CHAPTER - IV
OGGU KATHA - ITS THEATRICAL GRAMMAR
IV. 1. Introduction

Oggu Katha as mentioned in the previous chapter is a cultural text of the community, which performs it. It is a cultural text because; it refers to the cultural level of the community with its entire ethos and ideas. Culturally the community of the performers known as 'Oggus' perform Oggu Katha to their patron audience known as Kurumas/Gollas.

As mentioned already Oggus are bards for Kurumas/Gollas and infact perform priestly roles. Oggu Katha is one such priestly role, which is performed to the community to trace out their origins to god. Their profession being pastoralism the performance of Oggu Katha unfolds itself in congruity with their cultural mélieu. Therefore the theatrical grammar necessarily has cultural practices as one set of units and on the other the expressive behavioural patterns as the other set of units.

These two sets broadly indicate on one hand the text and its features (speech genres) and on the other the context and its features (performer/audience interactions). In both the cases the narrator remains centric to the narration and shifts his position between actor and character. In the following discussion certain unique features of theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha is given keeping in view of the textual and contextual features as paradigm.
which make the form unique. In order to bring out the nuances of different units of the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha, this chapter is divided into 5 sections.

The first section deals with the text and its dimensions, the second deals with the narrator and his role of performer, the third section elaborates the concept of space and the context in which the space of performance is used, the fourth section discusses the audiences and their varied roles, the fifth section in general discusses the significant features of the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha.

A critical analysis of the Oggu Katha performance is essential to identify the various theatrical elements involved in the performance. An Oggu Katha performer (Majjiga Lakshmi Narasayya and his troupe) with unchanged flavour and full of indigenous tint enabled this study to analyse the formulations of a concrete indigenous theatrical grammar developed by this particular Oggu Katha performer and his troupe. As discussed earlier, it is realised to locate the four basic components that make the structure for the grammar of theatre as text, actors, space, (context) and audience.

Now an attempt is being made to analyse the four structural components of theatre that evolve the grammar of Oggu Katha form. This present analysis is based on the caste myth of a pastoral
community in Andhra Pradesh narrated at Inole by Oggu pujaries of Mallanna temple. The troupe led by Majjiga Lakshmi Narasaiah. The caste myth "Mallanna katha" was narrated by Majjiga Lakshmi Narasaiah and his troupe which is drawn from oral tradition. An Oggu Katha performer strictly adheres to the traditions of narrating the story without distracting from the main theme and structure of plot. But as a part of its practice and performance certain inclusions do occur, by the innovative skills of the performers. The inclusions comment on the contemporary situations of their lives. For a comic relief they knit improvised texts; which are called as "Chithra Kathalu". It is quite interesting to note the demand from the audience for these Chithra Kathalu which do not form part of the actual story (myth), and the Oggu Katha performer obliges to this and performs, adds as many as Chithra Kathalu as long as the time permits and these are very well articulated by him, irrespective of the character he is playing i.e., as the narrator, though he plays at one instance Mallanna's role, speaks in their day to day language with English and Urdu words and other than their occupational terminology. The audience do not get confused or distracted from such scenes and languages and feel relished well. This is one of the unique features of the textual relationship between the performers and audiences. Now an attempt is made to further analyse the features and structure of the text of Mallanna Katha.
IV.2. Oggu Katha - And the Text

Drawn by Oral tradition the original story, characters, plot and events are well memorised by the Oggu Katha performer. It is not a written text and is passed down by one generation to the next and the story of this myth and the structure of plot remain unchanged. (Kapilavastuyayan 1996: 78). Hence the text of the narration appears to be well prepared and passed on through Oral tradition from one generation to the next. It is a caste myth called Mallanna Katha or Mallanna Puranam. Now an attempt is made to trace out the features of dramatic compositions; the structure of plot, characters and language in the textual analysis.

The story being analyzed here is as narrated by Oggu Katha pujaries at Inole which was documented for this study, in which Mallanna marrying four girls of different castes is narrated; Bapana Ratnangi, Padmala Devi (Vaddera)) Baleja Medelamma and Golla Kethamma. Usual popular version is that Mallanna married five brides. The fifth one is a Vysya or Komati girl Jyomanthaka Mani. This episode was not narrated by the narrators of this present study and confined it only to four marriages conferred it to the Mailardevudu Mallanna of Einavolu (Inole)
The structure of the text of Mallanna Katha

Structure of Oggu Katha text

[Mallanna Katha]

Oral Tradition

Caste Myth

Plot

Characters

Language

1. Neelima Devi Kanda
2. Mallanna Kanda
3. Varalakki Kanda
4. Ratnangi Kanda
5. Baliya Medalamma Kanda
6. Golla Kethamma Kanda

Gods

Human beings

Other super natural elements

Song

Speech

Proverbs

Metaphors

Similes

Occupational terms

**IV.2.1. Mallanna Katha - Its plot structure**

The plot is divided into six acts. Each act here is called as Kanda. This narrative which is episodic, also bears the elements of dramatic composition as found in a formal drama. Each episode or
act or Kanda bears the components of a beginning, a middle and an ending, where in involves the other components of dramatic compositions like, initial action growth of action, crisis, falling of action and conclusion. Each Kanda bears a structure of formal drama, but is hidden within the technique of the narrative form. The myth has Mallanna in the lead role, unfolds the different episodes right from his birth to he marrying four girls running through different incidents in a structure. Now a brief story line running through 6 Kandas is as follows.

1. **Neelima Devi Kanda**

The first Kanda "Neelima Devi Kanda" reveals about the life and rich background of Neelima Devi who is childless, her Oath to Lord Shiva that she would respect Jangamayya Devaras, and would not insult him, when she was blessed with boon, she giving birth for six children and then violating her Oath given to Lord Shiva by insulting him who is in the disguise of Jangamayya Devara who in turn curses her to lose everything and then the consecutive sufferings and finally realises her mistake and then again is saved by Lord Shiva.
2. **Mallanna Kanda**

The second act reveals the birth of Mallanna by the grace and gift offered by Lord Shiva (believed to be the incarnation of Lord Shiva) and his cousin Sanganna. Mallanna proclaims that he would reconstruct Kolhapuripatnam and he fulfills it. Then Mallanna helps his parents to marry of his brothers with their uncle's daughters. Mallanna's parents looking for a right alliance for Mallanna to marry, and Mallanna fulfilling the demands and conditions of his in-laws and ends with Mallanna marrying Bhamidikalla Padmala Devi (Patti Kankanam).

3. **Varalakki Kanda**

This "Kanda" reveals, the sufferings faced by Mallanna caused by his eldest sister-in-law, who out of jealousy accuses him of seducing her. Mallanna finally proves his honesty leaves behind the kacheri to his brothers and he is driven to the forest and asked to cultivate the fields there.

4. **Ratnangi Kanda**

This Kanda reveals the suffering of Mallanna's lonely life, his love affair with Bapana Ratnangi who is under safe custody of a demon and then Mallanna killing the demon and marries Bapana
Ratnangi with unni kankanam, on the conditions put forth by the
demon.

5. **Baliya Medalamma Kanda**

This fifth Kanda reveals Mallanna’s encounter with the
arrogant Baliya Medalamma, in the disguise of a leprosy patient,
insulted by her, goes back with a challenge of marrying her bringing
another co-wife, comes out of the disguise while going back, which
is seen by Medalamma and she repents for the things happened.

6. **Golla Kethamma Kanda**

The sixth Kanda reveals, Mallanna’s trails to find out another
girl, only to teach a lesson to Medalamma on the advice of Ellavva,
finds Golla Kethamma marries her and returns back to Medala Devi
when the later repents and he descending at Srisailam as Guru
Mallayya Devudu.

The sequential order in each Kanda is as follows for further
understanding the structure of this myth and the dramatis personae
appearing in different incidents. Each Kanda has a beginning, a
middle and an ending. A super objective in each Kanda, through a
series of events is realised. All the incidents in a sequential order
are structured maintaining the dramatic features like loosing and
gaining, revelations and realisations.
The sequential arrangements of the episodes bear the features of a well-made play with the five phases of action.

i. Initial action

ii. Growth of action

iii. Crisis

iv. Falling of action

v. Conclusion.

In each of these Kandas the super objective is common that good wins over bad and that also only by the grace of Lord Shiva's incarnation, Mallanna. The narrator tries to make a point that good prevails over the evil.

1. **Neelima Devi kanda**

i. **Initial action**

   In this Kanda, the initial action occurs, when Neelima Devi is in depression for not having children.

ii. **Growth of action**

   In the next phase the growth of action is met when she encounters Lord Shiva who is in the disguise of Jangama Devara, who also refuses to accept bhiksha offered by her, since she is childless. Pleased by her prayers, Lord Shiva offers her fruit and consequently she becomes the mother of six male children.
ii. Crisis

The crisis is met when she forgets the Oath given to Lord Shiva and also passes a rigid rule of not allowing any beggars in to her town. Lord Shiva in the disguise of Jangama Devara is also insulted and beaten blue and black and is thrown out of the town. Lord Shiva grows angry and curses the lady Neelima Devi. She looses all her rich properties and the city Kolhapuri Patnam is burnt into ashes. This forms the part of crisis the third phase of dramatic progression of the myth.

iv. Falling of action

The falling of action in the dramatic progression is met, when the lady Neelima Devi and her children, trying to settle down become nomadic being lost all of her wealth and the dilammatic condition is very well established.

yi. Conclusion

The final and fifth phase of action, the conclusion is met when Lord Shiva who appears before her, and he saying the morals that repentance is the best punishment and then offering another fruit, who would be the incarnation of himself.
2. **Mallanna Kanda**

   *i. Initial action*
   Mallanna’s six brothers are engaged to marry their uncles’ daughters and Mallanna rejecting to marry the daughter of his seventh uncle.

   *iii. Growth of action*
   Adi Reddy’s trials to find a right alliance for Mallanna and on the advice of Lord Shiva find Padmala Devi.

   *iii. Crisis*
   Adireddy meets the parents of Padmala Devi and returns back depressed and expresses his disability to meet the conditions and demands placed by the bride’s parents. This phase of drama is completed with Mallanna taking the Oath of meeting their challenge.

   *iv. Falling of action*
   Mallanna approaching his uncles' place along with Sanganna for getting financial assistance and is rejected.

   *v. Conclusion*
   Mallanna in the disguise of a Bandit loots the money and wealth, meets the conditions and demands placed by the brides' parents and marries Bhamidikalla Padmala Devi.
3. **Varalakki Kanda**

**i. Initial action**

Mallanna is now in Kacheri, he is looking after the administration and the welfare of his village people while his brothers are engaged in agricultural activities.

Jealous of his status as the head in the Kacheri, Mallanna’s eldest sister-in-law wants to blame Mallanna accusing him by creating a tricky conspiracy, wants to send him to look after the fields, so that her husband alongwith his younger brothers could stay back in the Kacheri and rule.

**ii. Growth of the action**

Varalakki Devi plays a crooked strategy and makes her husband and his younger brothers believe that Mallanna tried to lure her and shows the pearled cloth Mallanna used to wear on his shoulders as proof.

