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*Understanding
Culture*

Editor
Prof. Dr. Syed Azharuddin

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**4th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ASIAN LANGUAGES
AND LITERATURES**

UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

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Prof. Dr. Syed Azharuddin



**Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University
Global Art Publications, Aurangabad**

**4th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ASIAN LANGUAGES AND
LITERATURES: UNDERSTANDING CULTURE**

(ADES-IV)

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Introduction

Karnataka is home to innumerable and unique folk forms, spread across the state. These distinctly exquisite forms continue to evolve and represent the cultural identity and regional flavor. Historically the region has been a cradle for several flourishing religious and has created a haven of folk forms.

India has a long tradition of civilization which has imbibed different ancient cultures. Hence an analysis of the evolution of various strata of folklore, such as tales, songs, riddles etc. became inevitable. Because the roots of the Indian civilization itself is a confluence of many advanced and primitive cultures, local traditions from the provinces have been carefully examined both for their alliance with, as well as contrast to Vedic culture.

Indian culture as represented in folklore has been of one and the same quality, texture and strength, since the Vedic times. It has one soul. It is indivisible. The passage of time has not changed its form. Different religious doctrines have not affected its unchangeable spirit and even the outer garb. The provincial customs and linguistic peculiarities also have little affected it. For thousands of years India was culturally united. The cultural harmony in India, despite differences in provincial traditions, is unique. Unity in spite of diversity is what the divergence of traditions in folklore points to.

Folklore in India is not a mere relic. It is an important section of the multi-coloured, multi-lingual, multi-traditional Indian culture, which is practically incomprehensible. One cannot get a full view of it. One cannot judge it precisely because it is unimaginably vast.¹

Folk tradition of Karnataka

Folklore is the traditional knowledge, culture and practices of commoners' mainly rural inhabitants which are passed orally from individual to individual. Folklore of a society is rarely written or published. Folklore is the mother root of a nation's culture. Karnataka has a rich folklore repository in the form of ballads, riddles, legends, stories, proverbs, dance forms, customs, festivals, sports and medicinal remedies.

¹ Durga Bhagwat, *An Outline of Indian Folklore*, Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1958, pp.1-3.

Folk forms of Karnataka

The various forms of folk literature in Kannada can be found in the form of stories, riddles, proverbs and ballads. In the folk dance we have dance like Karadi kunita, Kolata, Veeragaase, Nandikunita, etc. In folk theatre we have plays like Yakshagana, Dodatta, Sanatta, and pupeetry like Sutrada bombe aata and Togalu bombeaata. The proverbs of Kannada are rich in moral and ethical values. A number of folk fairs are celebrated with much gusto in Karnataka like the Annamma, Maramma, Male Madeshwara, Harohara, Junjapp name a few. Even today in rural areas, there is a demand for traditional healers, who give herbal medicine called Naati Aushadhi for various ailments to both human beings and domesticated animals. There is an urgent need to document the recipe/components of the medicine being prepared by the traditional healers so that the future generation may not lose the benefit of it.

Folklore in Bidar

Bidar district, which occupies a central position in Deccan plateau, is mixed with several racial strains, ethnic groups and socio-cultural clusters. Long after the fusion of Dravidian and Aryan elements, there was, in the medieval times, a continuous influx of batches of various types like the Turks, Mughals, Iranians, Afghans, and Arabs who were welcomed and encouraged to settle down in the area. As a result of these admixtures there has been a cultural mosaic. Bidar town has made a unique contribution to the socio-cultural history of Karnataka in particular and of the Deccan History in general. The historical monuments and sites in and around the Bidar city belong to different periods of history.² It is a place of delight to poets, artists, and the archaeologists. Bidar is a tourist destination. Its climate is gracious. Some of the monuments are unique. Bidri art of Bidar is world famous.³

² See for detail Yazdani G, Bidar, Its History and Monuments, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi, 1995, pp.28-62.

³ See for detail Jagdish Mittal, Bidriware and Damascene work in Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, Hyderabad, 2011, pp.16-19.

Religion has more impact on the Folk art, dance, music, theatre of Bidar district. Religion, God, Goddess, religious sects, worships, beliefs, practices, social and traditional systems are more important aspects of culture in Bidar.

Meaning of Jananapada (Folklore)

Janapada is a word made by two words Jana-people or tribe, Pada- a kind of short verse joined together as a sandhi- a grammatical term. The folk culture and colloquial tongue of Kannadigas.

