CHAPTER - V

LOKNATYA — ITS ORIGIN & DEVELOPMENT, ITS SALIENT FEATURES & POPULARITY & ITS CLASSIFICATION.

— LOKNATYA OF VAISHALI
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LOKNATYA : ANALYSIS

5.1 Analysis of Loknatya (Folk-drama):

The history of Indian drama is quite old one. Bharat, the celebrate saint of 3rd century B.C. wrote his 'Natya Shastra' where he gave an elaborate analysis of this subject. Besides this 'Natya Shastra', the 'Dasarupaka' of Dhananjay and Sahitya Darpan of Viswanath Kaviraj also give us valuable informations about a drama. But the works of Bharata Muni is the master piece and can be regarded as the source of the 'Natya Vidya' i.e., the art of drama.

The Natya Shastra narrates a tale about the origin of folk dramas. It says that all gods including Lord Indra prayed Lord Brahma to give them some delightful and pleasant means for their entertainment. The means must be such so that people from all sections may take part in it. Because the reading of the Vedas was forbidden for the Sudras. So the compilation of the fifth Veda was a necessity now. Therefore Lord Brahma, for the

1. Natya Shastra, 1/17
delight of all, took up the text from the Rik Veda, the songs from the Samveda dramatic performances from the Atharva Veda and compiled the fifth Veda, i.e., the Natya Veda.  

While analysing the above statement of Bharata, two things come clearly to us — a) that the dramas are introduced for all classes of people; and b) that the purpose of its creation is to give delight to the masses. Therefore, it is the best means for entertainment of the mass people. The great poet Kalidas wrote in support of this idea that a drama is a unique means to delight the people of different taste and liking.

— "Natyang Bhinnaruchejanasya Bahudhatyek Samara-dhanam." (Kalidas).

In the Vedas, themselves the origin of dramatic art is found to be inherent. In the Rikveda what is found in the dialogues, 'Rikhas' can easily be regarded as the origin of dramatic dialogues. Similarly the songs of the Samaveda are no less important in the creation of a drama. There are the customs of dance and music among the people on certain social and religious ceremonies. In this manner the trio — songs, dances and dramatic performances together gave birth to ancient

2. ibid. 1/17/18
'Natya Shastra'. During the 3rd century B.C., there was the creation of the Sitabaiinga located in the hilly areas of ancient Sarguja state and the auditorium in the Caves of Jogimara. Panini also referred to some 'Natas' of the 'Nataka' (i.e., performers or dancers of a drama) in his 'Astadhyaryya'.

Patanjali in his Mahabhasya also discussed about the performances of the dramas — the Kausabdh and the 'Balibadh'. In the Pali scriptures the Bhixus are forbidden to witness a drama. One reference is found that one Bhixu was punished when he witnessed a dance in the auditorium at Kitgiri as such action was against their religion.

After the dramatic writings of Bhasa, Ashwaghosha and Kalidas there was a plethora of dramas in the Sanskrit literature, the tradition of which was prevalent for thousand years to follow. It shows that drama has been an art which has been universally acclaimed by Indians, which has been since its creation, an art for the mass people representing their delight and sorrows in them. The tradition of dramatic performances in the rural areas is quite old. People of all status gather together and therefore, folk drama is the common platform for the village dwellers. So also, the folk-dramas

become the basis of drama for cultured people.\(^4\)

Dr. Nagendra while giving the following definition of a folk-drama, gave stress on the 'Lokvarta Tatwa':

"Liknatya Samuhik Avashyaktao Aur Preranao Ke Karan Mirmit Honese Lok-Kathanako Lok Viswasao Aur Lok-Taboko Samete Chalta Hai Aur Jiwan Ka Pratinidhitwa Karta Hai."\(^5\)

According to Dr. Mahendra Nath Manawat a Loknatya is — "Lokdharmi Hurhio ki Alukaranatmak Abhivyaktio Ka Noh Natya Rup, Jo Apne Apne Xetra Ke Lokmanas Ko Ahladit, Ullasit Abam Amipranit Karta Hai, Woh Lok natya Kah Jata Hai."\(^6\)

But these definitions are not all-comprehensive. So we shall try to explain the salient features of folk dramas for making the scope of such a drama clear.