**iii. Crisis**

Mallanna escapes from the scene to avoid a fight with his brothers and with the help of Sanganna, hides in the “Odlamanutree” The brothers grow more angry and turn all the fields, paddy godowns yellow grass bundles into ashes only to trace out Mallanna but in vain Now they torture even their mother to know
the place, where Mallanna is hidden. Mallanna comes back to the rescue of his mother; Mallanna politely accepts the resolutions and leaves for forest to attend the agricultural activities leaving behind the Kacheri to his brothers.

iv. **Falling of action**

The wives of Mallanna’s six brothers visit Kacheri to feel pride seeing their husbands in power in the kacheri but are disappointed when they see them beaten up by the messengers sent by their respective parents, asking to repay the amount taken by Mallanna for his marriage. The messengers beat them up when the brothers burn out the letter brought by the messengers.

v. **Conclusion**

Mallanna comes to their rescue all of his six brothers and their wives pray Mallanna to pardon them and ask him to take over the Kacheri. Mallanna refuses to their proposal and asks them to lead their life separately by taking their share from the wealth and goes back for agricultural work.

4. **Ratnangi Kan da**

i. **Initial action**

Mallanna is alone with Bodanna, (in other version is also called as Ontikali Boyanna) taking care of the sheep offered by Lord
Shiva. In the process he needs some fire and goes to a place where he encounters with Ratnangi.

//. **Growth of action**

Ratnangi and Mallanna fall in love and decide to marry.

**iii. Crisis**

Mallanna in the disguise of a golden lizard knows the secret of the life of the demon that brought up Ratnangi and decides to kill the demon to marry Ratnangi.

**iv. Falling of action**

Mallanna goes to Akkamma Kota, destroys the pillar where the life of the demon is placed and the demon faints - Mallanna asks the demon that he would marry Ratnangi.

**v. Conclusion**

The demon accepts his proposal but on the condition that he should wear “Unni Kankanam” (Woolen bracelet) made out of wool from the wheel made out of his bones and nerves. Mallanna agrees to these conditions and marries Ratnangi in Kolhapuripattanam. The Gods great the couple
5. *Baliya Medalamma Kanda*

**i. Initial action**

Mallanna, in the incarnation of Lord Shiva is living with his two wives Bhamidikalla Padmala Devi and Bapana Ratnangi - Now it is the turn of Lord Shiva who out of his affection towards Mallanna as his son wants to marry him off with Baliya Medalamma who is the daughter of Kanchi Varadaraju, his ardent devotee- In disguise of a Jangama Devara, Lord Shiva approaches him and proposes to marry of his daughter Medalamma to his son, Mallanna- The Baliya lingalu insult Lord Shiva. Knowing this incident Mallanna takes the Oath and is on his mission to marry Medalamma and tries to meet her in the disguise of a snake charmer and returns in vain.

**ii. Growth of action**

Now he comes again in the disguise of a "Puvvaku Vendor" i.e; tobacco leaves vendor, with an ugly face and as a leprosy patient and in the name of Koti Marrisetti. Finding the brothers of Medalamma greedy who offer the mud of the houses in exchange of his tobacco, Mallanna offers the tobacco. The greedy brothers want to acquire the wealth of the sheep Mallanna possessed by playing a tricky gambling Mallanna takes them to the forest and wins in the bet and only gets invalid coins- Mallanna again bits in the gambling with the same invalid coins and in exchange demands to marry their sister Medalamma.
iv. **Crisis**

Brothers of Medalamma agree to this but on one condition that he should bring the Bandari (the hard turmeric or roots of turmeric) i.e., “Pasupu Kommulu” which are in the possession of Haseen and Hussain in Macca Majjid and Mallanna moves forward to get them.

iv. **Falling of action**

Mallanna wins over the duo and escapes in disguise of a black dog though chased by the duo till the banks of the river Ganges. Goddess Ganga looses her right hand when she confronts with the Duo and Mallanna posts a stick as a symbol of her hand and resolves to observe a ritual every year in the memory of the goddess Ganga river.

v. **Conclusion**

Mallanna, approaches Medalamma in the disguise of tobacco vendor again and tells her that if she marries him and touches him with her hairs his ailment would wither away - she insults him and in turn scolds him, saying if that is the case she would feed him with ambali from the seventh storey of the building she is living in.
6. **Golla Kethamma Kanda**

   i. **Initial action**

   Mallanna decides and proclaims to bring another co-wife only to teach a lesson to Medalamma and leaves in his original form relieved from the disguise, Medalamma repents for seeing Mallanna in his original form.

   //. **Growth of action**

   Renuka Devi, also named as Ellavva appears before Mallanna in the disguise of "Yerukala sani"- After listening him, advises him to go to Repallevada where he goes.

   iii. **Crisis**

   The shepherds request Mallanna to marry Golla Kethamma. He does so and returns to silver hills.

   iv. **Falling of action**

   Kethamma feeds him with Ambali churned out by the golden churner with silver rope.

   v. **Conclusion**

   Medalamma repents for her arrogant behaviour with Mallanna. Mallanna marries Medalamma and Kethamma and descends as guru Mallayya at Srisailam.
An analysis of the different phases of dramatic progression of the story reveals that the myth has all the features of a continuous progression of the story with casual relationship in between the incidents, which has potentials to be presented as a popular melodrama to the modern audience. From the above description of the structure of the plot, it emerges that the Mallanna Katha is in a dual plot structure play. One, the basic plot which runs the entire Mallanna story from beginning to the end; the second subplots are found in each kanda having a plot structure by itself. The following diagram reveals the existence of the dual plot structure in Mallanna Katha.

In the above diagram on 'Y' axis plot structure as it emerges in the narration is given and on the 'X' axis the kandas in the narration are taken to show how the plot curve emerges in these kandas as sub-plots and how the whole of forms the basic plot curve. Altogether as narrated above these 6 sub-plots in Mallanna katha and all of them have the 5 elements in the structure i.e. exposition, raising, crisis, climax and conclusion.

Unlike in the main stream dramas where the plot structure starts somewhere above the 'O' point of the axis and progresses steeply and falls steadily to a bit, then takes a horizontal curve and stops as shown in the following diagram.
Figure - IV.6

The plot structure of Mallanna Katha
The above diagram based on the western main stream plays is drawn basically taking in view of the interest of the audience and the time of the progression of the play. The whole idea of doing exercise of this kind by the theatre scholars is to draw interest curve so as to make the playwrights aware of the audience responses even before it is played. In other words how a model written drama should evolve is the concern of the theatre scholars who studied the plot structure. Therefore the plots of the western main stream plays started with a minimal expositions then take progression with
certain interesting terms based on the moves of the protagonist and antagonist or vice versa, and reaches a climax where one of them will win (usually the protagonist) and the following of actions take place and then end up with horizontal line always with a higher plain than the exposition horizontal line. (Exception being of those dramas where victim hero is projected as the theme of the drama).

This in a way is meaningfully shown in a standard plot structure owing to the fact that the playwright should possess an objective to take his audience along with him to a higher plain and leave them there so as to make them participants of the theatrical plain. Similarly the Indian Classical playwrights also viewed the play into 5 basic units i.e., Mukha sandhi, Pratimukha sandhi, Garbha sandhi, Avimarsha sandhi and Nirvahana Sandhi (Kapilavatsyayan, 1996: 78). These junctions are viewed as the different phases of growth of action of play internally inherent.

Both the Western and the Indian classical theatre has such 5 elements as mentioned above because they are all written dramas for exposing differential themes and contexts. Since they are written dramas a plot structure is mentioned above is conceived as the model to be followed by any play Wright as well as the persons involved in the production.

However, the above plot structure is not viable to a myth or an epic when played as a theatrical piece. The very fact that the myth
and the epic belong to folk genre, a belief system is innately knitted in the narrative and the same comes to life giving the performance in the form of a ritual.

Therefore, the modern anthropologists and folklorists designated them as ritual theatre. Fundamentally the folk narratives (myth and epic) are not written dramas but oral narratives. They come to life only when they are performed and only in the performances the theatrical qualities can be articulated. For this reason the above diagram of Mallanna Katha is shown in the plot structural phenomenon.

As shown in the diagram one can find two plot structures in the Mallanna Katha. The thick line drawn from the point of '0' to X-axis reveals the basic plot structure. There is a blending of the whole narrative in a concave mode suggesting that the narrative has several sub-plots known as kandas, which touch the concave line of the basic plot at each point, and falls. If one can draw the culminating point of each "Kanda" then one can understand that the plot structure progresses in a sober manner.

The basic underlying formula which worked at the culminated points of each kanda is that, the protagonist who always makes the moves and the antagonist (in this case usually the caste community and or bride) only responses to the moves of the protagonist.
This being the case the real antagonist in the form of a villain does not exist in the narrative. This characteristic feature of Mallanna Katha makes the plot curve a concave one.

Another interesting distinguished feature of Mallanna Katha is that it cannot be viewed from a interest vis-a-vis time curve manner, which is applicable only to written dramas but can be viewed only from a plot vis-a-vis kanda curve manner. This is because as mentioned already, Mallanna Katha is a caste myth, which is believed to be the truth of the existence of the community. It is because of Mallanna that the community attains respect and status in the social hierarchy. In other words it represents the worldview of the community which is shared both by the performers and the audience through a made belief system enacted through performance in varied ritual contexts.

To measure the interest of the community in terms of performance is absolute. Similarly the time scale of the performance does not work in the context of Mallanna Katha performance. It is the belief and the world view of the community that act as the driving force of the performance and therefore the audience and the performers are willing to interact in a theatrical situation hours and days together with intermittent intervals. It is believed that to watch Mallanna Katha performance as good as watching their god and interacting with him (which is literally followed through sessions of
ritual possession) which eventually bestows blessings on the community.

This intermixture of physical and metaphysical realms during the performance makes both the audience and the performers share universally the narrative and experience their ancestral god through the performance.

Yet another point to note in the above diagram is that each sub plot (kanda) has the general plot paradigm consisting of 5 units as discussed earlier. Since sub-plots are independent in a way and have potential within the construct a continuum, is achieved by the performers depending on the context present the performance into individual episode i.e., each kanda being as an episode by itself.

Paradigmatically each kanda is a unit by itself based on an event known as marriage. When these marriages that exist in each kanda if syntagmatically presented gives the larger picture of the Mallanna Katha. This feature is note worthy because it founds the crux of the grammar of Mallanna Katha. The audience and the performers can digest a paradigm (marriage) that exists in the paradigmatic structures of the Katha in isolation or when syntagmatically presented they still can understand the larger logistics of the protagonist emerging as god. At the paradigmatic structure level Mallanna appears as hero and at the syntagmatical level he appears as god.
It is because of the theatrical grammar of Mallanna Katha, such plot structure emerges which in an overall makes the performance an unique form by itself to which the community can cling to as their own.

After having discussed the ingredients of the structure of the plot involved in six Kandas it is now to the turn of the characters as a part of the theatrical study.

**IV.2.2. Mallanna Katha - its characters**

The characters found in this caste myth are quiet down to earth. Their behaviour reflects the traits of this particular community, their beliefs, customs and other emotional patterns. The relationship among the characters establishes the nature and behaviour of their household relationship of this pastoral community. The sentiments and customary relationships, the characters maintain do reflect the many a traits of this community. The characters also reveal the relationship of this community with other communities and castes. All the characters reflect the behaviour and attitudes of this pastoral community.

