CHAPTER V

PROCESS OF TAMASHA PERFORMANCE
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5.0 — PROCESS OF REHEARSALS
The organiser of Tamasha phad, stage manager, assistant stage manager, musicians, artists (kalavanths) are assembled at one place and the script which they are going to practice are discussed deeply. After discussions, step by step Vag Natya story is narrated. Can, goulan, lavni, batavani, farce are common to all the vag natyas in Tamasha and hence there is no discussion held on these items. Only the discussions on the vag (story plot) will be held.

5.1 — TRY-OUTS
After discussion on the script, the Tamasha phad organiser who is also the director of the performance, decides casting (decided which artists should perform which role and distributes the roles among the artists). The decision of the director is final.

5.2 — SITTING REHEARSALS
After the selection of characters in try-outs, for dialogue portion of the characters, a person is being appointed. As most of the actors are illiterates who do not know to read, the artists learn the dialogues by heart by repeating the person who tells the character's dialogues. Though the artists are illiterates, they grasp the dialogue very quickly. The artists do not waste their time and always, even while eating and while doing other works also, they do this work of learning the dialogues by heart. The full script is taught within the period of fifteen days.

5.3 — STANDING REHEARSALS
In standing rehearsals, the director, as in traditional theatre, make blockings, movements, improvisation, melodrama, etc and these are taught to the artists. In addition to this, as the artists themselves were well experienced, they perform in melodramatic style or in cinematic style, and get ready for the performances. Almost all the actors in modern Vag Natya have adopted the styles of movies/cinema.
After getting ready for the final performance, they fix a date and venue for the performance. The owner of the phad visits the place of performance in advance and completes all the formalities such as obtaining permission from the local authorities for the staging of the performance on that particular day. After that, they give propaganda by moving in jeeps, pasting posters and by distributing pamphlets. The entire company reaches the place of performance two days in advance and make arrangements such as erecting the tent, dais, decoration, etc.

5.4 **PROCESS OF PERFORMANCE**

As in the traditional Tamasha, in modern Vag Natya also they follow the same tradition. Half an hour before, the Daph and Dholki players start playing the instruments and after that the Gan enter the dais chanting prayers of Lord Ganesha.

5.5 **GAN IN TAMASHA**

Gan means Ganesh, the son of Lord Shankara. The other name of Ganesha is Vighneshwara. That is why in the beginning of the performance, they do prayers of God Vighneshwara and start traditional Tamasha. From the seventh century onwards, most of the poets have introduced the prayers of Lord Ganesha in Tamasha. In the oldest traditional Tamasha, "Rukmini Swayamvar," its Shahir Narendra has started with the prayer of Lord Ganesha only. In the Tamasha forms of the Peeshwa kingdom also, the Ganesha Vandana was prevalent before the beginning of the Tamasha. The Kuladaiva (ancestral deity) of Peeshwas was Ganesha and this might be the reason for the beginning of the Tamasha performances with the prayers of Ganesha. It is said that the tradition of worshipping Ganesha is there since time immemorial.

In Maharashtra's oldest traditional folk forms, Vaghya Murali che Jagaran, Bharud also, the prayer of Ganesha was done before the performances. The common people of Maharashtra worship Ganesha as their deity. Ganesha is the presenter of wisdom, who shows the real path of life and is a very powerful God. It is the belief and trust of all, that a work started with the worship of Ganesha will end fruitfully.
TAMASHA FOLK THEATRE OF MAHARASHTRA

The scripts of Tamasha are also of Maharashtra culture, the artists bound to the tradition and hence begin their performances with the prayer of Lord Ganesha. This tradition of worshipping Ganesha is done by the Sardar along with his co-artists with the help of musical instruments like dholki, tuntune, tal, hâlti and sing the lavni on Ganesha ((Jan ki lavni) 7

An example of Lavni of Peeshwa kingdom

Sri Vakramunda Ganapati, Ganadhipati tujhhe sthuthi
Nar dishe dince karti, Me n atrirvindh
Prapanchi jegi vicharchi
Mastaki mumut mojal tc dolak vishal
Tayavar vyaal karprati mikhe
Peetavarn vastr kaseshi kashele bakhe
Kudle mec makra kruti sravani talpath
Farsha kur hoti mandin kar rakhe
Chowshasth kalacha lekh konaana kale
Chowdha vidhicha sindhu prabal haa
Swanand nabhicha indu adal haa
Lagna lacch tyarupi, naam sachhupi
Bhav achhipjadmu uccharati. 8 (Marathi)

Sri Vakramunda Ganesha — You are the greatest of all the Gods and hence all worship you first
Four sides (all corners) of people worship you. All the people in the world utter your name. The crown on your head is looking very beautiful and your trunk is very long and wide. The clothes that you wear are very colourful and very beautiful. The ear-rings are in the shape of crocodile and are shining bright. No one has knowledge is all the sixty four kalas except you. You are the Guru (teacher) of fourteen Vidyas. Your place in the world is stable and no one can remove or replace that. Your position is very revered and more powerful than the position of Indra of Akasas. On looking at you (your shape), people forget all their sorrows.

The other lavnis related to Lord Ganesha were written by Heenaji Bhal, Ramjoshi, Patte Bapurao, etc. Shahirs.
Though the tradition of worshipping Ganesha in Tamasha is a very old one, it is said that this tradition is adopted from the folk form of Gondhal. The traditional Gan writings and traditional singing styles have changed rapidly. The gan songs of the Peshwa period and the post-Independence gan songs have much difference. In modern Vag Natya, after the formation of Tamasha Sudhar Samithi, they have also followed the traditional Jan songs, as well as modern songs.