Classification

Karnataka Janapada folk tradition even though includes every aspect of Kannadigas life can be broadly classified into three main heads:

1. Folk literature (Janapada Sahitya): Janapada literature reflects the life of Kannadigas as it is lived from day to day. Bidar also contributed to enrich the folk literature. In Bidar literature divided into many parts. Geeta sahitya, Gadya Sahitya and Drusha sahitya long with Drama Sahitya. Most of the scholars wrote above topic and contributed the literature.⁴

2. Folk songs (Janapadageethe): Janapada geethe, songs expressive of the common joys and sorrows of the common people. All can be subdivided according to subject matters of the occasion or purpose the different forms intended to serve. Folk songs are in various forms like Bhulaye pada,⁵ Samprada songs, Handipadagal, Bhuterrupadas, Moharam padas, Lavani⁶ and Tattavapadas.

Bhajans songs are one of its kinds in folk literature. Bhajanas is inseparable part of Indian culture. All regional folk literature consists of Bhajanas. Similarly, Bidar also has rich Bhajans system. There are several groups that holy Bhajana programs. They have their unique and individual style. Some bhajana groups Akkama Balaga, Taruna Sangha, Mahila Mandals, etc.⁷

⁴ For detail see Somanatha Yalavara and Prema Sirshe (ed), Bidara Zilla Darshana, Prasaranga, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga, 2005, pp.175-184.

⁵ Ibid, pp.185-190.

⁶ Kyatanhalli Ramanna, Bidar Jilleya Janapada Geetegalu, Kannada Adhyana Samsthe Manas Gangotri, Mysore, 1976. pp.35-42.

⁷ Hamsakavi-Dhari-Siri, Kikkeri publication, Bangalore, 2011, pp.181-187.

3. Folk Theater (Janapada Rangabhumi): Folk theater, poetry intended to celebrate the greatness of chosen deities and ballads dramatizing the heroism or sacrifice of chosen heroes, historical or legendary.

The folk theater in Bidar till today runs successfully because of its importance in society. In the first phase the historical heroic works dramas performed like 'Vira abhimanu', 'Kichakana vadhe', Jayadratha, Rakta Ratri. Later on socio-religious reformers dramas like 'Bhakta Sirilaya, Mahatma Basaveshwara, Bhakta Markandeya etc. Few dramas which help the social awareness among the people like 'Anna tangi, laxmi. These create the awareness about family planning and social welfare.⁸

4. Folk Medicine (Janapada Oushadi): And then there are hosts of books on Folk medicine such as 'Padartha Sara', 'Vaidyaratnakara' etc. Many of these were brought out by, or with the help of the royal family of Mysore. Few scholars are doing their research work on folk medicine in Bidar. Most of the people consider the Ayurveda and folk medicines both are same. But still research is remaining. Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematicians and along with Historians jointly do research on folk medicine⁹ which will be benefit to future generation.

5. Folk Dance (Janapada Kunita): The ritual dances of Karnataka are known as Kunita. As dance is a visual art, the visual impression of this dynamic art is lost on the sands of time.

Bidar is on the border of Andhrapradesh and Maharashtra States. The mixed culture, language and folklore are found in Bidar. The professional artists perform their art to make both ends meet. The following are the professional artists found in Bidar are Budbudke, Kinari Jogi, dombaru, Havadiga, Sudugadu siddharu, Bahurupi, Bhuteru, Gondaligaru, Kaladyana, Bhurbhur pochama, Bala santur, Karadi kunita, jatagararu and koti kunita.¹⁰

Few special features of Bidar folk arts are gondaligas, bhuteru, puravantaru etc and are performed on religious activities. The other dances related to Moharam are Hulikunita, Alabi kunita, paitri sports etc. The theatres performed are Dodatta,

⁸ See for detail Jaganath Hebbale (ed), Bidar Jilla Darshana, Jilla Kannada Sahitya Parishad, Bidar, pp.46-50. (Kannada).

⁹ Channappa (ed), Lokasiri, Souvenir of All India Folklore Conference held at Bidar 22nd to 25th April 2011, pp.215-223.

¹⁰ See for detail Jaganath Hebbale (ed), Bidar Zilla Darshan, Zilla Kannada Sahitya Parishad, Bidar, pp.53-61.

sanatta, and Kolatta is the dance perform generally in social and religious function.¹¹

Bidar is famous for its folk culture, music, dance forms, and folk art. It has uniqueness in language and style of performances. Bidar has incorporated culture from other places and added more style and richness to it. Thus Bidar in its own way has contributed to the folk culture; it must be remembered for its efforts in keeping these art forms alive.

6. Folk Fairs (Janapada Jaatre): Jaatre or fair or gathering festivals arranged by particular Mathas, organizations, temples or villages to showcasing Janapada art. The fairs preserve the culture and provide the livelihood to artisans. In Bidar many fairs organized by mathas and organizations. The folk artisan perform in the fairs Basavanna fair, Virabhadreshwara fair, Papansahini fair, Mailar fair, Mari fair, Ellama fair etc.¹²

7. Folk Arts - Some religious and social traditions of the past have come down to the present generation in the form of several interesting folk-arts. Bhajan-singing, Bayalata, Kolata, Gorata, Bhulayehadu, Hanti pada, Shobanepada, Devi-hadu, beegara-hadu, karadi mazalu, nandi-kolu, gee-gee pada, lavani –lullaby songs etc. are in vogue in the district. These are recited or performed on the occasions of important jatras, observance of jayantis and various other religious and social functions.¹³ Many artisans contributed to preserve the folk art in Bidar.¹⁴ The folk artisans are very poor today because of impact of globalization and mass media.