The characters in this caste myth could be classified as the following-
(i) Gods
(ii) Human beings
(iii) Other supernatural elements

In the first category Gods and Goddesses in general and Lord Shiva in particular appear as the key characters of this myth. Several other Indian deities. Gods, sages, Jangamayya Devaras are often referred for eg. Sages asthadiggaja pathulu, Rama, Narayana etc.; The characters divine in nature behave quite down to earth. They are delineated so native that they are easily identifiable by the community. Mallanna who is believed to be the incarnation of Lord Shiva is also seen behaving as neighbour at the next house of our day to day life. Still he is attributed with of having the divine power of behaving in disguise of the several other characters and also in the disguise of a black dog. Golden lizard etc. Mallanna with his strong determination always wins in the end but is not spared without him being in the crisis and struggle. His logical behaviour witty and wisdom and being trickster nature of making strategies to achieve the super objective show his divine power. All the characters in this myth are purposeful. Though certain characters are spontaneously improvised by the performers they would be justified by the performers linking them to the objectivity of the story. All the characters that come across in various situations of the story reflect traits of this pastoral community; their beliefs, customs and other emotional patterns.
The emotional pattern of Neelima Devi is very well delineated in the following incident.  

Lord Shiva in the disguise of a Jangamayya enters into the city of Kolhapuri patnam and reaches in front of the palace of Neelima Devi where her six sons will be playing, after seeing Jangamayya, frightened by his appearance run to their mother and complain about him. Neelima Devi enraged by her sons' complaints, grows very grim and gets him thrashed by her servants. Neelima Devi once an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva, when she was childless now ignores him and also his other devotees and behaves like the women of this community.

The ethos of the characters also are established in varied incidents. One such example could be the following situation.

Varalakki alias Onamala Devi the eldest sister-in-law of Mallanna out of jealous wanted to get rid of him throwing him out of the Kacheri; plans a conspiracy. When all the six brothers leave for agricultural work, the eldest sister-in-law calls Mallanna and cries for help saying that there is a big snake in her house. When Mallanna is about to go, Sanganna warns him not to go predicting some evil-minded conspiracy behind this and also says that this would not be fair to enter into her house when her husband is absent. But Mallanna argues that it is nothing to do with that and the principle of morality is only to save one's life when he or she is in danger and enters into her house. Varalakki when found him alone.
in her presence insists him to satisfy her lust to which Mallanna refuses. She holds his pattu sella, when Mallanna flees leaving his "pattu sella" in her hands. Then she calls her husband and his five brothers and says that Mallanna wanted to seduce her. In these conflicting situations, the behaviour of Mallanna, Sanganna and other characters stand as per the propriety of the characters. The ethical values, sentiments, emotional patterns are delineated very earthly and truthfully in this myth,

The relationship among the family members do establish the several other customary and traditional values. The following incidents in the cast myth surface this statement.6

Mallanna is on his way to invite his aunts before informing his uncles. He justifies it that since aunts are from outside and uncles are part of within the family and hence he wants to visit and invite the aunts at the first.

This above cited incident is placed to show that the characters of this myth are delineated naturally, earthily and with much native traits.

The attitudes of the character and their other traits are established through different situations and acts to maintain the propriety of their behaviour. Their socio, physical and psychological dimensions could be felt by their appearance in all through the theatrical expressions. (Plates 9 to 21 for characterizations)
### Table - IV.3

The list of characters found in each act (Kanda) of Mallanna Katha.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Name of the characters enacted</th>
<th>Acts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Adireddy</td>
<td>1 Neelima Devi Kanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Neelima Devi</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Jangamayya (Lord Shiva in Original)</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Sons of Adireddy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>People to whom Adireddy tries to sell fire wood</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Servant Maids</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Akumanchi Devi</td>
<td></td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Mallanna</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sanganana</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Adireddy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bhatti Kesavaraju</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Bapana Peddi bhotla</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Kolimi Katala reddy</td>
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</tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Machani Devi</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Kalaapu Jogaiah</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Mallanna’s maternal uncles</td>
<td></td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Uncles' wives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Mallanna as bandit</td>
<td></td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Padmala Devi</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mallanna</td>
<td>3. Vara Iakki Kanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sanganana</td>
<td></td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Mallanna's brothers</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Varalakki (Onamala Devi)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Neelima Devi</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Messengers sent by Mallanna's Uncles</td>
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<td>S.No.</td>
<td>Name of the characters enacted</td>
<td>Acts</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Muslim Jawans</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Mallanna</td>
<td>4. Bapana Ratnangi Kanda</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Bodanna</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Bapana Ratnangi</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Brahmins</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Priests</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>Jangamayya (Lord Shiva in disguise)</td>
<td>5. Balija Medalamma Kanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Mallanna</td>
<td></td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Kanchi Varadaraju</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Balija Lingalu</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Medalamma</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>Mallanna as snake charmer</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>Mallanna as Tobacco vendor</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>Mallanna as the one with leprosy</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Mallanna</td>
<td>6. Golla Kethamma Kanda</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Renuka Ellavva</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Gollas</td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Golla Kethamma</td>
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<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Balija Medalamma</td>
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</table>

In the above table the characters in the Mallanna Puranam are listed more or less as they appear in the narrative. The whole narrative is built upon the formula of Dyad movement. The whole narrative is based on this principle because the narrator is the chief enactor who shifts his positions between himself as narrator and the characters of the narrative. What is interesting to note here is that
the narrator when shifting between the characters develops a dialogue, which progresses the narrative. This being the case each character is voiced in the narrator's perception and therefore they appear earthly which is intelligible to the community, which is akin to their life style. All the characters named as to their onomastic systems of belief. In other words the characters are named very much like their names and could easily be personified when narration progresses, despite they being overtly pronounced in the narration.

It is also evident from the above table that the actions of the characters in the narration are tuned to perform the roles, which would develop in turn the role of the protagonist. For this reason in every kanda mentioned above, Mallanna becomes the foremost and initiates action, which would in turn evoke responses from the other characters.

Thus the protagonist centric play-plot becomes the formula for the narrator to unfold the characters one after the other in the progression of the narration. Looking from this viewpoint the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha lies in the foundation of characterisation of the protagonist who assumes different roles in the course of events of the narrative. This can be best understood when the performance of Oggu Katha is witnessed. Almost 70%-80% of the narrative revolves around the enactment of the actions of the protagonist by the narrator. Quite often than not in the
process of narration, the narrator himself takes the position of the protagonist and voices the concerns of the community which he represents. (As a narrator and as a protagonist/ character)

Another interesting feature that can be brought forth from the above table is that the whole narrative of Mallanna Katha revolves around gender relations. Though the Katha seems to be attributed to establish the divine realm of Mallanna, their ancestral god characters do not correspond to the celestial realm. They appear most mundane in their relationships. All the six kandas speak for one ultimate action i.e. the marriage. The familial realm is thus created in all the kandas so as to meaningfully construct the existing gender relations in the community into the narrative. The male and female characters all are viewed from a gendered perspective. Gender relations are basically a social construct and therefore it is not simply the male and female divide that is important, but the social role that each character plays is important which is the crux of the narrative. In other words the whole narrative is based on gender relationships, because the theme of the narrative itself is "marriage". In any given native communities' social system "marriage" becomes central because it is the marriage which sustains identity and which demarcates that community with that of others. Therefore to protect the identity of the community bondages at familial level is construed through kinship relationships on one hand and on the other the matrimonial relationships. For this reason in the above table, the kin groups of
Mallanna appear as characters on one hand and on the other those belong to the brides’. One can find hardly any characters not belonging these two groups appearing in the narrative. However gods, and donor characters such as animals though do appear so as to build up context of the event of marriage.

Another interesting feature is that Mallanna though belonging to the pastoral community marries the brides of the other communities, Vaddare, Brahamins, Balija and Vysya. Therefore the characters that appear in the narrative primarily belong to the pastoralist on one hand and caste order on the other. It is the protagonist who represents the pastoralist, wins over ultimately the caste people. Therefore, the protagonist character is pastoral centric, the speech and actions are also tuned around the pastoral community. In the following section on language this phenomenon is brought forth elaborately.

IV.2.3. Mallanna katha - its language

It is the usage of the words and the arrangement of the words in different rhythmic segments which makes a narration understandable and it is obviously the rhythm in the organised words of the lyric which make the narration interesting and moving. The language used in Oggu Katha is vernacular as the whole performance is addressed to a particular community/Pastoral
community. The metaphors used, comparisons held come from within the daily life and house chore activities. The language used can broadly be distinguished into three types.

1. General narration
   - In the form of Song - Speech
   - In the form of Metrical recitations

2. Dialogues in the form of Metrical recitations.

3. Dialogues between the characters in the form of prose.

1. **General Narration**

   The language used for description of the situation is usually set to a particular rhythm and this rhythm will remain the same for almost all the entire description. The following lines refer to this.

   "OM! OM! Ani Annada! Omkaramu chesena!

   A line frequently repeated before the arrival of Paramasivudu

   **Ayyo Angitla phalamaina yestavunnadu**

   **Alia Devara Parameshwarude Rama Rama**

   These lines are from the description in the Neelima Devi Kanda where Parameshwaruddu gives the fruit to Neelima Devi.

   "**Kattelammaa Pota Vunnadu aa Adireddi**"?

   These lines are also from the first Kanda where Adireddi goes to sell firewood. These descriptive lines are mostly set to the four beat but sound different and specific because of the arrangement of the words and mode of singing. With in the narration there are speeches, which sound like lyrics, but they are not sung but recited. The following lines of the above quoted song stand as the fine example of such recitations.
"Sankalona Mopu Chesukuni Adireddi
Chaudari matramaina
Mutyala Chella teesi matramaina
Chutta batta chesukunnadu
Nettina chutta batta petti kattela
Mopu petti matramaina"

And when the descriptive narrations are said as simple speech, the vanthas/ accompanying artists emphasis the speech by saying a lyrical “Aa—” after each line. This lyrical “Aa---” is also used in lyrics.¹⁰

"Aa natta naduma bodraayi kaada
Oka Komati Seelamma Ani Oka
Komtame beedasturalu
Aameku matramu vunde sthalam ledu
Yedu Pendalu Yedu Kamamu
Aa.....

Atuvanti matramaina needa Vesukuni
Aa—

The descriptions are always in lines with the intensity of the situation and mode of singing specially the speeds used - first; second and third speeds add emphasis to the description. For instance in a particular episode of the Neelima Devi Kanda where the sons of Neelima Devi work in the fields and when the harvest is made to disappear by Parameswara, the farmer beats the six male children with sticks.¹¹

“Alalla Alla Nerello!
Alla Nerello Nirmalallo!
Adavi Lona Vunna Maraju
Chudu nirmala lo
Gira gira gira tippu tunnadu
While this song describes the farmer coming with a stick in hand. The following song which is sung in three speeds actually describes the six sons working in the fields, and the behavioural traits are given very clearly.

"Kanduleri bukku tunnaru
Kadupu challa iga chestunnaru
Kadupu challa iga chestunnaru
Kadupu challa iga chestunnaru"

This song depicting Neelima Devi’s sufferings of labour pains is very naturally described. The lady counts each second of her suffering and expresses her desire to eat different dilshes.¹²

"Ayyo Kanipenchina ma tallulara
kattamulu kallachudaramma"

“Ammamma ika taala lenu
nenu baadhalu bharimpa lenu
amma Okka ghadiyaa nindinaadi devudo narayana
Okka ghadiyaa nindinaadi
Naaku Opika Karuvaayenamma
Rendosi ghadiyalu ninde naku rotte
Tina buddhayenamma
Amma……..mudu ghadiyaalu nindenayo
Devudo narayana
Mudu ghadiyalu nindinayi nadku pappu
Tina buddha yenamma"
Then there are lyrics which are dialogues. The scene where Neelima Devi suffers from labour pains is thus recited.¹³

"Naaku neppulemo yekkuvavuta Vunayi
Ituvanti kashtamu neneruganamma
Naaku matramaina
Golluna Pegulu Polladinattu matramaina
Kadupulo naaku maatramaina

Gubbullu Gubbullu Puttabattenu
Aagalenu iga tallularaa
Ayyo niluvalenu iga niluvalenu
Nimushamu iga cheruvaina".