5 6 — Goulans (Gopikas)

After the beginning of the performance, after completion of the worship of Lord Ganesha, the Goulans enter the stage. Goulans means Gopikas. In Tamasha, though the Goulans are Gopikas (milkmaids), they are mythological characters. These characters are Radha (a dancer), her friends (chelikattelu), Mausi (Aunt), and in male roles Krishna, his friends (sakhas), Pendya (Songadia), Chandrawal, etc.

The scene in Tamasha begins like this:

The Gan exit from one side of the stage after the prayer of Ganesha and from the other side of the wings, the Mausi character, followed by Radha and her friends with milk pots on their heads going towards Mathura for selling milk. Radha and other sakhi dancers swing and walk rhythmically. Mausi also walks with steps like them and leads the other dancers. Musicians with dholki, tuntune, tal, halgi play instruments rhythmically. The dholki instrumentalist then moves towards these ladies forcefully by playing dholki very loudly. Then all the goulans enter onto the stage by showing their backs.

Then Krishna and his friends stop the passage of these ladies midway. Then Radha comes to Krishna by folding her hands and requesting Krishna to leave them to go to Mathura Nagari. Still Krishna does not listen and then the other Gopikas also follow Radha and come to Krishna to entreat him. They request him to kindly let them go to Mathura to sell milk and curd and to stop delaying them. At the end, Mausi also requests Krishna to leave them to go. On observing the condition of the Gopikas, Krishna allows them to go. Then Mausi, Radha and the other Goulans...
sings songs and dance, move towards Mathura, with the potfuls of milk and curd on their heads. These types of stories are found in traditional Tamasha as well as in modern Vag Natya.

In addition, the Tamashgirs wrote various other types of stories to be presented by their Goulans from time to time.

According to traditional Tamasha, the Goulan is of five types:
1. Bazaar Goulan (Bazarchi Goulan)
2. Goulans with self-introduction of Sri Krishna
3. Goulans on various types of mischievous plays of Sri Krishna

56.1 — **BAZAAR GOULAN (BAZARCHI GOULAN)**

The following is the script of Patte Bapurao, in which the description of the beauty of Goulans and the style in which they sell milk and curd was shown:

- That karoon maat bharoni, dhya dyage sagalya shirec
- Aage jaon madhurcchya bazaari
- Solaa hazaracha mohra, tyamadhye Radha goulan kharecd
- Chandravale dusree Indrachi parec
- Handyavar ghada, ghacyavar tadyaa chi ghagri
- Dahi dhyage dahi konce dudhachi aakri 12 (Marathi)

Friends, fill the pots with milk and start moving to Bazar.
Friends, come, let us move to Mathura.
Out of sixteen thousand girls, only Radha is the real Goulan.
Radha is looking like a Devakanya.
By keeping pots over pots and a copper bowl on the top of them and start moving.
Curd! Curd! Here is curd for sale.

The Goulans dance accordingly to the above script.
The prose form script is as follows to which the Goulans dance:

**Goulan**

Move ladies

**Other Goulan**

Move - Move.

**Other Goulan:**

Are the arrangements over? The path is very far.

**Another Goulan**

We have to go to the bazars of Mathura. We are all young girls and the mischievous Krishna might be sitting midway. Hence, we should take one wise and sharp woman to lead us.

**Goulan**

Then, let us ask our Mausi to accompany us.

**Other Goulan**

Then wait. I will call her. Mausi. Mausi

**Mausi:**

Girls! Here I come! Here I come!

**Goulan:**

Mausi, what are you doing alone at home?

**Mausi:**

Pasting ash.

**Goulan:**

Pasting ash? To what?

**Mausi:**

Pasting ash to vessels.

**Goulan:**

When did you repeat this word?

**Goulan:**

Oh, Mausi! You must come!

**Mausi:**

Yes, I will come. I observed the hurry of you people and then heard your call and here I am. But in this hurry, I myself sat on the pan instead of putting the bread on it.

**Goulan:**

Mausi, then you might have burns.

**Mausi:**

Ha, all was burnt out and turned into coal. Arre, today there is a fair at Mathura. Are your arrangements over?

**Chandravala:**

My arrangements are over.

**Mausi:**

O, Chandravala! What did you take for sale today?

**Chandravala:**

I took a very fair thing for sale.

**Mausi:**

What do you mean by fair? What is such a thing?

**Chandravala:**

I took Basundi.

**Mausi:**

Let it be. What did you wear today?

**Chandravala:**

I am wearing black Chandrakala dress.

**Mausi:**

Good. Then what ornaments did you wear around your neck?
Chandravala: I am wearing Mangalsutra around my neck.
Mausi: Of your husband?
Chandravala: Yes.
Mausi: What is on your forehead?
Chandravala: I put kumkum of my husband on my forehead.
Mausi: Eh you, come here! What things are you bringing for sale?
Goulan: I took my milk.
Mausi: Aye, you of torned clothes. Who will buy your milk?
Goulan: Aye mausi, my milk means — the milk of my cows and buffaloes, which means my milk.
Mausi: Oh yes, they are your milk.

The above conversation was of prose type between the Goulans in Tamasha. The above conversation was taken from the audio recorded programme of Vithabai Naraingaonkar at Tuijapur.

In prose Tamasha, all the incidents are described through dialogues. There should not be any settings on the stage as described in the dialogues. They do not keep pots etc on their heads. Everything they enact is through mime. The audience grasp the scene very quickly because of their actions and understand the scene very well. The Goulans mesmerise the audience by their acting. It is almost a fantasy they create through their dialogue and through mime action in Tamasha.

