness were

analysed well in the drama.

Redefining folklore

We can see one or the other way the whole world art facts are contributions of their own folk heritage. Indian Poetics in its interpretation of Bharatha's Natya Shastra defines drama as bramha's creation and calls it 'Panchamaveda' However; scholars have identified the rituals with Stone Age traces that existed as a part of early human life. The relationship between folk and theatre remains a living heritage to this day. There is a strong relationship between folklore and Kannada drama, every theatre activity of Kannada dramas are attributed to the folk culture of the Kannada region.

The present study focuses on the reconstruction of Kannada dramas as a means of expressing altered rustic sensibilities based on folklore. For that, selected Kannada play Siri Sampige which is created to match modern sensibilities, exploring the redefining possibilities of cultural history and discussing the changing forms of folk aspirations.

However, here the subject of the context selected for the mainstream society rather than to folklore. The modern theatre in the initial stages lingered to the main stream stories, the texture is folk, but the ingredient is purely modern. During the Navodaya (pre-modern) and Navya (modern), folklore entered into the theatre with new emancipation. During this period many folk contexts were restructured and remade in Kannada. The process of this restructuring mainly defines and interprets the author's knowledge, talent, perceptions, comprehensions, pressure taken by his time, motivations, and influences. In the present article, the selected play discussed within its limitations under the subtitle, woman sensibilities.

The study of redefining plays of Kannada is a task with a lot of variety and diversified sensibilities, on the surface the playing or enacting of melodrama for the entertainment. But underneath the drama and the context selected to display is beyond one's perceptions. These literary pieces are filled with insights, theologies, thoughts, ideologies, pains, and failures of civilizations that are all abundant in it. This expressive mode of literary form confronts the human struggles against in humane muscle power and always remade, reconstructed and restructured to meet the new possibilities of equality in the society.

Today the modern plays tried to interpret realist notes by examining the man's life through all other possible sources and even sometimes imagining logical shape. Truth-finding and justifications are not responsibility of literature, but dramas play the role of drawing attention to the achievements of truth. Through this, it differs from the framework of representation that the hegemony has adopted.

In India the traditional art forms like music and dance are still an unbroken contact with its culture. But in modern art forms like to use these older terminology art forms, the influence of chorus and fourth wall concept of interacting with the audience are all helped this theatre that has inspired the popular or commercial stage with its various gimmicks like's opera, broadband performances, ballets, and also borrowings from the cinema produced admirable plays in Kannada. It is against this background of examining for roots that Chandrasekhar Kambar's ethnic theatre has to be placed and evaluated. Something still needs to be said of the bayalata form in which this early play was so imaginatively clothed. Bayalata, as Kambar is never tired of repeating, is total theatre. It includes 'dance, drama, narrative, song, sex, death and religion'. Both the audience and the actors participate in what is ultimately a shared religious experience in the form of a play'. A traditional bayalata performance begins with prayer and ends with the audience as well as the players going to a temple early in the morning. His subsequent experiments in theatre have taken him beyond bayalata. He has now turned to yakshagana and its possibilities for theatre today. Although many feel that he has 'bourgeoisified' the folk form and trimmed it to suit Western and Festival of India audiences. The myth of Narcissus and a folk story line by AK Ramanujan created for Bangalore audience. He has brought it closer to Western ballet.' Kambar has tampered far less with the native form and his chief innovation has been the introduction of the playwright with its modern

connotations. This has entailed a shift from the third person narrative of traditional yakshagana to a more dramatic form where the individual voices of the characters are allowed to be heard. The only restriction on the playwright is that he has to imaginatively enter into the world of the community's myths and deploy these myths to structure his plays. Siri Sampige, was made possible through a Ford Foundation fellowship. The writing of the play began in May 1986, published in English in 1991

Siri sampige:

In the play the playwright writes elaborately the concept or myth of ardhnanarishwara as two lives in a single body, both the souls are not siblings instead the writer tried to make them an opposite sexes which attract each other, but the destiny of the story takes a twist and concludes as they can be siblings only even after splitting. The sexual impulse shown in the beginning doesn't continue but ends up as they are mirror image of each other. Their longing for each other with love and hate, duality is more spiritual than the infatuation.

He searches for the completeness in every maiden put forth in front of him. The prettiest lady sirisampige herself not a complete woman he desires.

"Which maiden is flawless? Son, if you want such a maiden, then you yourself must be your own wife",

In the analysis to show the confusion regarding his spiritual ecstasy and later the news of Sirisampige's pregnancy transforming the same spiritual ecstasy into a hellish experience where he is eating his own corpse symbolizing the destructive quality of self-love.