As the song and recitative words are all stringed together so also the characters. Within the general narration there are also popular poetic verses used as quotations One such example is

"Gaadida ke meruka gandhapu Vaasana
Ganta Kadite mosugaaka
Dunna potu ke meruka pinnala iluva
Muriki madugu chusi murusugaaka"

This verse says that what does the donkey know about the odour of sandal all that it knows is to carry the sandal sticks heap on its back, so also what does the bull know about the value of a rich bungalow all that which counts to it is a watery, muddy pond. This
verse is used to denote the mental status of the brothers of Mallanna who aspire for his seat in the kacheri.¹⁴

Thus the verses used to add an emphatic note either to the actual status of the situation or the personality traits of each of the characters are not straightforward statements but carry a suggestive pun in them. There are also dialogues in the form of words and also in the form of prose.

3. **Dialogues between the characters in the form of prose.** ¹⁵

“Kaavalidarulu: Eyy! Jangamayya! Aagu! Aagu!

Eyy! Jangamayya! Evadavaya nuvvu Nayana?

Eh desamunnadi? eh rajya munnadi?

Ayyaa yendadi mi bhujam meeda!

Baabu, niku seluvu ledu idi ledu gatlane gantalu sankulu pattukuni vachina daarine ellipo!!

Jangamayya: "Ayyalaara! nenu maryaadaga mesalatonni,

Eemi! I oorla mediletoni, ee ooru naadi"

Besides the above discussed songs the most interesting feature of narration is the activity songs. Lyrics regarding various day to day
activities such as lullaby songs, (jolapata), pounding songs, (dampudu) patalu also feature in an Oggu performance.  

**Jolapata**

'Jo achchutananda jo jo Mukunda!
Ra ra paramanda ramani govinda Rama govinda!
Niku nillosi nillangi todigi
Niamma palla sara neeku techero! Neeku techero !
Nillangi thodigi !
Edavaku Edavaku
Erri naa tandri
Eediste ninnevaru ettukuneru ettukuneru
Palamma mi amma patnamelindi patnamelindi"

One of the lines in this lullaby says that "do not cry little one who is going to carry you if you cry. Your mother gave you bath dressed you and left to the city to sell the milk'. The occupational activity of selling the milk is shown here as the duty of the child's mother.

Yet another activity song while pounding during Mallanna's wedding is as follows.  

"Suvvi Sovvanna laala suvvanna laala Suvvanna laala! "
"Suvvi Suvvani nenokka Pata Padanga PotuVeyanga!!"

Thus the language used in Oggu Katha either in the form of songs, speech or metric recitations is charged with emotions and conveys
the meaning to the audience the enacted events in the narrative. What is interesting to note in this is it is rich with Metaphors, Euphemisms and Similes. Since the entire language used in the performance is set in dance drama style, in incongruous with the footsteps, it proceeds the narration. When the songs are sung, the language rendered follow the rhythm of the drum beats and cymbals. When the speech portions are delivered the language comes down to the natural ways of speech of the community. When the metric recitations are rendered the specific speech act that follows in proverbial usage or tongue twisters usage or riddle usage is adhered to. Therefore, the language of Oggu Katha expresses itself in versatile manner encompassing differential genres within the performance. This is one of the reasons why, the concept of theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha is argued for. A grammar that exists in differential context, contextual speech modes, more or less qualify such speech modes into groups thereby genres. Oggu Katha though a performance encompasses different speech modes within while it is being narrated. As shown in the above discussion such speech modes are grouped paradigmatically and down syntagmatically to bring out the generic types that exist in the Oggu Katha. These genres are basically found in the community in their verbal acts.

Another interesting observation with regard to language especially when the dialogues are performed between the characters and narrator with regard to scenic content and events is
that they reveal underlying formulae that the narrator uses. A formula is one such speech act which repeats itself to a given situation or event or describing about a person. When the narrator describes Mallanna or Beerappa or any such prime character he uses time and again a set of words, which describes the person. Similarly when scenes such as journey, war, marriage, forest, hills and hillocks are described such formulae are used. These formulae are also known as multi forms. They are descriptive elements expressed in the same meaningful utterances and or certain syllables, which carry no meaning. Even in singing such formulae are visible. The formula in singing would occur as repetitions or incremental repetition. The use of the formulae is two fold. One is to the narrator who memorises the text, not in its entirety but in a capsule sequence. When he performs he brings forth the text by means of formulas; The other is it sets the style of the performance which the audience could easily recognise and comprehend to. The formulas are also played by the narrator to suit to his musical accomplices in order to make the audiences lively. Thus the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha uses language as a powerful vehicle to transform the narrator into the character on one hand and on the other transport character into the hearts of the audience. Audience in the process experience the characters as well as the events of the myth and quite often than not personalise them. This way the myth through language transcends from metaphysical to physical realm. Therefore, gods become human and humans become gods. Such is the power of the language of Oggu Katha.
In the following discussion, the usage of language with regard to their professions, daily life speech activities etc., are given so as to drive home the point, that it is the language of the Oggu Katha in its true sense of its grammar belongs to the community and therefore they own it and share it.

The folk life, mundane activities of the folk and the pastoral community in particular are reflected in the language used. The language is full of very much Vernacular words like:

- **Manda,**  
  - **Mandakallu,**  
  - **pidakalu,**
- **Ambali,**  
  - **Ingulam,**  
  - **Boyinam,**
- **Rokkam,**  
  - **Taguru,**  
  - **Gampa,**
- **Karre Avu,**  
  - **peda gampa,**  
  - **Kandukam,**
- **Santu,**  
  - **Bonkatam,**  
  - **Ambatala**
- **laggam,**  
  - **logili,**  
  - **Bicham,**
- **Jole** etc.,

The above given stand as right examples of the occupational vernacular kind. So also we can find words with Urdu influence being frequently used are as follows:

- **Bazaar,**  
  - **Darwaaza**  
  - **Darbaar,**  
  - **Galli**
- **Jawaan**  
  - **Salaam** etc. are of such kind
Coming to the poetic usage of language lot of proverbs and beautiful metaphors and similes can be found as part of the narration. The similes used are very native. For instance Neelima Devi adored with gold jewelry is described as

**Pusina Tangedu ole puttedu sommulu Petukoni**
The tangedu flowers are yellow in colour and when the tree is full of flowers the whole tree looks yellow. Here Neelima Devi is compared with a tangedu tree which is full of blossomed flowers.

**“Dummi kinda pandi kokkulu podichi nattuga”**.
As the pandikokulu beneath the rice grain is pierced, so did they with him.\(^\text{19}\) This is also an example of similes used. A beautiful poetic expression while describing the passionate feelings of Onama Devi, the Sister-in-law of Mallanna is:\(^\text{20}\)

**“Madana masti kandla kavaramu”**.
To describe the richness of the house and the snake in the house a poetically rich phrase used is.\(^\text{21}\)

**"Ponnaru logilla munnaru Nagasarpamu"**.

While narrating the labour pains of Neelima Devi in her own words Neelima says that.\(^\text{22}\)

**"Kondavole neppu lostavunnavi Teppavole Telipotavunnavi"**\(^\text{2}\)
The pains start as hills and move away as the little boats in water.

**"Enuganta Padamu yedepai mopindu"**.\(^\text{24}\)
Many such lucid descriptions using similes and native proverbs can be found through out the narration. Integration of their life world and the nature is poetically highlighted in the narration. Native proverbs are inevitably part of
the narration. A list of the proverbs used by the troupe led by Majjiga Lakshmi Narshaiah is given here under

a) Bangaru simhasanamuna sunakamunu kurchunda bettinattu
b) Cheppi chesina paniki chedutanamu ledu
c) Moratuganikemi telusu mogalipuvvu vasana
d) Paduguru adumata padimandi lo chellu
e) Varusaki peddodini vayasuki chinnodini
f) Bichcham pettani avvaki muchchatlekuva saddi gattani avvaki sagadolu tekkuvu
g) Peyyanta koste peruku kotta pedda ledu
h) Adabidda gunam aralugannagunam magabidda gunam motugunam
i) Ninnuganti nee raata kanaledu

IV.3. Oggu Katha and the Actor

The second primary source that initiates the grammar of theater is Actor. The actor in Oggu Katha form is very energetic, dynamic and is capable of exhibiting his skills in all the dimensions of the varied characters. In other words the performers with the help of their dynamic acting skills shape this form. It is the actor's world, who presets the images, words, emotions, meanings and
actions of the characters through out his performance, in the sense this form is seen only through the medium of acting skills:

Such is the responsibility of the actor in this form and he fulfills it well and satisfies the challenges of the form all through his performance in narrating the story, thus by strengthening the structure. This Oggu performer of this present study does not possess extra paraphernalia, i.e., the elements like, set designs, lighting, costumes, make-up etc. He is there to hold the narration with out these elements and performs exploring his acting skills to substitute all these things. In the recent times, a change is noticed in certain other Oggu performances using make-up costumes, adding colour to the form Chukka Sattaiah is one such example.  

The present study is made only of one troupe as mentioned earlier, to emphasise or unfold the traditional and native character of the form.

The set of performers of this present study are led by

1. Majjiga Lakshminarasaiah - Kathakudu and followed by
   1. Majjiga Bhumaiah-Vanthakudu
2. Majjiga Sailu-on Oggu dolu
3. Majjiga Malliaiah-on thalam
4. Are Mondeyya- on thalam the set consists of 5 performers in number.
This set of performers could be divided into two.

The first set includes two performers i.e. One Kathakudu, the main narrator and the Vanthakudu the follower or helper.

The second set includes 3 performers who are musicians. One performer is on Oggu Dolu, another on cymbal [thalam], but would also be helping the main set lending his voice by repeating the ends of the ragam (alapana) occasionally joins himself as an actor when third character is needed in the performance.

This is the way the set is orchestrated well to the demand of the performance. All the episodes of the story and often-increased chitrakathalu in all their emotional, sensitive and other related traits that create the texture of the scenes are all handled by this set of five performers. The performance is totally dependent only on his body, vocal and psychological energies to establish and communicate all those features of inner environment of the character and the outer environment of the character in which they move, without depending on the other theatrical elements like sets, lights and so on.

This Oggu Katha performer's role is a challenging one. The performer shifts his role from as a narrator to as an actor and vice versa.
Figure - IV.8

The Oggu performer’s acting skills

Acting skills in Oggu Katha

- Bodily Skills
  - Mime Movement
  - Visual effects

- Vocal skills
  - Speech Recitation
  - Sound effects

- Psychological skills
  - Various emotional inputs that are controlled and channelised
  - Aesthetic effects
IV.3.1. Bodily skills

The Oggu Katha performer explores the art of using his body, intelligibly in the process of mimetic dramatization. Material culture and its functional categories are disposed by mimetic exposition in the performance.

A) Mime

The indigenous technique of mimetic improvisation stands as a specimen for his imaginative skills.

This art of mimetic improvisation is exploited by the performer to the demands of various incidents that are narrated; shifting of the energy and weight in the body, gaining and shifting of attention holding the balance and the rhythm are maintained by the performer, which are the basic properties of mimetic art.

This mimetic improvisation done by the Oggu performer could be classified into three kinds.

1. That part of mimetic improvisation where the performer's body is used to create the images of the varied locations and other inanimate properties. The following incident is placed for reference:-

Mallanna to fulfill his Oath given to his father Adireddy of satisfying all the conditions put forth by parents of Padmala Devi goes to seek financial assistance to his seven Uncles,
but is rejected by them. Then Mallanna in the disguise of Bandit enters into the bedroom where his aunts and uncles are resting and loots the money.