5 6.2 — **KRISHNACHA KHODIA SANGNARI GOULAN** (The Goulan showing the mischievous type of plays of Sri Krishna)

Until the period of the Peeshwas, the Shahirs of Tamasha wrote plays on the acts of Sri Krishna such as Krishna teasing, and other mischievous plays with Gopikas. The Gopikas complain to Yasoda, mother of Krishna, about his mischievous acts played with them.
Example:

Jaathote Yamuna kadan
Tikhun aala Krishna dahun
Chari maychya padalaala
Krishna ga bhar rasyala
Bale hovun kadali kal
Dena kela raan mola, dena traas murlivala
Tya ga bhar rasyala (Marathi)

I was going through the bank of River Yamuna
Then Krishna appeared in front of me, then he held my saree’s end
I forcibly pulled my saree but he still caught hold of my saree
How much he troubles me, your son, this Krishna
That too in the middle of the road

(Raghuvccr Khedkar with Kantabai Satarkar Lok Natyacha Tamasha Mandal. Samamner. Ahmednagar dt.)

The above Goulans was also written in prose as follows

Goulan: Arcc, you could not come to the last week’s bazar Then the black Krishna teased us.
Mausi: Arcc, teased. What did he do then?
Goulan: Mausi, he tore my blouse.
Mausi: Chandravala, in what way did Krishna tease you?
Chandravala: He tore my new saree.
Mausi: What did he do to you?
Goulan 2: He broke my pot.
Mausi: It does not look like that to me.
Goulan 2: Arcc, Mausi. He broke my milk pot.

The Goulans which were in prose form were in dialogues and contain humour and have a dramatic element in them and the dialogues attract audience. Almost all the audience feel hypnotised in this scene.
Krishna and Pendya (Songadia) attack the Gopikas on their way to Mathura. Goulans and Krishna were unknown to each other at that moment. Then Krishna introduces himself to the Gopikas. This introduction is in the form of philosophy. This philosophical type of introduction is by way of play and song:

Mee ga Nand Yashodccha bal bal Krishna
Mathurecha Kamsacha kal kal Krishna
Agasur marriagc, Bhagasun Chirlage
Baragaon agni gilala ge jal jal Krishna
Yamuna doha chedu gela, Kaliyala mardan kela
Nachvile tya veli tinhi taal taal Krishna
Goulyacha gayi rakitya, Jarasandh chiroon takila
Padvache ghode hakaali, mal mal Krishna.\(^7\) (Marathi)

I am Nandaraja and Yashoda's beloved Krishna.
I am Krishna, the killer of Kamsa of Mathura.
I was the killer of Agasur, the rakshas (devil).
I was the savior of twelve villages from fire.
I am Krishna, who played on the head of the serpent Kaliya in the River Yamuna.
I have saved the cows of Gopikas and killed Jarasandha.
I am that Krishna, who was the rider of the horses of Pancha Pandavas.

These verses were taken from mythological-based stories.

The structure of Krishna has changed in Tamasha form from time to time. Helping Pandavas during the Kurukshetra war, helping Draupadi (Draupadi Vastrapaharanam), killing of various devils by Krishna are some of them. The Tamasha phads instead of wearing the original costume of the mythological character of Krishna, wear modern day costume to the character.
The audience have accepted this type of costume to the mythological character. They did not oppose Krishna wearing torn shirt or something else, but they have enjoyed the role. At the time of entry of Krishna onto the stage, the comedy between Songadia and Mausi characters is very humourous and interesting.

**Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Songadia</th>
<th>Mausi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you a male or a female?</td>
<td>I am a female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then, how do you have a beard and moustache?</td>
<td>Because I am like my father (resemblance with my father).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like this, the dialogues continue between the two characters and they create comedy.

Ganpath V Mane Chinchnikar wrote a Tamasha in which there is a Goulan scene through which we have the description of God’s omnipresent form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Krishna</th>
<th>Mausi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am present everywhere, here, there, on the bank of the river, in the stones</td>
<td>Arc you present in the trees also?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, in the trees also</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the railway station?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, there also.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you there in the sky also?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, up in the sky also.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the bridge?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There also.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then ok, you stay everywhere but do not stay on earth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 6 4 \[\text{GOULANIGHYA OAADKHICHI GOULAN (The self introduction of Goulans)}\]

After the introduction of Krishna himself, and after the scene of humourous dialogues between Mausi and Songadia and also with Krishna, the Goulans introduce themselves to Krishna.
Example:

I am Radha. I am a Goulan.
You won’t get my alms, Govinda.

Like this, Chandravala, Radha, Gopika give their introduction to Krishna in poetic form. Afterwards, the introduction will be performed in the form of prose also.

The Goulans entreat Krishna by saying that they came under his protection and plead to him to give them way to go to Mathura.

5.6.5 — VINAYNEECHI GOULAN (Goulans of Humbleness)

After the introduction of Krishna, all the Goulans come under his protection and say that they are ready to give whatever Krishna needs and pleads him to leave them to go to Mathura to sell milk and curd.

Example:

0, the lover of my mind! My mind is running towards you!

Innocent Radha became mad.
(some groups of Gopikas come)

I forgot to bring my saree and blouse and fell in trouble.

Another example of this Goulan is:

Rukmini’s husband and Devaki’s son do not stop our way every time. We are coming from the bazar after selling our milk and curd. Please forget what has happened in the morning when we were going to Mathura and allow us to leave for our homes now and we are ready to give you whatever you want from us.

In this way, the prose and poetic forms of Goulans were introduced in Tamasha. At the beginning of traditional Tamasha, Goulan was introduced to focus spirituality. The audience were feeling spiritualness by witnessing the Goulans, but later on a number of Tamasha Shahirs have changed the trend of Goulans and have diluted the spiritual-mindedness of Goulans and for the sake of creating humour, and to make that particular scene romantic, they have created dialogues filled with full of fantasy and introduced the element of farce in the scenes of Goulans and made the
The main intention of the Shahirs have moved towards creating humour and to entertain the audience and thereby they lost the spiritual sense in the scenes. Audience also have accepted such a drastic change.