The play Sirisampige is in sixteen scenes. It is a commanding play that talks subjects of the urge of self-stimulation of young man to attain sexual pleasure, he who has surrounded by whole palace with women folk and a woman's sexuality in her husband's absence is another important theme in Kambar's plays. Here, Shivanaga, a young prince who marries Sirisampige half-heartedly, is lost in his own dilemmas, when a cobra pursues her and takes the form of Shivanaga to woo her. The Bhagavata (narrator) tells the story in third person and other characters dramatise in the first person what he narrates. The Prince of Shivapura, son of King Nagara Nayaka has reached the age of sixteen when, on his mother's wish, he is to be married. But the Prince himself has fallen in love with the impossibly perfect lamp-maiden who comes to life one night in his bed chamber and disappears dancing into his own body. He says that while he was 'all alone and fast asleep... The wall of this palace cracked, and someone drew a sword from its sheath and let my thighs feel its edge.' He now demands that his body be split in two and the equal parts stuffed into two pots. Out of one he emerges wholesome. But out of the other pot emerges, not the lamp-maiden of his dreams, but a hooded cobra. Marriage to Siri Sampige, daughter of King Pushparaja of Sevantipura, succeeds but the Prince, in the grip of his earlier infatuation, will have nothing to do with his young wife. He periodically takes to visiting the lamp-maiden in a pool outside the town into which he gazes. Meanwhile Siri Sampige herself has been charmed by the snake-god, Kalinga, yields to him and conceives. Suspecting his wife's infidelity, the Prince orders a trial in which Siri Sampige proves her chastity. She takes the snake which coils round the Nagalinga, on her own body. She remains unharmed. In the end in a fit of jealousy, the Prince kills the snake and dies himself, fulfilling the ancient prophecy that he will die upon the death of his brother. The play, then, recapitulates the growth of human consciousness from simple narcissism to full adulthood and genital sexuality. The symbolism of the snake is unmistakable, only from the abundant Freudian literature but also explicitly in the play itself, when Siri Sampige becomes pregnant by Kalinga who turns out to be the 'rejected body' of the Prince. In the parallel sub-plot, involving the court jesters, Awali and Jawali, the sexual theme reappears: Jawali can make love to Kamala only when he turns into a snake. The collective deaths of the Prince and Kalinga, as well as their thematic doubles, Awali and Jawali, may be viewed as the tragedy of the self-regarding narcissistic self. Sirisampige, a collection of some of his finest plays, is a treat. While Kannada readers and theatre-goers have been familiar with the plays for long, the English translation helps connect with a larger audience.

Going back to Kambar's folk metaphors, there is 'Sirisampige', the play that gives the collection its title a woman, much like the earth is the life-giver and her sexual desires fulfil the larger purpose of the need to continue the cycle of life.

From the perceptions of western ideologies and Indian thoughts blended well in redefining the modern folk drama in Kannada. Beliefs, motifs, practices, ethics these literary creations made the contemporary folk subject blending with the modern sensibilities created the powerful drama base in Kannada. During the modern drama the 'stream of consciousness' concept was applied in the redefining process of plays. This happens with the Character Shivanaga, the protagonist, with Awali Jawali, for some extent with Siri Sampige the title character.

Though folk literature interprets beyond the hegemony base of decentralized sources but cannot sustain from the fists of power centric hegemonic groups. The natural talents of folk expressions have their control or dominating influence by society. That's why we cannot come to the conclusion that everything which the folk supports the human kind or stands in support of ideal life patterns. These hegemonic patterns are clearly demonstrated by the Shivanaga that too in his unsound sensible state when it comes to his knowledge that his wife is pregnant. He immediately starts worrying of the Siri Sampige's infidelity and kills her paramour Kalinga the king of whither world.

His mother the queen throws a tantrum on his lack of enthusiasm about the line of brides she has shown, and says "Which maiden is flawless? Son, if you want such a maiden, then you yourself must be your own wife",

One of the main deals of the restructured literature is on woman oriented sensibilities, the restructured plays tries to shutter the whole concept of fidelity afforded on woman the SiriSampige demolishes the accepted norms of paternal dominance by addressing woman's basic instincts. The writing throws light on Sirisampige's suffering her justification for her immorality echoes the voice of a betrayed woman, the boldness and clarity with which she explain the reasons for her immorality challenges Kambar's women characters individuality and eagerness to gain independence.

Whole palace is surrounded with prettiest women of the world and he is throbbing for someone else. The new bride Sirisampige longing for a man to satisfy her yearnings, these contradictions are narrated masterly by the playwright.

The SiriSampige's interprets according to the changed situations and uphold the importance of her presence in building the society, family, sacrifices, struggles, agitations, and her role in handling family and expand the margins.

The play punctuates in wholly Indian, and derivative values and techniques lead the passage to maturity. In redefining these larger truths through the use of Indigenous folk myths, Siri Sampige goes way beyond traditional yakshagana.

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