While narrating this incident of entering into the bedroom, the performers use their body in creating an illusion of a cot and the aunt and uncle hiding themselves under it. (Plate 22).

2. That part of mimetic improvisation where the performer uses his own hand properties which form the part of his usual costumes for the performance such as Rumalu, Vaani (oni), Chinna cheti Karra and Aashique / Gua Gutka Packet.

The following incidents are referred here where this kind of mimetic improvisation is done during the narration of the story.

i. Vaani

The performers wore a dupatta, which is normally pronounced as oni in Telugu language. The three performers Kathakudu, Vanthakudu and the helper wore the Vaani in three different colours green, pink and black.

Whenever they need to improvise different articles and hand properties, their Vaani was utilised in creating the needed effects. These Vaanis are rotated to the other characters apart from the
main narrator. In other words these coloured Vaani's are used by all the three performers, not fixing the same coloured Vaani for each of them.\textsuperscript{27}

While impersonating the characters they used to exchange them to the need of the characters they were portraying.

\textbf{Vaani as saree is used for the following characters:-}

a) Neelima Devi, and the lady who wants to buy Kattelu from Adireddy in Neelima Devi kanda (the I kanda of the story)

b) Akumanchi Devi, the sister of Neelima Devi who brings up Mallanna in Mallanna Kanda (the II Kanda of the story). Maternal uncle's wives etc., in Mallanna kanda).

c) Padmala Devi, Mallanna's first wife (Mallanna kanda the II kanda of the story)

d) Varalakshmi, the sister-in-law of Mallanna and in Varalakshmi Kanda (the III kanda of the story).

e) Bapana Ratnangi, Mallanna's second wife in Ratnangi kanda (the IV kanda of the story).

f) Balija Medalamma the third wife of Mallanna, an old lady who wants to buy pogaku from Mallanna who is in disguise of an ugly faced leprous and pogaku vendor (Koti Marrisetti), all the characters in Balija Medalamma kanda.

g) Ellavva, Mallanna’s sister, and Gollakethamma in Golla Kethamma kanda (the VI kanda of the story).
The performers used Vaani to portray all the female characters mentioned above. (Plate 23 for Vaani as Saree)

The same property the Vaani is used as turban to portray the following characters whenever they appear in the respective scenes.

a) Vaani as turban for the following characters: Adireddy in Neelima Devi kanda, Mallanna’s brothers. Mallanna and Sanganna in Mallanna kanda. Bodanna in Ratnangi kanda. Pogaku vendor in Balija Medalamma kanda. (Plates 24, 25, 26 for Vaani used as turban for various characters).

b) This property Vaani is also used as cradle, in Neelima Devi kanda where the scene of Mallanna’s birth is shown — characters Neelima Devi and Akumanchi Devi present here, swaying the Cradle (Plate 27 Vaani as Cradle - Mimetic improvisation).

c) As huge tummy of Koti Marrisetti (i.e., Mallanna in the disguise of this pogaku vendor.)

ii. Rumaal (hand kerchief)

Another property, which is improvised for many a needed hand properties, is rumaal. The following properties are improvised using rumaal.
a) Neelima Devi holding a baby in Neelima Devi Kanda.

b) Letter read out by the messengers from Mallanna’s uncle’s court to the brothers of Mallanna, at their Kacheri in Varalakki Kanda (the third kanda of the story). (Plates 28 and 29 rumaal being improvised as the needed hand property)

c) As Taraju used by the Pogaku vendor Koti Marrisetti (Mallanna in disguise in Balije Medalamma Kanda (V kanda of the story.)

d) Rumaal as Koppu when the scenes of female characters are impersonated.

iii. Gutka Packet

This gutka packet is improvised to show the characters, Mallanna’s sisters –in-law, moving to Kacheri, to see their husbands after being made-up, this gutka packet is improvised to the poolu in koppu (flowers in their hair dressing).

(Plate 30 Gutka Packet as Poolu in Koppu (flowers in the hair))

iv. Chinna Cheti Karra (small hand stick)

Another property which is extensively improvised during the performance is chinna cheti Karra (a small hand stick) in many an incidents.

a) As Kodavali when portrayed as the sons of Adireddy in Mallanna kanda (the II kanda)

b) As heap of sticks when Adireddy moves in streets to sell the fire wood (Neelima Devi Kanda, (I kanda) (Plate 31).
c) As the reins of the horse when shown Mallanna going to see his uncles - (Mallanna kanda, the II kanda) (Plate 32).

d) As knife used by Mallanna in the disguise of a Bandit to get money and ornaments from his aunts and uncles (Mallanna kanda the II Kanda) (Plate 33).

e) As pounding sticks, when depicting the women folk, preparing Bandari for Mallanna's marriage (Mallanna Kanda, the II Kanda)

f) As chameleon, when Jawans from Mallanna's uncles come to the Kacheri and threaten the sister-in-laws of Mallanna (Varalakki Kanda) (Plate 34).

g) As tarazu (balance) when depicted Mallanna in disguise of a pogaku vendor, while selling the pogaku. (Plate 35).

h) As Magic stick when depicted Mallanna in disguise of a snake charmer in Balije Medalamma kanda. (Plate 36).

i) As flute when portrayed Mallanna in the disguise of a snake charmer in Balija Medalamma Kanda.

v. Long bamboo stick

a) Taken from the audience used during performance and was improvised as a pounding stick in Mallanna kanda, when shown women preparing bandari for Mallanna's marriage with Padmala Devi in Mallanna kanda (Plate 37).
b) As the sticks of shepherd, Bodanna in Ratnangi Kanda while he being with Mallanna in the fields, looking after the sheep offered by Lord Shiva and Parvathi (Plate 38).

c) The third kind of mimetic improvisation is unlike the above two kinds.

3. This part of mimetic improvisation is same but without using any kind of properties, but is done with gestures

a) When Lord Shiva appears as Jangama Devara in Kolhapuripatnam in Neelima Devi Kanda, the I Kanda playing Sankham. (Plate 39).

b) When depicted Lord Shiva offering a fruit to Neelima Devi; giving boon of bearing children in Neelima Devi Kanda, the I Kanda. (Plate 40)

c) While depicting the sister-in-laws making up themselves combing before a mirror in Varalakki kanda. (Plate 41)

d) Depicting women folk weaving the thread from cotton in Padmala kanda. (Plate 42).

B) Movement

The second property in the bodily skills is the extensive movement this Oggu performer displays. The movements animated by this performer, create several lines as part of the compositions in terms of spatial relationship.
The movement done by the Oggu performer could be classified as two kinds

1) General movement  2) Rhythmic movement

1) General movement

The general movements are there with no specific trait in making the movement and are like plain moves taken by the performers to the needs of the scenes and the characters.

General movements are made by the performers, when the scenes are in prose and demand a spontaneous improvisation. (Plate 43).

2) Rhythmic movement

This kind of movements are made set to the Rhythm of the narrative and are animated by the performers stamping their feet and thus create the needed visual effects (Plates 44 & 45).

The metrical lines followed in the text of the Oggu Katha initiate the performer to move unlike the general movement. Hence they could be called as rhythmic movements. They are made by this performer stamping their feet at times on heels and on toes and create the needed visual effects.

The lines of the text of this troupe of Majjiga Lakshmi Narasaiah were either in four beats or in three beats and often in
varied paces. Rhythmic movements are made by this performer when these parts of text of recitation and that part of songs in the narrative are performed.

Both these above cited two kinds of movements animated by the performers create several lines as part of the compositions in terms of the spatial relationship. The patterns that are created by the animation of the performers are classified as under

a) **circular**  b) **horizontal**  c) **diagonal**  d) **vertical**.

a) **Circular movement**

The circular patterns of these movements could be further of 2 kinds

i) Performers moving round to make circular pattern in the space given (Plate 46).

ii) performers revolving around themselves.

i) **The first kind of movement is done to establish the following things.**

a) To establish the arrival of a character.

b) To convey the emotional conditioning of a character.

c) To describe a locale of the action.

d) To convey the emotional condition of a particular situation involving tensions and dense mood.
ii) The second kind of circular movement is often done to convey the following things.

a) change of role from one character to the other character.

b) Change of role from narrator to the character and vice-versa.

Through this way of using movement in the above said circular patterns, the performers communicate to the audiences, who are surrounded by the latter.

The other three kinds of patterns made by the performers are explored to the demand of the compositional needs of a particular scene involving the characters of different nature, by the Oggu performer, spontaneously.

These movements are not pre planned or pre-rehearsed, but are spontaneously composed which is inherent in the enactment of the narrative keeping in view of the audience and the space given for their performance.

Since these things form part of the elements of composition, which in turn are related to space, this aspect would be further discussed in the segment of space in this chapter.

The above discussed aspects of movement are the important and vital components of this narrative form, which are also as important in theatrical performance.
IV.3.2. Vocal Skills

The vocal skills of the Oggu performer could be analysed in terms of his role in the narrative form. The Oggu performer's role in this narrative performance is of two kinds

1. As Narrator
2. As Varied characters.

The performer maintains his tonal values being energetic in performing both as a narrator and in varied characters.

The pitch, tempo and pace are maintained at one level while narrating and when he shifts his role to enacting the varied characters, brings out different vocal traits suiting to the demand of the dimensions of the characters in different situations.

A) Speech

The performer explores his vocal skills in a different way to a different character with his lucid speech. The kathakudu and the two Vanthakulu exchange the roles during their performance depending upon the situations of narrative, the main kathakudu immediately shifts to the role of narrator and one of the two vanthakulu becomes Mallanna.

This exercise continues all over the performance, and the audience do not get confused. Though this kind of shifting of the role happens, the performers maintain the vocal traits and speech
that are meant for each of these characters. Even this is maintained in differentiating male to female characters. All these varied characters like gods, supernatural characters and human characters are delineated with different kinds of vocal traits and speech.

The following characters in their respective scenes are given for the reference, where the performers maintain typical vocal traits and speech.

a) The woman who attempts to buy the firewood sold by Adireddy in Neelima Devi Kanda.
b) The conversation between Mallanna and Sanganna - Here the performers inter exchange the roles, and maintain the needed vocal traits in delivering the speech.
c) The brothers of Mallanna in Varalakki kanda.
d) The Muslim Jawans threatening the sister-in-laws of Mallanna in the kacheri to maintain the dialect and vocal traits suiting to the demands of those characters.
e) Bapana Ratnangi conversing with Mallanna in Ratnangi Kanda.
f) The vocal traits and speech for the character Bodanna, who accompanies Mallanna in Ratnangi Kanda.
g) The snake charmer's role in Medalamma Kanda.
h) Kotimarrisatti, the pogaku vendor in Balija Medalamma Kanda.
B) Recitation

The recitation part also draws a creative exploration of the vocal skills from the Oggu performers. In fact recitations form the basic aural factor of this narrative form, which grabs the attention of the audience - there will be a continuos beat on Oggu Dolu and Thalalu often with variations on rhythm and tempo. Against this backdrop of rhythmic beats the performers recite the lines accordingly, exactly following the variations on the rhythm and tempo. This exercise of recitation following the beats demands creative exploration of a musical sense from the Oggu performer.