5.7 — "MAUSI" CHARACTER IN TAMASHA

There cannot exist such a character of 'Mausi' in the mythological stories of India. The Mausi character was introduced in Tamasha during later days. In male characters, Songadia, the comedian with his unusual style of acting, with double meaning dialogues, create humour and make the audience laugh. Likewise, in female characters, there were no female comedians in traditional Tamasha. Mausi character was recognised as lady comedian. This character follows Radha and her friends in the costume of an old wise woman. The Mausi also plays the role of their protector. The role of Mausi was being enacted by male character artists.

The dialogues of Mausi were very loud, said with speed, and full of humour. There were no rules or boundaries for the dialogues of Mausi. The audience laugh at every dialogue of Mausi. In Tamasha of the Peeshwa period, this type of Mausi character was not in vogue. It might have been introduced in Tamasha during 1985-90 period. There was a character in the Keertan of Sri Krishna by name 'Badal' and this same character has been converted into 'Mausi' in Tamasha.

It is said that this character of Mausi might have been borrowed from the literature of Bengal.

5.8 — LAVNI

In Maharashtra, for the entertainment of the society, a number of art forms have come into existence. Lavni is one such art form. As there are more villages in Maharashtra and the villagers conduct fairs, festivals and religious functions very occasionally. During such occasions, for the public who participate in those fairs, different types of programmes were performed to entertain the public. Lavni performances were the main attraction in such occasions.
Lavni first came into existence during the sixteenth century. The important thing in Lavni is the description of beauty, romanticism, description of separation, description of hero-heroine’s romantic fights and their reunion, and various such subjects. The main thing that can be seen in all the above Lavnis is romance. Hence people began thinking that Lavni means the romantic description of hero and heroine. But this is not true. The Lavnis were written on philosophical, social and mythological subjects also.

In social lavnis, the day-to-day incidents that were happening in society were described. Lavnis on communal riots, that were created by anti-social elements were also being written. A number of lavnis on comedy can also be seen.

During the time of the fall of the Peeshwas kingdom, the development of Lavni had begun. Dance, drama, music, singing, acting and all the four types of abhinayas were to be seen in the lavnis of those days. During the time of Peeshwas, the lavni Shahirs had good respect in society. The livelihood of Shahirs was being looked after by the Peeshwas. The Shahirs also enjoyed all the facilities and benefits that were being availed of by the other employees working in the palace.

The famous Shahirs of the Peeshwa period were Shahir Ramjoshi, Shahir Ponaji Bhada, Shahir Parasuram, Shahir Sagan Bhau, Shahir Ananda Padi, etc.

After the downfall of the Peeshwas, a number of Shahirs wrote Lavnis. The main and important of those Shahirs were: Shahir Dagdu Salji Shirolikar, Shahir Bhau Pakkad, Shahir Patte Babu Rao.

The supporting instruments (musical) that accompany the lavni song were kade (ring), dholki, tal, tuntune, kanjira, etc.

The lavnis of Maharashtra were divided into three parts by the Shahirs. Part one is Shahiri Lavni (poet’s lavni). Part two is Baitkeechi lavni (singing lavni by sitting). Part three is Tamasha chi Lavni (lavni of Tamasha).
5.8.2 — **Shahiri Lavni** (Poet’s Lavni)

With the help of folk musical instruments like dappu, kada, dholki, tal, tuntune, kanjira, through physical movements, and through costumes and make up, the lavni is sung. The expressions given in this lavni are of cool mindedness. This type of presentation of lavni is called Shahiri Lavni.

At the time of the Lavni performance, the musicians cannot cross their boundaries. Sawal-Jawab is also a part of Shahiri Lavni. Moreover, philosophical and mythological lavnis are also being sung.

5.8.3 — **Baitkichi Lavni** (Lavnis being sung by sitting)

Lavni is actually a part of the folk form. Lavni singers are not trained anywhere in classical music but are trained themselves. The Baitkichi Lavni singers sing different ragas of classical music in their lavni presentations. While singing lavni, tabla, harmonium were played rhythmically. The tumri of North Indian style is similar to that of Baitkichi lavni form. A total of thirty five ragas are being sung by the lavni singers.

The facial expressions of the lavni singers give the whole meaning of lavni. The lavnis are mainly being sung in the ragas of Rag Yamun, Rag Jhijoti, Rag Pilu, etc. While singing the lavnis, in addition to facial expressions, the movement of eyes, the expression through hands, the stylish way of sitting, the expressions of male and female viewing each other are also expressed very well in the lavni performance.

5.8.4 — **Tamashachi Lavni** (Lavni in Tamasha)

In this type of lavni also, dholki, tuntune, gada, halgi, tal, jhanjar, mungru etc. musical instruments are being accompanied through which Rag Jogya, Rag Yamun etc. ragas were being used for singing Tamasha lavnis. In this lavni, in addition to music, two singers sing the last sentences of the lavni in a very high pitch with great care. In this lavni, the lady dancer, Songadia, Sardar sings the lavni song with the coordination and with the help of music, were being sung. This type of lavni is called Tamashachi Lavni.

In this lavni, the verse form is first uttered and then prose form is also explained through acting with expressions. This lavni is of three types: Bale Ghati, Junnari, and Chakkad.
In Bale Ghati style, the romantic moods are being expressed. In this, there are two characters — one male dancer and one female dancer will take part. Romantic subjects were being taken and expressed through dancing. In the olden traditional Tamasha, male actors used to play the female roles for dancing. Boys of seventeen and eighteen years old were being engaged to dance. The boys were trained in classical dance forms. The costume of the boys were like that of ladies.