In ancient Indian theatre two types of dramatic art are found. They are (a) Natyadharma and (b) Lokdharmee.

The principles related to the form and theories (the plot construction, the hero and the Rasa) of a drama are regarded as the Natyadharma. The 'Natyashastra' of Bharata is a great book on the principles of a drama.

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5. Bharatiya Lok Sahitya, Dr. Nagendra, p. 84
Bharata also accepted the view that the mass-life and the folk-drama are the basis of a drama. He calls the folk-drama as natural and Natyadharma as special one. The Natyadharma is also called a dance-drama. Bharata also accepted that the old dramas had a special style which was based on the Lok-manas, i.e., mass-psychology.

In a folk-drama the delight and sorrows and the ideas of mass-life are clearly reflected their scope is also very wide and unlimited one. But they can never be judged through tests of the Natyadharma. Because it is not possible to judge the numerous ideas and natural instincts through the literary tests. Therefore the shastriya principles as referred to in the Natyashastra can never be the basis of analysis of folk-dramas. Bharata in the thirteenth chapter of his Natyashastra discussed about the tradition of Lokdharmee dramas.

5.2 Loknatya and Vishista natya:

The main difference between these two forms of drama i.e., Loknatya and Vishistanatya is that the former does not follow the latter is always bound by these principles. A folk-drama or a Loknatya, although is performed not

7. Bharata Muni, Natyashastra, Chap. XXI

through the Shastriya principles yet it is an accomplishment of mass psychology. On the other hand the Vishist- 
natyya is bound by all shastriya principles. In this 
connection the statement of Jagadish Chandra Mathur is 
worth quoting:

Lok rangmanch Nagrik Athava Sahityik Rangamanach 
Mein Mukhya Antar Yeh Hai Ki Lokrangmanch Janasadharan 
Visheshatah Dehati Janata Ke Dainik Jiwan Ki Ek Prakriya 
Ek Rang Raha hai aur Samajik Uddeshyon Ka Ek madhyan 
Nagarik Rangmanch Varg Vishesh Ke Logon Ke Manoranjan Ka 
Sadhan Unki Fursat Ke Mein Lokrangmanch Lok Samaj Ki 
Deh Ke Ang Hai Nagarik Ya Sahityik Rangmanch Uska Bahri 
Abhushan Lokrangmanch Jiwan Ki Umang Ki Swabhavik Kalat- 
mak aur chestayukt Abhivyakti. 9

When further analysis is made on these two forms of 
drama, their scope of analysis may be made wider on the 
basis of their salient features. According to Indian 
dramatic principles the Vishit or Sahityik dramas can be 
studied on the bases of the plot (Katha Vastu), the hero 
(neta) and the Rasas. A fourth basis namely dramatic 
performances (Abhinoy) is also added of which there is 
an elaborate discussion particularly on their necessity 
etc. All these four qualities of a Loknatya are also

9. Sammelan Patrika (Lok Sanskrit Visheshank) 2010/vvi, 
p. 353
elaborated in the Indian dramatic criticism. There are indications of certain elements on the basis of which a drama can be classed as Loknatya i.e., a folk-drama. Of these elements of a Loknatya, a dance is of prime importance because in the literary dramas (Sahityik Nataks) it has no importance. In the same manner, songs, costumes etc. are also considered as necessary elements in a folk-drama, which are not regarded as necessary elements in a literary drama. To ascertain the two types of dramas more clearly, we may refer to the following statement "Lokvarta Ke Vishay Xetra mein Anewala Wah Lokmanas Ka Sangeet, nritatmak, Sangwadjukt Sahityarup Loknatya Kahleta Hai, Jo Janasamudai Ka Manoranjan Karne Ke Pradhan Uddeshyaon Ke Lekar Racha Jaye."