Famous Folk Artist of Bidar

Many folk artisans have devoted their lives to the profession and sacrificed their lives for the sake of the art and folk culture. Many folk artists, musicians and dancers have contributed a lot enrich folk culture in Bidar. A record of the artists who have played a significant role in the growth of folk literature and culture is an exhaustive one. However, complete record of artisans after 1980 is available. The famous artist of Bidars are Nanasaheb Mangalgi Chimunabai, Shantappa

¹¹ Virendra Simpi, Jaganath Hebbale, Shubhash N.Nelge, Shivraj Kanshetti (ed), Basavaprabhe, 72nd Kannada Sahitya Sangha, Bidar, 2006, pp.171-175 (Kannada).

¹² See for detail Jaganath Hebbale , Hyderabad Karnataka Jaatregalu –Ondu Sanskrutika Adhyana, Kannada Sahitya Parishad, Bangalore, 2008, 31-77. (Kannada).

¹³ The Gazetteer of Bidar District, Government of Karnataka, 1977, p.484.

¹⁴ P.K.Khandoba (ed), Hyderabad Karnataka Samsritika Vishaya Kosha: Lalitakala, Volume, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga, 2012, pp.171-176.

*Shilabanta, Hanakuni Nagamma, Gondali Vithalarao, Kolar Imamsaheb, Barurpi Eknath, Sharanappa Bhuteru Eramma Chinkera, Gundappa Benalai, Ratnamma Tambhake, Abraham Sindhale Kashamma Markhale, Nagamma Gundayya Swami, Sangappa kardala, Kshinath Gavar Fale Siddharamnappa, Gangama mantalkar, Jaganath Maharaj, Gangadhar Swami Chikmath, Nabelal, Gurunath Kothe, Gorammaji Kadhade etc.¹⁵

The above mentioned artisans are just a few who dedicated their lives for preserving the folk art. However, there are many more who have selflessly worked for the folk art. These artists need to be documented and recognized so that the artists can live a peaceful life.

The present status of folk Artist in Bidar district

1. The folklore communities are facing social and economic problems in this globalized world.
2. Most of the folk artists, musicians, dancers, and theatre performers are without any work.
3. The folklore medicines, arts and crafts are also in a diminishing state.
4. Today people are more addicted to T.V, Cable, Internet, Mobile and Cinema. As a result the folklore culture losing its identity.
5. Kannada Sahitya Parishad, Kannada Janapada Academy, and few Universities of Karnataka are trying hard to preserve and propagate Folklore culture in Karnataka and India.
6. Most of the folk artists are living in a very poor condition.
7. Most of the Academicians, researchers, social scientists, historians must pay attention to do research in Folklore.
8. Planning and programmes of Governments must be implemented rigorously.
9. Poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, superstitions, beliefs and practices are the reasons for backwardness of folk culture of Bidar.
10. More propaganda about Folklore and artisans' life through media is the need of the day to preserve the folk culture in Bidar.

¹⁵ Somanatha Yalavaru and Prema Sirshe (ed), Bidar Zilla Darshan, Prasaranga Gulbarga University, Gulbarga, 2005. Pp.204-213. And An Article by Somanath Nucha entitled Bidar Zilleya Janapada Kalegalu: Ondu Samekshe.

Conclusion

Bidar is the crown of Karnataka. Bidar also called as Dharinadu. Dhari means the tall region. Folk artisans of Bidar brought name and fame to Bidar. We find multiple (mixed) folklores. The folklore system is very old in Bidar. In Bidar, people from different castes, communities and backward communities are involved in folklore. Most of the folk artist, musician, stage performers and literary persons are trying to preserve this folk art, culture, medicine and is passed to the new generation. Few artisans of Bidar district got State level award. But looking at the impact of globalization on folklore very soon folklore will only be seen in museums.

Subject as folklore can be great for character formation, which is will be required the most in the coming generation. Folklore is representation of culture and tradition. It reflects the moral value of a particular culture and society. Folklore can produce a feeling and a strong sentiment towards culture and unity. As a means of entertainment, reconstruction of regional history and rediscovery of lost words in a language of traditional cuisine, sports, medicine and sciences folklore has a rich source. The woks on the folklore of Karnataka (special reference to Bidar) and also major studies made on it in Kannada should be translated into English which helps the other researchers. Attempts to revive and re-establish the past glory and grandeur of our folklore are the need of hour. Happiness and integrity of our society will be safeguarded.

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