5.8.5 — **Costume and Ornaments**

The dancers wear a nine-yard saree, silk blouse, colourful pearl necklace, ear-rings, colourful flower garlands on their heads, rich make-up, bangles on both hands, ghungurus on both legs and colourful make-up (parani) to both legs and palms.

5.9 — **Batavani (Comedy, Entertainment and Farce)**

In Batavani, there are small stories. They dramatise the stories and make it colourful. They divide the dramatic form into scenes and then improvise the scenes. This Batavani is performed after Can, Goulan and Lavni. The speciality of Batavani is that they interpret the true into false and the false things into true; thereby, comedy is created. The duration of this performance is about half an hour to one hour. This form is almost the adoption of English dramas.

It is said that this form came from English literature to Marathi in 1856. Actually, no one is aware of how this farce entered into Marathi literature.

Shahir Patte Bapurao wrote a farce titled “Sasu Jamaiyacha Farce” and introduced it in Tamasha, and from then only the farce has come to everybody’s notice. Likewise in Dagdubaba Sali Sirolkar’s “Saha Gosavyacha Farce,” there is a farce about male and female. By this farce also, Tamasha performers and the audience of Tamasha came to know about farce. Farce itself is Batavani.
5.9.1 — Batavani in Modern Tamasha

There are mainly two characters who take part in Batavani. They are Tatya and Bapu. Both the characters come onto the stage and create a scene from Batavani story. They present the scene humorously.

Example:

Bapu: Arre, Tatya! There is the smell of education coming here.

Tatya: What kind?

Bapu: This is the City of Education — Pune. This Pune is the motherland of Education. That is why the smell of education is coming from here.

(This is a kind of humorous scene being presented on Pune city)

5.10 — Structure of Tamasha

As discussed in previous chapters, Gan, Goulan, Lavni, Batavani are the integral parts of Tamasha. The most important part, in addition to the above, is Vag. Vag means story/plot.

In Tamasha performance, there are two parts — one is poorvang and the other is uttarang. In poorvang, gan, goulan, lavni and batavani are performed, and in uttarang vag is performed.

"Mohana Batau," a kind of Vag Natya, was first presented in the form of verse. In the coming years, the structure of Vag has changed from verse to prose form. Vag means 'a flowing stream.'

In the Marathi dictionary, the meaning of the word Vag is given as 'a group.' In Gadhya Saptasathi also, the meaning of Vag was given as 'a group.' Vag is the concluding part of Tamasha. The very first Vag Natya was being written by Uma Bapu during the period between 1850-60. The name of the Vag Natya was "Mohana Batau."

In 1853, Shahir Sagan Bhau wrote a Lavni Vag named 'Kasturicha Sugandha' (the fragrance of Kasturi). In 1843, Sri Vishnudas Bhave wrote 'Seetha Swayamvar,' a play in Marathi. It is said that he wrote this play with the inspiration of these Vags. Between 1778-1844, Shahir Parasuram wrote "Pativrata Khun" (the symbol of Pativrata), a lavni of Vag. This lavni almost has resemblance with the lavnis of the Peeshwa period. The unfortunate thing is that the script of the above lavni is not available at present.
The Vag Natyas, in its beginning stages, were in poetic form. The famous Vags were "Mohana Batau," "Sursenacha Vag," etc.

As discussed in the earlier chapters, in traditional Tamasha, Jan, Goulan, Lavni are presented through song, dance, and music. But there is less of acting in them. After the introduction of Vag only, the acting part has increased in Tamasha. In traditional Tamasha, the subjects were mainly mythological and tales were based on folk

“Rajwadi Vag” is an example of folk tale. “Raja Bhoj,” “Raja Harishchandra” are examples of mythological-based Tamasha subjects.

In traditional Tamasha, the characters — Sardar, Suruthe (companion), Dholakia (player of dholki), and Songadia (comedian) were the main characters. Tamasha performance was first started with the Vag Lavni. Equal time was being allotted for both dialogue part and for lavni part. That is why the total duration of the vag performances ranged between three to four hours. In these performances, the lavni was in written form. The Lavni Shahirs were there but there were no dialogue writers in prose form then. But the Kalavanths (artists), with their intelligence and depending on the situation, were uttering prose dialogues. In other words, they were improvising the dialogues individually.

5.10.1 — The Important Vag Natya Parts in Traditional Tamasha

With the introduction of Vag Natya in Tamasha, the Shahirs of Vag started writing Vag scripts on various subjects. They wrote on deities, on kings, on village folk, on the characters of developed society. On going carefully through these, the Vag Natya can be divided into four parts:

(1) Mythological Vag
(2) Historical Vag
(3) Vag based on folk tales
(4) Social Vag
A number of Vag Natyas were written based on the above four forms. Given below are some of the Vags of four forms of Vag.

I Mythological Vag (Pauranic Vag)
   1. Raja Harischandra
   2. Raja Siriyal
   3. Bhakta Pundalik
   4. Santh Tukaram
   5. Santh Namdev
   6. Santh Chokamela
   7. Santh Rohitdas

II Historical Vag (Ithihasik Vag)
   1. Hee Jhunj Murar Bajichi (A takkar Murar bajiki)
   2. Maharashtra Jhukta Nahi (Maharashtra should not bow)
   3. Raja Shambhu Agnipetta (Firesome anger of King Shambhu)
   4. Afzal Khan cha Vadh (The killing of Afzal Khan)
   5. Santaji Dhorpade
   6. Umaji Maik.