The following lines are given as few examples, which are recited in a typical way and this recitation of lines forms the basic factor of performance of this narrative form. The narrators recite the following lines while describing Lord Shiva, who will be coming to help Neelima Devi in Neelima Devi Kanda.\(^{28}\)

i) "Endi kondala vunde Jinka Tholu kattu koni
Paadalaku bangaru kadiyam vesukoni
Chethi lona aggi gajaa surini pattu koni
Koppu Ippu koni……………Aha"

Narrating Mallanna and his inner qualities the performers recite the following lines.
ii) "Thandri Racha Thandriki unchindu Thana Racha Thanu Kattu kunnadu". These following lines are recited by the performers as characters, unlike the above lines.

i) Lord Shiva recites the following lines advising Neelima Devi (in Neelima Devi Kanda).

"Repati kalla kalla kaliyugamuna mugguru threemoorthula Ioni matti Bommalu manava Jeevalye ettedunnadi".30

ii) Lord Shiva advising Neelima Devi in the same Kanda (Neelima Devi Kanda).

"Hara Hara Anna Ayyala Maravaddu Shiva Shiva Anna Shivuni Maravaddu Poddeedu Snanam Seyyala."31

C) Singing

Singing forms the major element in exploring the vocal skills in terms of musical sense and tonal variations. The entire performance in a way is sung except those parts of incidents that are enacted. Right from the invocatory song in the beginning till the end of the performance with Mangalam, singing places itself as a major component of the vocabulary of this narrative form. The different 'ragas' which are very much indigenous and native, explore vocal strength in the Oggu performer with vibrant music.
While the narration continues, by providing the needed mood and other related effects of the varied incidents, with abundance of descriptions with native flavor of metaphors, riddles and proverbs, music and singing become the prime source of the theatrical vocabulary of this narrative form. All the performers do sing follow the pitch and variations in tempo and rhythm. The variations do occur, suiting to the demand of the event, situations, characters and the emotions built in it.

Invocatory songs, songs depicting the pains and pleasures of the various characters, songs describing the locations and time, songs depicting the valorousness of the character, apart from other sentiments, are sung by the Oggu performers, proving their energy, with clear vocal skills. The performers maintain to orchestrate their vocal skills and establish the contrast when needed. The songs can be classified into three kinds.

1. Songs sung by the narrators.
2. Songs sung by the characters.
3. Songs sung by the narrator and the characters.

The following two songs refer to the respective categories as an example. The songs in this narrative form usually end in each line with the words.
"Rama Rama" the ending note are words are followed by the other helpers i.e., vanthakulu elongating it set to the respective rhythm and tempo.

1. *Songs sung by the narrator*

   a) **Kanduluri Bokkuthunnaru**

      **Kanduluri Bokkuthunnaru**

      (This song is sung in three speeds building the tempo to the need of the scene that is narrated.32)

   b) **Aaruguru Ega Kodukulaina**

      **Adavilo Malla Balayya**

      **Kali kooluthunnado Rama Rama**

      **Bhaggunna Mantalu Mandena Rama Rama.**33

   c) **Alalla Alla Nerellolo**

      **Alla Nerellalloo Nirmalalo**

      **Advilona Chinna Maraju Choodu Nirmalalo**

      **Doddu Karra Theesi Chetha Battindu Nirmalalo**

      **Gira gira thippu thunnadu nirmalalo.**34

2. *Songs sung by character*

   a) **Ammamma ika thelenu Devudo Narayana**

      **Ammamma ika Thalalenu**

      **Nenu Badhalu Bharimpa Lenamma,**

      **Amma Oka ghadiya nindinati Devudo Narayana**
Okka hadiya Nindinaadi Naku Opika Karuvayenamma.  

b) Edavaku Edavaku Eka Kumara Edisthe ninnevaru ethukuntaru Jo .... Hayee

c) Suvvi Suvva nanna lala suvvanna lala lala suvvi suvvana Nenokka pata padanga Potu Eyanga

3. Songs sung by both the narrator and the character.

a) Ellipora Jangamoda Rama Rama
Ellipora Jangamoda Rama Rama

b) Chempala Juttu Lekunda Joodu Lekunda Joodu
Ethu Nosalu Lekunda Joodu Lekunda Joodu
Ethu Bhujalu Lekunda Joodu Lekunda Joodu
Naalika Macha Lekunda Joodu Lekunda Joodu
Eepuna Sudi Lekunda Joodu Lekunda Joodu

D. Sound Effects

Another major component in this narrative form is "sound effects". The Oggu performer by exploring his vocal skills in creating different sound effects, do achieve the atmosphere of both temporal and spatial dimensions. These effects created by the performer intelligibly at the backdrop of a continuous rhythm on Oggu dolu and thalalu, by exploring their vocal skills and mimicking talents, create the needed mood.
Table - IV.4

Sound effects created by the Oggu performers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Sound Effect</th>
<th>Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bhom Bhom Bhom</td>
<td>Counch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Gana Gana Gana</td>
<td>Bells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Bhaggu Bhaggu Bhaggu</td>
<td>Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Me. . . . Me. . . . Me. . . . Me</td>
<td>Goat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Guyyeen Guyyeen</td>
<td>Snake charmer's wind instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Gira Gira Gira Gira</td>
<td>Rotating, revolving Moving round &amp; round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Pala Pala Pala Pala Pala</td>
<td>Chanting Hymns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV.3.3. Psychological skills

The Oggu performer holds the performance in dual role i.e., one as the narrator and other as character. In other words he acts at a time as both a narrator and as varied characters.

This exercise of narrating the events, emotions of the characters and moods of scenes invites a greater attention on the psychological skills and energy from the Oggu performer.

The characters also are of different nature in emotional traits. The performer adheres to the emotional needs of the characters. He performs at ease and is truthful in his behaviour while portraying
the characters. He turns out to be clownish and slapstick when he portrays such character suddenly transforms into the character of a bitterly crying woman and after the end of the scene again becomes the narrator.

The performer discharges his psychological skills suiting to the demands of both the contexts of he being a narrator and as an actor, using a characterization, He is totally involved in performing the narrative having a clarity in his mind that he is surrounded by audiences and discloses the event, creating the aesthetic experience with them.

The complexity in narrating the story lies totally in the psychological skills of the performer. To understand the psychological skills operated by the Oggu performer his role in conducting the show could be analyzed as under.

1. As the narrator showing the emotions.
2. As the actor doing the characters; showing the emotions.

This dual-role held by the performer demands a greater amount of psychological skills and energy. The following varied scenes depict the above said complexity as a performer of this narrative form, one holds in his psychological skills and energy.
### Table - IV.5

The characters enacted by the main artistes I & II in each act

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Names of the character Enacted by performer I (Pradhana kathakudu)</th>
<th>Characters enacted by Enacted by performer II (Vanthakudu kathakudu)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jangamayya</td>
<td>Neelima Devi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neelima Devi</td>
<td>Adireddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women to whom Adireddy tries to Sell Fire wood</td>
<td>Neelima Devi's sons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maid Servants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act II</td>
<td>Akumanchi Devi</td>
<td>Neelima Devi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mallanna</td>
<td>Mallanna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adireddy</td>
<td>Sanganna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Machani Devi</td>
<td>Bhatti Kesava Raju</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bandit</td>
<td>Kolimi Katala Reddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kalapu Jogayya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mallanna's maternal Uncles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maternal uncle's wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Padmala Devi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act III</td>
<td>Mallanna</td>
<td>Sanganna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neelima Devi</td>
<td>Mallanna's brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mallanna's brothers</td>
<td>Mallanna's sister's in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mallanna's sister's in-law</td>
<td>Onamala Devi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Messenger sent by</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mallanna's maternal Uncles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muslims Jawans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act IV</td>
<td>Mallanna</td>
<td>Bodanna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bapani Ratnangi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act V</td>
<td>Mallanna</td>
<td>Kanchi Varadaraju</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jangamayya</td>
<td>Balija Lingalu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snake charmer</td>
<td>Medalanna</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As tobacco vendor ladies of the Harem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leprosy character</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladies of the harem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act VI</td>
<td>Mallanna</td>
<td>Renuka Ellanna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Balija Medalamm</td>
<td>Golla's</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Golla Ketamma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) As the Narrator showing the emotions.

a) Bhaga Bhaga Mandinado Rama Rama
   Bhaggunaa bhasmamayino Rama Rama
   Choopulu Baga Maarindu Rama Rama
   Rudra Devudayenu Rama Rama
   Japa Patamulu Maarchi chandrudu lekunda chesi
   Jabba ulupuga mari
   Kudi bhujambunna Rudraksham
   Peyi Meeda Vesindu
   Edama Sankana Endi Jole, Kudi Sankana Bangaaru jole
   Esukuni
   Amma ! bhujana ganta pettindu Rama Rama
   Chetula sankhamu pattindu Rama Rama

b) Jangamayya vaddaki chera vasthavunnad
   Jangamayya vaddaki chera vasthavunnadi

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Jangamayya vaddaki chera vasthavunnadi
poraka katta Chethoola sye sye ga Battina"
poraka katta Chethoola sye sye ga Battina"
Eevuru annadi... Ee Rajyamannadi
Nee manda Aavulekkada Vayu guruvulekkada
Unde thalamekkada Ooru peru ekkada 40

(2) As the actor doing characters showing the emotions:

a) Aadi Narayanudu Narayanudo"
adigoche brahma deva brahma deva
Memu andari vole putta leda bhagavanthudo
Bhagavanthudo
Memo andari vole melaga leda melaga leda
Maaku thalli entha noorindo! Ponninado
Maaku brahma entha raasindu raasindo
Bhagavanthudo. 41 (Neelima devi kanda when her sons are
beaten by landlord.

b) O! Thalli Neelamma! Thalli Neelamma!
Andari vole memu puttaleda! O! Thalli Neelamma!
Kondari vole peraga leda O! Thalli Neelamma!
Nee papa Dharmamulona! O! Thalli Neelamma!
Eee padu puttukalu mammenduku puttinchinavu
Kanna thalli neelamma
O! Thalli Neelamma! 42

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(Neelima Devi kanda the six sons of Neelima Devi bitterly crying, when they are beaten blue and back by the rytu asami).

Thus by exploring his acting skills as discussed above the Oggu performer maintains to create the needed visual, aural and aesthetic effects.

The Oggu performer transferring himself from the narrator's role to the character, and vice versa shows out the energy he is possessed with it is unlike the performer, one finds in other forms like Burrakatha Sarada Katha and the like in terms of the theatrical elements.

IV.4. Oggu Katha - and the Space

The third major source for evolving the grammar of this narrative form is space. Exploring the given space the performer finds the space through his progression of narration. The performer creates performance space within the given space. The performer creates several compositions by animating the characters energetically and brings out the kinetic and dynamic values for the narrative form. All visual images, spectacles are clearly conveyed intelligibly by the performer who finds and defines the space by the way of his compositions.
The Oggu performer finding the space and transforming it into the performance space is the third major source of creating theatrical vocabulary for this narrative form. This narrative form demands this creative aspect of transformation into the narrative’s space and the performer and the audience respond to this. This response establishes the flexibility of the space found by the performer.\textsuperscript{45} (Plate 47 shows where the performance was held).

The three kinds of spaces, the performer suggested, are by three different shapes and dimensions.

1. The first one under a tree in the corner of the street suggests no specific demarcation of the space for the performer and the audiences.