5.3 Origin of the folk-drama:

It is believed that at the beginning, man took up the help of movements of his organs to express his emotions, which can easily be regarded as the beginning of folk-drama. Therefore, the folk-dramas might have developed along with the development of human consciousness and social emotions. Adding to it the idea of amusement might have also worked. They began to take the help of wild animals like bears, monkeys etc. also for their entertainment. It has been proved by the system of rearing
animals by the mass people. Besides, the people now began to imitate and express themselves through acting. So finally, the development of consciousness and the idea of entertainment gave birth to a folk-drama.

The Western scholars also expressed their views on the origin of a drama. According to Dr. Releigh, the drama originated with the worship of the dead. In ancient times at the death of some heroes the activities performed by them were presented through acting to satisfy their souls. Dr. Pascal on the other hand believes that a drama originates from the puppet shows. The tradition of the puppet show is quite old in India. A systematic description has been found that there had been puppet shows in the Puranic and the Mahabharat eras. In the Vrihatkatha and the Panchatantra the puppets were also used. During the time of Chandragupta Vikramaditya, puppet shows were arranged for entertainment. Even in a modern society, a puppet show has its own importance in the mass entertainment. The term 'Sutradhara' (i.e., the interlocutor in a drama) has been taken from the puppet drama. The Sutradhar of a puppet show takes hold of the 'Sutra' (the thread) and makes the dolls dance and in the same manner a 'sutradhara' in a modern drama also directs the actors and make them act in various manners. Dr. Keen on the other hand, believes that a folk-drama originated
when the dance ceremonies were performed in the celebrations of the seasons (Ritu Utsav). The uttering of Indra by the people of the Kora caste when drinking the 'Somrasa' in their ceremonies can be regarded as the origin of a monologue by Mr. Keen. This ancient form of drama is still in use among some aboriginal people while they perform certain sacred ceremonies.

5.4 Tradition of a folk-drama:

In Sanskrit a dramatic literature has been also analysed. Bharat Muni in his 'Natyasastra' analysed enormously about this type of literature. A drama has been regarded as the fifth Veda, as something was taken from all the four Vedas and was infused into it. For this reason, a drama can be regarded as old as those Vedas were. In a mass life, imitation has been regarded as the main way of entertainment. That is why the tradition of folk-drama is quite old one. There can be no two views that on the basis of the extent to which Bharata analysed and discussed about drama that a drama entered into the life of mass people. The forms of dramas available in Sanskrit are all based on the dialogues of the characters. One can find the germ of the dramas in the Yam-Yami dialogues of the Vedas. All the forms of folk-dramas available now are in the form of dialogues in songs.
From this basis it can be concluded that a folk drama in Sanskrit is quite old as poetry comes earlier to prose literature. Although dialogues in a folk-drama are generally in poetic forms yet side by side prose was also used. Dr. Krishnadev Upadhyaya is of opinion that the middle ages the Muslim rulers almost destroyed the tradition of our dramatic tradition. But along with the Bhakti movement, the tradition of drama has been revived. It is rather evident that nothing can destroy the tradition of folk culture since the flow of folk tradition or the way of mass life is quite eternal.

There are certain people like the Bahurupiya, the Jhar, the Nott etc. who have been earning their livelihood through performances of old folk-drama since olden days. It is therefore, not correct to say that a folk-drama originated with the Bhakti movement only. Of course, it is a fact that the Vaishanav Sect gave birth to two type of folk-dramas, viz., the Ramlila and the Krishnalila. In this case also they introduced the story of Ram and Krishna and added them to the folk-drama which was prevalent prior to them and not they had introduced a new type of folk-drama for it. In Bengal a new type of folk-drama (like the Raslila and the Ramlila) was introduced by the disciples of Gauranga Prabhu and Mata in their 'Kirtan'. The opinion of Dr. Krishnadev Upadhyaya can never be regarded as the perfect one in this connection.