III Vags Based on Folk Tales
   1. Goulyachi Rambha (Rambha of Yadava community)
   2. Aaich ka Lizz (The heart of mother)
   3. Vishacha pela (The bowl of poison)
   4. Bhillachi Toli (A group of cats)
   5. Dev dete Karm nete (God gives, fate takes out)
   6. Thakas Mahatak (Powerful man over weak person).
IV  Social Vag (Samajik Vag)
1. Raktan Nahvali Kunahad (Knife flooded with blood)
2. Lagna Adhi Kunk Pusal (The sindur lost before marriage/became widow before marriage)
3. Sasra Sunecha Navra (Father-in-law, the husband of daughter-in-law)
4. Sapadla Hari Nayikicha Ghati (Hari was found in heroine's house)
5. Vedijhali Tujhyasathi (I became mad for you)
6. Rakat Navli Pehli Ratra (Bloodful of first night)
7. Asun Pathishi Shodthe Tula (I am searching here and there, which is behind me only)
8. Ana sanga bai Ponachi (Now tell, whose woman is she?)
9. Ase Pudari Tharkara (Kill such leaders)
10. Anahe Asach Chalayech (Now, this will happen like this only)

Generally, in Vag, the central idea of the Vag is being explained through song. They tempt audience to witness the Vag. In traditional Tamasha, we find two parts. The first part is of a serious nature. In the second part, the subject is entertainment-based. In the subjects of seriousness, truth, God, philosophy etc., things can be seen, whereas in entertainment it is quite opposite and the subject is very light and more to entertain the audience.

510.11 — MYTHOLOGICAL VAG (PAURANIC VAG)

The Shahirs wrote Vags in mythology based on the epics like Ramayan and Mahabharata. The subject moves on philosophy and there are descriptions on dedication and bhakti. These Vags are very sentimental. In Mythological Vag, they take whole or part of the epics for their performance.

Example:
Dagdubaba Sali Thambe Shirolikar's "Raja Harischandra" Vag comes under this category. In this Vag,

there was an effort being made to destroy the truthfulness the sound slate of Harischandra on Truth, the sale of son and wife for truth, not allowing to do funeral for want of fee, though the
body was of his own son. regaining his kingdom from the Maharishi by winning the Test of Truth being performed. In this Vag, the sentiment part is more. During the presentation of this Vag, the audience will be influenced by sentiments. Further, the audience begin to weep. Like this, in traditional Tamasha, the mythological Vags are performed which encourages audience.

A number of such other mythological Vags were written which also gained popularity.

The important Vag Natyas of Mythological Vag in Maharashtra are:
1. Raja Harischandra
2. Raja Siriyal
3. Bhakta Pundalik
4. Santh Tukaram
5. Santh Namdev
6. Santh Chokamela
7. Santh Rohitdas

5 10 1.2 — HISTORICAL VAG;

Like Mythological Vag, the Historical Vags also come into the category of serious natured subjects. Historical Vag entered in Tamasha very late, that is, after the entry of Mythological Vags etc. The stories, incidents based on persons of historical importance were being taken to write the Vag in historical Vags. There is no scope for creativity in Historical Vag narration. The real historical events are the subjects in Historical Vag. There is no chance for exaggeration of events and fantasy in this type of Vag.

"Hee Jhunj Murarbajichi," "Umaji Naik," "Panhalghad ka Khaidi" etc. are Historical Vags which were written in traditional Tamasha. Like that, Vithabhai Naraingaonkar's Afzal Khan ka Vadh," in which the Shahir narrated the incidents as it is that took place in history. The dialogues of this Vag were written by taking into consideration the conditions of that time and the language used was also hard. After witnessing the Vag, the illiterate folk also feel as if they are reading history. Seriousness as well as comedy also can be seen in this Vag. The scenic design is very
difficult in this type of Vags, but if care is taken to set the stage related to historical times, the presentation will be very rich. Make up is also very rich in these historical type of vags. They use different type of turbans, the get up of Muslims, different types of hand props such as swords etc. All these are used to attract audience. That is why the Historical Vag has become very famous in Maharashtra and the response from the audience is also very good for this type of Vag.

In Historical Vag, the audience feel that they are looking at a wonder (though the incidents really happened in history). This is also the reason for the popularity of Historical Vag in traditional Tamasha though this type of Vag entered into Tamasha very late.

The most popular Historical Vags of Maharashtra are:
1. I lee Jhunj Murar Bajichi (A takkar Murar bajiki)
2. Maharashtra Jhukta Nahi (Maharashtra should not bow)
3. Raja Shambhu Agnipetta (Firesome anger of King Shambhu)
4. Afzal Khan cha Vadh (The killing of Afzal Khan)
5. Santaji Dhorpade
6. Umaji Maik.

5.10.1.3 — VAGS BASED ON FOLK TALKS

Like mythological and historical vags, the vags based on folk tales also became very popular in Maharashtra. The important thing in this vag is that they contain the beliefs and customs that are being followed in society. Crossing of black cat, hearing the sound of an owl, falling of a lizard on the body etc. beliefs were taken to write these vags and were presented. The incidents are based on those which cannot take place in daily life.

The Shahirs take fantasy-based subjects and choose their incidents from them and create a scene of Vag. Discussions are more in this type of Vag Natya. The relationship between the characters is very good. In the dialogue part also, the dialogues have no meaning in them.

In Marathwada, “Gadwacha lagna” (The marriage of an Ass) was one of the very famous Vags of this type. This is a very fantastic Vag. The central idea of the story of this Vag is — The
king announces that those who construct a seven storeyed building by using copper will be married to his daughter (i.e., marriage will be performed with the princess for whoever constructs the building). A donkey constructs the building. Abiding by his word, the king performs the marriage of his daughter with the donkey. After the marriage, the donkey becomes a young man. He was a member of Indra sabha, who received a curse and became a donkey. The relief to the curse was the marriage with that princess. Like this, fantasy, wonders etc. can be seen in this type of Vag.