2. The second one in the premises of “Satram”, also under a tree but is surrounded by a compound wall.

3. The third place was in the premises of the temple.

The compositions are indigenously created by Oggu performer by animating the lines and mounting the mass, that are demanded by the content of this narrative form.
1. Main Deity Mylaaru Devudu/Mallanna
   accompanied by Golla Kethamma, Balija Medalamma
2. Mandapam - Roofed with 4 Pillars
3. Vayidhyakarulu - orchestra people in chairs with Oggu dolu, and thalalu
4. Performers Kathakudu, Vanthakulu
5. 3 Feet height wall surrounded
6. Pillars holding the roof
7. Rock on which the inscriptions were inched.
8. Dhwaja sthambham
9. Compound wall
10. Entrance gate.
Through the dynamics of movement and mimetic improvisation, the space is explored by the Oggu performer, which forms the important source for the liveliness of this narrative form.

The factors in the narrative form that act as the key to the performer for finding the space are the need.

1. To establish the shifting of his role from being a narrator to the character and vice-versa.

2. To establish the locations of different episodes.

The different kinds of lines and mass are explored to establish the above said factors, which stand as the primary sources of theatrical compositions. This exercise of finding the space for these theatrical compositions forms the basis for the evolution of theatrical grammar in terms of the space, in this study of narrative form.

An attempt is made to explain the exploration of space by the Oggu performer keeping in view of the above said aspects.

1. Finding the space to establish, the shifting of his role from being a narrator to the character and vice versa.

The following incidents that are established through finding and exploring the space stand as the reference.
“Atuvanti Shiva Sankarudu Bhoom! Bhoom! Shanku chethabatti atuvante gokula kolhapuri cherindu

(As narrator continues).

Kadapu gadapa vada vada galli galli, bazar bazar, Illu, Illu, thirigi Madhya ranga, Boddu kadi Moodu vadala kadi kochi ganta kotti bhoom! Bhoom! Ani shankham oodinadu! Ayina Mana Santhanam leni Bhavanam Ekkada unnadani alochinchinadu!

Atuvanti Mathraminaa! Parameshwarudu Mathimaina pachchani pandiri lo ayamma Neelima devi paadala nadakalo! Logi valoloki aiyana atuvantii shiva sankaradu vachi“

(The narrator begins to sing describing the entrance of the character Lord Shiva)

"Ganagana gantalina Jangmayya Gotteno……"

"Ganagana gantalu kotti…..

Bhom! Bhom! Bhom! Shaye! Pattina shankunadam evaru vinnarayya! Bangaru Logillalona Bhama Neelima Deviro!………..

Neelima Devi eppudithe vinnado!

The narrator shifts into the character with vanthakudu as helper.

Vanthakudu as Neelima Devi and the narrator transforms into the character Lord Shiva in disguise of Jangamayya.
Now in the characters and the dialogue continues

Neelima Devi:-"Ayyoo Evaro" Deva Jangamayya Vachindayya!
Nenu
Nenu vachina vaniki bikshamu aiyetha pedatha!

Narrator- Annukoni! Suryanadilo snanamu chesi
naravannacheera katti jama pattu cheera raika thodigi

(the discription continues how Neelima Devi prepares to offer "bhiksha" to the Jangamaiyya.

Darvaja dhati mathara maiyana pachani pandirla krindiki vasthunnadhi! Ela Anna! Pallem! Chembu pathukoni padivela pabbati patti! Kanna thali eppudu itta vachindo!

Narrator transforms with the help of Vanthakudu, he being in the Jangamayya and Vanthakudu as Neelima Devi

Kathakudu in the role of Jangamayya replies:-

Marie! Nee! Perentamma?

Neelima Devi - Naaperuu! Gokula Kolhapuri patnam lo nunna

“Neelima Devi”...

Vanthakulu in the orchestra continues to repeat the last line "Neelima Devi"....

The dialogue between the character Neelima Devi and Lord Shiva in disguise of Jangamayya continues:-

The narrator and his follower i.e., the kathakudu and vanthakudu respectively share the space while narrating the story and continue being in the character.

The performers move in straight lines forward and back ward while narrating (Plate 48 refers to the space found)

The performer turns round to establish of their shifting from narrator to being the character and stand in half strong positions and continue their dialogue. (Plate 49 refers to the space found).

The performer moves round in the given space at the beginning and at the end of each scene, and establish the given space by their circular movement. (Plate 50 refers to the space found)
2. The second factor that initiates to find the space is to establish the location of an event.

The following incidents refer to the above factor of finding the space

a. Adireddy trying to sell the fire wood (Neelima Devi Kanda) (Plate 51 refers to the above said factor of finding the space).

b. Lord Shiva appearing before Neelima Devi to offer another fruit after she repents and prays for him. (Plate 52 refers to the above said factor of finding the space).

The following figure IV.10 shows the space found and its transformation from given space.

Narrator's space refers to the given space where they narrate the story. The given space transforms into the space of narrators, while they space themselves in movement and composition suggesting their roles as narrators.

The transformation takes place where the narrators shift their role into the varied characters that appear in different scenes, into the narrative's space.
The given space transforming into narrator's space, again transforming into narrator's space again transforms into the narratives space and vice versa.

The conjunction of both narrator's space and the narrative's space is the finding space in this narrative form, where the narrator
would also be in the characters and thus bringing both the spaces found into one.

All these three phases of transformation of a given space into the narrator's space, narrative space, when do occur simultaneously become the space found in or the performed space in other words.

This transformation of the space involves the creative process of the narrators who establish these above said stages of transformation involving the different elements of compositions, spacing, movements, dance and pantomimetic dramatization. As discussed earlier the space is the third major component that evokes the grammar of theatre in their narrative form.

IV.5. **Oggu** Katha and the Audience

As discussed earlier the fourth major component in the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha is audience. Since a theatrical performance is incomplete without audience the discussion is furthered to understand their importance and role. Though the narrative is a caste myth as a part of its content, as a form, it is received by the audience who include in many a cases, the other sections and castes of the society.
This narrative form in its development widened its contexts of performance from its ritual linked and community related one and thereby also widened its groups of audiences. This is evident from the context of the performance of this form apart from its regular, usual ritual linked events to the other context of festivals conducted by different governmental and non-governmental organisations. They even use it for propagating various social issues, policies, and ideologies of their organisations. Hence in the process of its development from the context of the rituals of the pastoral community to the other contexts cited above, it is reaching to the audiences of main streams of the society, through live performances and also through other electronic media, irrespective of its content. While the context is changing the content of the form is also changing according to the demand and so also its grammar. This facilitates to evaluate the structure of the grammar of theatre of this form, at the level of its functioning. One at the level of text and context and the other at the level of performer and audiences. It is the mutual relationship at different socio, political and religious levels of the performance and the audience that strengthens the structure of its grammar. While the performance of this narrative form is being conducted in various contexts, the issue of patroising is also to be considered, which many of times influence the performance, the context, and its duration, which in turn effect the temporal conditions of the audiences. Patronage offered by the pastoral community as part of its rituals conducted both at
household and temples, varies in the patronage offered by the other organisations suiting to the demands of the context.

Hence, to estimate the role of the audiences in the structure of its grammar of theatre, Three cases of performances are taken for study. The three performances were conducted at different places by different troupes in different contexts.

1. The performance arranged exclusively for this study and which is not linked with their usual rituals. This was conducted at Inole on 4th and 5th of October 1995 (Plates 53 & 54 for audience).

2. The performance conducted at Mallanna Temple of (Khandoba) tradition at Bagh Ambarper, Hyderabad on 15.6.97, which was linked with annual ritual of Mallanna Kalyanam.

3. The performance conducted at Ellamma temple at Balkampet on 30.7.97, also linked with the rituals usually under the patronage of the temple authorities was not done in this context -. The community and the other devotees of the deity made it on their own.

In these three cases of performances, three different caste myths were narrated.

1. Mallanna Puranam at Inole, Mallanna Temple.
2. Beerappa katha at Bagh Amberpet Mallanna Temple.
However, despite of the variation in the content of the myths the form that is Oggu Katha becomes central to the performance. Viewing audience from this standpoint it appears that in all the three case studies as mentioned above, the relationship between the performer and the audience reflect as duality in the group of audience. One group of audience can be termed as internal audience and the other as external audience. The following diagram shows the diversity of audience for Oggu Katha performance in general.

**Figure - IV.11**

Diversity of Audience

![Diagram of Audience Diversity]

The internal audience view the performer not simply as the narrator but the very fabric of the narrative itself. The narrative
being sacred, the narrator becomes the executor of sacral act. Therefore he performs the role of a priest who officiates and mediates between them and the gods. In order to perform the ritual in the form of Oggu Katha, the performers depend on the community since their main occupation is the ritual performance. Therefore the performers (bards) having a right to invoke the gods to bless the community enter into a dual relationship with the community while it attains the status of audience. In other words the audience are created and related to the ritual performance as binding. Once the community is transformed into audience the performer makes them partake in the performance as internal audience. Here he manipulates the internal audience to shift between the two realms, one as patrons and the other the devotees. As patrons it is the family or a group of families and occasionally the entire community exercise their right to watch the performance through ritual situations such as rites of passage, territorial rites etc. During this occasions the internal audience who make the ritual performance possible show off as patrons. In the sense it is they who invite the bards and pay them to perform the ritual. Wherefore, the performers to satisfy such groups in the internal audience cautiously knit them into the narrative as well as to the gods. For instance as family of Kurmas/Gollas when arrange a performance to the occasion of birth of a child, the performers while performing the ritual of "Mallanna Kolupulu" they overtly uplift the family by relating them as the elders of the marriage of Mallanna, while the narrative progresses. Similarly when the
community performs as a whole the rituals connected with the wedding of Mallanna, the patrons are intrinsically treated in the text analogous to the characters in the discourse time of the narrative. Being created such made belief situation the performers transform the internal audience to devotees and help some of them to get possessed by the spirit of the gods. Once a devotee is ritually possessed by the spirit of Mallanna or Ellamma the performer takes the role of Shaman and officiates a mediation between the devotee and the spirit of gods. He also helps the spirit possessed person to come back to normalcy.

Both as patrons and devotes the audience contribute to the progress of the performance in two ways; Firstly as providers of the hand and stage properties (functions of the stage manager) contribute the progression of performance; Secondly as critics they decide the duration and the level of the narrative. As providers of the properties the internal audience if necessary give away their gold ornaments, garments sticks, gunny bags, chairs etc., as it is demanded by the performers to the progression of the performance. Once a performance is over they take back their articles. What is interesting to note here is that the articles used in the performance loose the property value and are treated as stage and hand properties. Unlike in the main stream theatre where they remain as properties meant to use for other productions. Simply by decontextualising the article it looses its value as property. This observation is important because in folk theatre, as already discussed every unit of grammar of theatre only where
contextualised becomes meaningful and otherwise not. The fluid status of all the units is the prime nature of the folk theatrical grammar. Similarly the audience are also in fluid state and therefore they shift between the patrons and devotees and between the critics and the stage managers.

As critics the internal audience negotiated with the performers to fill up a particular Kanda of the text of Mallanna katha as the theme of performance. They also decide the magnitude of the narrative to effect the duration of the play. They also as critics challenge the narrator to bring out the innate talent of the performers. As already stated the performers being sensitive to the comments of the internal audience they improvise on stage the performance on one hand and on the other by stretching or condensing the scenes in the episodes. In this sense the scenic continuum of the narrator is achieved through the contribution of the internal audience as critics.47

The other segment of audience as shown in the above diagram pertains to external audience. External audience are those who are not in the habit of internalising the text. There could be two groups within the external audience. One may be the non-kurma/Golla community people who neither own the text nor ritually incorporated to the text. The other group could be the people of the same community of kurma/golla yet do not show the sense of
belonging to the narrative as they may be effected by the modernity.\textsuperscript{48}

On the whole the external audience could be deviled into two kinds: based on the positions they take in relation to the performance; one as sponsorers either the non-kurma/golla community people or those who belong to the same community who do not show the sense of belonging for various reasons may sponsor the performances for the benefit of the larger audience through electronic media or through folk festivals etc. The academic community may also sponsor the performances only to study them in which case induce a context with small group of audience when the performances may occur.\textsuperscript{49} The remuneration in these cases is fixed not by traditional negotiations between the audience and performers as it is the case with the ritual performances but much depends upon the purposes of the sponsorers. The other group of external audience can be termed as onlookers. As on lookers the audience only watch the performance for an entertainment thrill or while away the time. In both the cases the external audience show not much interest in the content of the narrative but the form of performance. Since they are interested only in the form, the time they spend to watch the performance \textit{varies}.\textsuperscript{50}

Since the audience do not form a monolithic group but vary ranging from devotees to onlookers the performer needs to cater the demands of various audiences. This being a Herculean task the
performers strategically adopt the techniques which can be termed as panoptic vision to draw the attention of various audiences. The concept of panoptic vision refers to the controlled gauge of the performers, who by using such strategies not only control the narrative, but also the audience by incorporating them into the narrative. This concept further elaborates that the controlled gauge of the performers over the audience makes them sensitive to the responses of the audience as they are revealed through their movements. The panoptic vision of performers in a way construct the performance itself by making a direct intra and inter relationships on one hand with the narrative and on the other hand with the audiences.

IV.6. Oggu Katha and the Semantics

As described in the foregone sections of this chapter, the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha is constructed fundamentally on four units viz., text and context (space) and performer and audience. However the units themselves do not give complete meaning to the performance but only when they are found as combination. That is to say that the units are interrelated the semantic value that the performance gets can best be understood. The relation between signifier and signified in the process of signification is not unitary in the Oggu Katha performance. The signifiers intrinsically built within, the process of signification are the
one which create the meanings. In this sense signifiers have a multiple meaning as the way they are interrelated. This dimension of Oggu Katha performance is the crux of the semantics of this theatrical grammar. This feature is central to the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha, because the interaction of each unit with the other itself is in fluid state. The fluid state here refers to a state where in a fixed state of combination, do not occur but a state of possibility of occurrence of multiple combinations. In other words the nature of the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha rests on the interaction of the units in a multiple way so as to communicate "Polyseme" through performance(s).

An interesting feature is that each unit in the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha has in itself dual nature. In the text unit the dual nature occurs in the plot situation; in the "actor unit" the dual nature occurs in the roles of actor being taken between narrator and character; in the space (context) that the dual nature occurs between narrative's space to the narrator's space and in the audience unit the dual nature occurs between the internal and external audiences. Thus the dual nature is the basis for creating the fluid state to the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha.

As stated already, the actor becomes central to the Oggu Katha performance and every other unit which he manipulates justly fall in line by way of creating various combinations and thus create semantics of the performance. The actor is central because it is he
who being belonging to the community of bards (Oggu Pujarulu) exercise right to perform the cultural text, Mallanna katha to his community who invariably becomes the audience. In this sense actor becomes central to the performance because but for him the text fails to manifest itself into visual, without the visual, the audience neither can relate themselves to the text nor to their ancestral gods to whom they owe their existence. In other words it is the theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha that distinguishes between the 'self (community) and `the other' (other communities).

The following scheme is conceived based on the above discussion and presented in a diagrammatic manner to understand the semantics of Oggu Katha.

In the following diagram textual space (T.S) refers to the commonly shared text of Oggu Katha (be it Mallanna katha, Ellamma katha Beerappa katha etc.,) in its oral and aural form. The T.S. also refers to the narrative time wherein the characters through their interaction display meanings. In other words T.S. in its oral or aural form has a content value i.e., the basic story line. Being in this state T.S. refers to the plot structure of the story line. It is the actor who by virtue of his skills transforms text into narrative thereby changes its nature from oral and aural to narrative and performance text. In order to transform text into performance he shits between narrator's space (N.S.) and performance space (P.S.).
Figure - IV.12
The semantics of Oggu Katha
In the narrator’s space the actor informs the story line and in the performance space he enacts the actual events of the story. As narrator he uses panoptic vision as a strategy to control the audience. As performer by stepping into the role of character he instills interest in the audience to watch his performance. On the whole the actor by using narrator’s space and performance space enters into audience space and incorporate them into textual space. In the process the audience oscillate between higher special level (H.S.L.) and lower special level (L.S.L.).

At H.S.L. the audience transforms themselves into patrons and sponsors. At L.S.L. they experience themselves as devotees and onlookers of the performance. What is important to note in the above diagram is that the actor initially places his audience on parallel spatial level (P.S.) and then manipulates their statues between H.S.L. and L.S.L. In the theatrical grammar of the main stream theatre in most cases the audience are placed at the receiving end therefore always lower to the actor. In other words the didactic component of the performance privileges actor over his audience. This brings the case the audience at any given point of time during the performance will not have any control over rit. Neither their criticism nor their resentment or applaud will effect the duration/quality of performance. However in the case of Oggu Katha, the actor being free to shift his roles between narrator and performer manipulates and manifests the textual space so as to enter into audience space and transforms them by relating them to
the text. What is important to note here is that all the units of the theatrical grammar being in fluid state variously interact and create multiple meanings to the performance itself. Therefore every performance becomes unique and draw attentions of the audience thereby giving scope for repetition of performance. This quality of theatrical grammar of Oggu Katha makes it as a tradition by itself. As tradition it becomes an identity of the community. Oggu Katha therefore as form represents the community of pastoralists and its theatrical grammar informs semantically their worldview, which is central to distinguish their `self` and the other.
NOTES

1. Chitra Kathalu - Stories or anecdotes which are narrated in between the main story for maintaining the interest with wit and humour are called chitra kathalu. When asked for the importance and role of these chitra kathalu Narasaiah told that "it is only to make the performance interesting for the sake of the audience, the chitra kathalu are rendered. In fact the audience ask for more such kathalu for they are already aware of Mallanna Puranam (Interview with Majjiga Lakshmi Narsaiah at Inole, October, 1995).

2. Ganges, Gangamma or river ganges when referred by the Oggu performers does not necessarily mean the actual river ganges, any river which is existing locally is treated as Gangamma. An obeisance is paid to Gangamma before the beginning of the actual performance as well by the performer.

3. "Most important is the concept of the sandhis (joints, junctures. How are all these elements of progression, permeation and proliferation from the point of view of hero, theme etc., to be joined together and juxtaposed? This time the implicit metaphor is that of the purusa (man) or vaguely, even architecture. The constituents are Mukha, Pratimukha, Garbha, Vimarsa or Avimarsa and Nirvahana. The literal translation of these terms- mouth, progression (literally counter mouth) womb, pause or complexity and resolution - will perhaps give us a clue to the nature of the terms employed. The first three are metaphors of the body. The latter two suggest movement. Finding exact English equivalents is not
easy. This is loaded terminology, which emerges from Bharata's understanding from the body system as also as familiarity with the methodology, viniyoga, of the yajna. The analogy of the itivritta as the sarira (body) at its grossest and subtle levels of drama alludes to the nature of interconnections and the movement of time within the dramatic structure. It is the dynamics of movement and nature of interconnections which are suggested through the terms Mukha, Pratimukha and the more complex but fundamentally germane levels of movement within garbha (in the womb- unmanifest but dynamic) to further complexities (vimarsa) and again final resolution”.

4. Neelima Devi kanda in Mallanna katha performed by Majjiga Lakshminarsaiah and his troupe at Inole, Mallanna temple on 4th and 5th October 1995.

5. Varalakki kanda, Ibid.

6. Mallanna Kanda, Ibid.

7. Neelimadevi Kanda, Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Mallanna kanda, Ibid.
18. Neelima Devi Kanda, Ibid.

19. Varalakki Kanda, Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Neelima Devi Kanda, Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Adding coloured costumes is a change now occurring. Chukka Sattaiah of Kuruma community adds wigs, ornaments and colourful costumes in his performances. In the process of field study for this study an Oggu performance was witnessed at Balcampet Ellamma temple, Hyderabad, July, 1997 where this element of colourful costumes, hand properties were added by these performers. Even the number of performers is also enhanced to 12 to 14 and all of them were made up with bright and coloured costumes with sparkling ornaments head gears and also hand properties like trisoolam, gada etc., However, the present study is made only of one troupe as mentioned earlier, to emphasise or unfold the traditional and native character of the form.

26. The performers when asked in the interview, about the pronunciation of Vaani as it would be in English as (watts) responded and answered that normally we pronounce since we are used to. But in general telugu language that particular piece of cloth which is normally worn by unmarried young girls in Andhra Pradesh is pronounced as "Oni" as in English words like "open\'V\'own" etc. This may be the dialectical difference in pronunciation though the functional aspect is the same.
27. When asked about the use of Vaanis by all of them in the performance Majjiga Narsaiah said that they are not particular about the colour and material of the Vaani and brought those which are handily available to them. So also they do not fix up each Vaani to each of them but take up the one which is within each. Hence the Vaani which was used by one narrator in one scene was used by yet another narrator in another scene.

28. Neelima Devi kanda, in Mallanna katha performed by Majjiga Lakshminarsaiah and his troupe at Inole, October 1995.

29. Mallanna kanda, Ibid.

30. Neelimadevi kanda, Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Mallanna Kanda, Ibid.

38. Neelimadevi Kanda, Ibid.,

39. Mallanna kanda Ibid.,

40. Neelimadevi Kanda Ibid. describing Lord Shiva appearing before Neelima Devi to offer her boom to bearchikldren.

41. Neelima Devi’s six sons wailing. Neelima Devi kanda the six sons of Neelima Devi bitterly crying, when they are beaten blue and black by the rytu asami

42. Ibid.
43. Neelima Devi suffering from labour pains, Ibid.

44. Rythu asami while beating the sons of Neelima Devi in the forest Ibid.

45. These Oggu performers led by Majjiga Laxminarsaiah, when asked where do they perform? He replied "anywhere, here, there, or there in the temple, showing the three kinds of places, which were different in terms of their physical dimensions. When asked "where do you perform usually, he replied "usually we do in the temple premises, for the devotees who come to fulfil their 'Mokkulu" and we are not supposed to conduct the performance in the villages, and are responsible to perform the rituals and the narration only in the temple premises. The three kinds of spaces, the performers suggested, are in three different shapes and dimensions.

i) The first one under a tree in the corner of the street which suggests no specific demarcation of the space for the performance and the audience.

ii) The second one is the premises of Satram (inn/choultry) also under a tree, but is surrounded by a compound wall.

iii) The third place was in the premises of the temple. (Interview with Majjiga Laxmi Narsaiah and his troupe who performed at Inole, October 1995).

46. Balkampet performance held in July 1997. The female members of the audience even gave away their golden ornaments to the performers and took them back after the performance. The performers used those ornaments as part of their makeup and costumes.
47. **Peddapatnalu Chesetappudu Inka baaga cheptharu - Aade Chitra kathalu –manchiga vuntayee.** They perform better when they officiate Peddapatnalu and with more and better chitra kathalu. (Interview with the audience, at Inole, October 1995).

48. Though the audience belong to the same community who are not acquainted with the kinds of rituals and performance and are in the system of modernity, and are departed from the systems of their life. (Interview with S.S.Yadav and his sons, Hyderabad, October 1998).

49. Contexts which were made, when they are sponsored in the festivals-

50. Onlookers were observed and interviewed and they did not respond since they wanted to leave for their works.