In Shahir Patte Bapurao’s “Mitharam” Vag also, this type of fantasy and make-believes were described. Maharashtra audience have enjoyed this type of Vag Natya also and make this type of Vag Natya very popular.

A number of Vag Natyas of this kind were written of which the following are very famous:
1. Goulyachi Rambha (Rambha of Yadava community)
2. Aaich ka Lizz (The heart of mother)
3. Vishacha pela (The bowl of poison)
4. Bhillachi Toli (A group of cats)
5. Dev dete Karm nete (God gives, fate takes out)
6. Thakas Mahatak (Powerful man over weak person)

These days, the traditional Tamasha in Maharashtra has been changed into modern vag Natya. Some of the Tamasha performances which I witnessed and read are discussed hereunder.

From the Peeshwas period today, Tamasha has changed in all angles, which have been discussed by me in the earlier chapters. But Tamasha, after entering into society by stepping out of Peeshwas Darbars, has become into Vag Natya. The writers of Vag Natya took mythological, social, historical and folk-based subjects and according to the desires of the people, started writing Vag Natya.

Patte Bapurao’s “Ratnaghadcha Rangamahal: Gouliyachi Rambha,” a historical type folk Vag Natya, has attracted almost all audience, from all corners of Maharashtra.
Tamasha organisers say that audience used to come from far off places with great interest to witness this Vag Natya. This Vag Natya became very famous among other Vag Natyas and hence the performers of this Vag Natya took it as a prestige and were taking most care in scenic design, lighting, make up, costume, special sound effects, and were performing the Vag colourfully.

The shows were almost showing houseful and packed and the tents were being paced with audience and the performers of this Vag “Ratnaghadcha Rangamahal - Gouliyacha Rambha” were always drawing profits. By discussing this Vag Natya by taking Tamasha elements, this Vag Natya can be divided into six parts—plot, characterisation, diction, atmosphere, aims and objectives, and technical aspects.

10.1.3.1 — PLOT

In Gouliyacha Rambha Vag Natya, there are seven scenes. The first scene is Raj Durbar scene. In this scene, the conversation between the prince and princess is the main theme. After the death of the king, the responsibility of the nation and the people fell on the shoulders of these two. The marriage of the princess was fixed with the Senapati, Ranamal. After their engagement, the Senapati used to look after all the matters relating to the rule and began harassing the public. The information of this harassment of people by Ranamal is being told by the prince to the princess. At the same moment, Devadas, the village leader, also confirms the news. The princess does not oblige this and says that this is a rumour. Then the village leader says that the Senapati is teaching and harassing Gouliyacha Rambha in the streets.

The second scene is set on the streets. In this, Savakhya, Rambha and Devadas started in the streets and began selling milk and curd. While walking, Rambha signs a pad. The meaning of the pad is: “It is because I am dressing myself very well and hence all eyes are on me, and the Senapati Ranamal is behind me with his bad views.”

The third scene is the market scene. In this, all the milkmaids assemble together, selling milk and curds. Then Senapati Ranamal and Yuvaraj Kishori Singh come there. Ranamal starts teasing Rambha by putting his hands on her and Yuvaraj interferes and stops him, but Senapati
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does not listen. Then begins a fight between Yuvaraj and Senapati in which Senapati is defeated by Yuvaraj. Rambha thanks the prince for saving her from the clutches of Senapati.

The fourth scene again turns to the Rajmahal (palace). In this Senapati Ranamal comes to Raj Kumari (princess) and complains to her that the Rajkumar (prince) has teased and tried to molest Rambha in the bazar. The princess questions the prince whether it is true and the prince denies it. Yet, the princess suspects the prince and sentences him to jail.

The fifth scene is again a street scene. In this, Senapati Ranamal and his servant Fukdand were happy over the happenings that the prince is being sentenced to jail. They think that it is not good for them to keep the prince alive even in the jail, and went to the jail and attacked the prince with khanjar. The prince became unconscious and the blood was flowing from his body. The Senapati and his servant think that the prince is dead and flee. While fleeing, they left behind the khanjar (small sword), which is full of blood.

The sixth scene is the jail scene. In this, the princess, the Patil (village leader), Senapati were standing by the side of the prince who was unconscious, in the jail. The Patil sees the khanjar which was left behind and lifts it. Immediately, Senapati enquires about fingerprints on the khanjar and comes to the conclusion that the fingerprints on the khanjar were that of the Patil. All of them accuse the Patil that he assaulted the prince and he is sentenced to jail.

In the seventh scene, Rambha and Mouli were thinking about the reason of Patil’s not returning from Rajmahal. By then, the servant of Senapati comes there and informs them about the happenings of Rajmahal. Fukdand tells them that Senapati does not have real love for the princess and loves her for the power only. On hearing this, Rambha and Mouli feel very sad over the happenings.

Senapati Ranamal tried to molest the princess in the Rajmahal and then the prince appears there and rescues her from the hands of Senapati.

Finally they arrest Senapati, sentence him to jail, and then the marriage of the princess is performed with the village head.
CHARACTERISATION
In this Vag Natya, prince Kishori Singh, Senapati Ranamal, Savakhya — the husband of Rambha, Patil, the village head, Fukdand, the servant of Senapati, are the important male characters, and in female characters, princess Indumati, and Rambha were the two leading roles.

The writer has characterised the role of the prince as hero (Dhirodatta), Senapati as villain, and the village head as the responsible gentleman.

The title role character, Rambha, by her beauty and with other things, makes the story move around her. Like this, the princess Indumati’s role is presented as a noble and a loyal lady.

These characters are taken as historical-based folk characters. Hence, this Vag Natya can be treated as historical-based folk styled Vag Natya.

DICTION
Diction in this Vag Natya is written in a very simple language which is very easy to understand to the common folk. The dialogues are timely used. Given below is an example:

Kishori Singh: Sister, Father has left the responsibility of ruling the country on my shoulders and I think I am fully fit for it. Because of the anger of Ranamal, your marriage is being fixed with him. All administrative powers related to rule is under his control and I have received several complaints of his misusing the power and harassing the people. I came here for your suggestion in this matter to tackle him.

Rajkumari: Brother, you are right. But my marriage should not have been fixed with him. Under any circumstances you should cut short his powers and regain the administration from him. You believe me or not, I have not heard of any complaints against him. I think this is a rumour spread by some people.

Kishori Singh: This is true and not a rumour. You may not be aware of this because most of the time you stay in the palace. If you do not know, I have to take Shamsher along with me.

Rajkumari: Is there any evidence for this?

(The village leader, Patil, enters from outside)
Devadas: I praise you, Prince and Princess.

Kishori Singh: Come, Patil. After long time in the palace, you are a good friend of my father and the same relationship will continue with me also.

Devadas: Prince, there is an important reason for my visit. Govind's wife, Rambha, is facing troubles with Senapati whose bad sights are on her. And he may try to harass and molest Rambha in the bazars.

Kishori Singh: Sister, now you might have realized the truth.

Rajkuman: Brother, you might have bribed this Patil, to utter these words in front of me. But even now I am not sure.

Kishori Singh: Sister, you are blind in love with Senapati and not able to realize the truth.

(Kishori Singh leaves and Ranamal enters)

Ranamal: What is the reason for the sad feelings in the face of Rajkuman today?

Rajkuman: I heard the news that you are harassing Govind Rambha in the streets. I heard this from Devadas. Is this true?

5 10 1 3.4 — ATMOSPHERE

The Tamasha phad organisers create atmosphere by taking into consideration the situations written by the writers in the Vag Natya. By witnessing the Vag Natya performance, audience forget themselves and their surroundings and treat them as if they were in the Rajmahal. This is because of the atmosphere being created by the organisers with the help of scenic design, stagecraft, lighting, including historical type of costumes and make up. By using the above-techniques and with latest developments, they create the complete historical atmosphere on the dais.

5 10 1 3.5 — AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim and objectives of the Tamasha phad organisers in presenting this type of Tamasha Vag Natya is to entertain the audience with a rare historical type of folk stones. There is a message also being taught through this Vag Natya. Sentiment is also being shown in this Vag Natya.
5.10.36 — **Technical Aspects**

The present modern Tamasha, i.e., Lok Natya Tamasha, is only dependent on technical aspects. They are using modern lighting equipment including flood lighting, halogen lights, footlights, spotlights, strobe lights, follow-up lights, etc.

Further, in sound system also, they use modern sophisticated equipment. They are using acoustic mikes to maintain clarity and to reach the sound to the far off place, i.e., to the audience who are sitting in the last row.

The Tamasha phad organisers are creating scenes such as was scenes, fire scenes, lightening and other types of wonders on the dais, by using fireworks, firecrackers, etc.

Backdrops, moving sets, wire work sets, special effects sets prepared by using wire work, modern music and music effects and even in make up and costume also they have advanced technically.

5.11 — **Social Vag (Samajik Vag)**

In this type of Vag, there is a wise character who narrates the story to the audience and entertains them. The whole of the story (Vag) depends on his wisdom. The subject of these vags are based on the incidents of present day society. There is scope for reality in this type of vag.

Dagudbaba Sali's "Stree-Purush ka Vag," "Aklecha Vag," "Teen gosichya Ulgada," "Dagalbaj Mitra" are some of the vags of this type. In addition, the writings of Koulapurkar's "Bapache Vag," Arjun Wadlikar's "Naikicha Rang Mahal," Lakshman Marathwadikar's "Savla Kubhar" were also some of the vags which were famous in Maharashtra.

In addition to the above, the following vags also became very popular in Maharashtra:

1. Raktan Nahvali Kunahad (Knife flooded with blood)
2. Lagna Adhi Kunk Pusal (The sindur lost before marriage/became widow before marriage)
3. Sasra Suneha Navra (Father-in-law, the husband of daughter-in-law)
4. Sapadla Hari Nayikicha Ghati (Hari was found in heroine's house)
5. Vedijhali Tujhyasathi (I became mad for you)
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6. Rakat Navli Pehli Ratra (Bloodful of first night)
7. Asun Pathishi Shodthe Tula (I am searching here and there, which is behind me only)
8. Ana sanga bai Ponachi (Now tell, whose woman is she?)
9. Ase Pudari Tharkara (Kill such leaders)
10. Anahe Asach Chalayech (Now, this will happen like this only)

5 12. LITERARY IMPORTANCE OF VAG

The story, characterisation, entertainment, comedy, plays a very important role in Vag. All the Vag Shahirs took these four items and wrote vags in common language which is attractive to common folk. The culture of the villages of Maharashtra are taken and were described in these Vags. There is an inspiration of local languages, conditions on these Vags. Because of literary importance, lavni, Gan, Golan and Vag subjects have been attracting the audience.

Marathi literature, mainly folklore, are being dramatised by shahirs and moulded by them into the form of Tamasha and according to the situations, use the words in literature, write good dialogues, write lavnis, Gan, Golan etc. All these aspects are being bound in words, and hypnotising audience, which is the literary importance of Vag. In one word, without literature, there is no Vag Natya. Whether the Shahirs are educated or illiterate, they understood the village folk and wrote and are writing vags by maintaining the importance of literature.
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