10. Lok Sahitya Ki Bhumika, Dr. K.D. Upadhyaya, pp. 179-80
on the ground that there are evidences that different types of folk-drama had been in use since very old days. The Bhagta in the BraJa area and the Nashira in Haryana are definitely the examples of folk-dramas where were in use before the coming of the Bhakti movement. Even the Darakas and the Pathakas referred to in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata can easily be regarded as a form of folk-dramas. Expressing similar views Dr. Shankar Lal Yadav says that the tradition of folk-drama like the Raslila, the Ramlila etc which borrowed their plots from the Puranic stories came later than other folk-dramas having the similar plots borrowed from the Puranas. In the words of Yadavjee,

— "Pauranik abang dharmik Vishayo Abang Akhyano Nayakoyon Ke charitra Ke Atirikta Lokrangmanch Par Ek Tritiya Prkar Ka Nataki Prakashan Bhi hota Raha Hoga. Es Pradarshan Ka Nam Nakal De To Anuchit Na Hoga. Yah Vartaman Sang, Bhagat Ya Nautanky Ka Purva Rup Ya Paryay Hai."11

Dr. Yadav also cited the example of the Norang Esk (1683) which is a 'Kansabi' olay of Maulana Guimat who lived during the time of Aurangzeb and says that during those days many Bhagawatwaj Sants came to Delhi who dressed in colourful ways and sang for the entertainment of

11. Hariyana Pradesh Ki Lok Sahitya, pp. 382
the people. From the writings of Patanjali also, it is evident that a kind of folk-drama 'the Bhagta' which narrated Krishna and Kansa by two parties was prevalent during the seventeenth century and this was nothing but borrowing from earlier folk-dramas. This a folk-drama of very high standard and it is due to its century old tradition. One Mussalman writer praised it very highly. According to Dr. Farmer: "Aitu Utsavon, Fasal Kate janeke vvad anand ke Ashroo Abang Vividh Awasaro Par Pratek Prant Mein in Natakon Ke Pradarshan Gramin Xetra Dekhe Ja Sakte Hai. Bharat munine Sambhawatah Enhee Pradarshano Ko Lekh Kar Natyashastra Ke 14 we Adhyaya Mein Lokdharmee Natya Pravirliyon Ki Or Sanket Kiya Hai. Yad-yapi Sanskrit Mein Lokparak Natyo Ke Udaahan Nahin Milte hai, Tathapi Samvakar Vyapom Prahasan, Bhaj, Sattak Adi Prokaron Ko Lok Shaaile Ke Natya Rupak Kaha Ja Sakta Hai."

In this manner the tradition of folk drama is quite old one. The present forms of these dramas are found in the Swang or Sangeet of Braj and Haryana, the Raslila of Braj, the Ramlila in Bhojpuri, the Ankiya Nat of Assam, the Karimala of Himachal, the Kirtaniya of Mithila, the Gondhala and the Tamasha of Maharashtra, the Jata-Jatin of North Bihar, the Yatra of Bengal, the Nekal or Nautkee

12. Lokdharmee Natya Parampara, Shyam Farmer, p. 07
of Uttar Pradesh, the Bhawal of Gujrat, the Manch of Malwa, the Bideshiya of Bihar etc., the evolution of which took place during the 15th/16th centuries A.D.

Since the tradition of folk-drama is undoubtedly related to the mass life, its origin must be very old one. According to Dr. Mahendra Bhanwat:


The Natyashastra of Bharatmuni also speaks of the antiquity of dramatic performances in India. Practically speaking the tradition of folk-dramas preserve the various celebrations of mass ceremonies and religious ceremonies. in tact. The development of folk-drama began along with the development of our civilisation.

13. Lokdharmee Natya Parmapara, p. 7
5.3 **Salient features of a folk-drama:**

A folk-drama has been defined by various scholars. Here the opinions of Dr. Krishnadev Upadhyaya and Dr. Satyendra are not considered since they have not analysed folk-dramas impartially and have not considered the salient features of such a drama. Their study can be regarded as quite Shastriya (Classical) and not a deep study of the form of a folk drama. For example according to Dr. Satyendra: "Lok Rangmanch Ka Natya Sangitatmak Hota Hai. Geyata Ki Isme Pradhanata Nahti Hai. Es Geyata Ka Hup Shastriya Nahin Hota Hai. Yah Sahaj Lok-Sangeet Ke Tatwo Se Yukt Hote Hai. Nagare Jaise Lok-Vadya Ka Enmain Upayog Hota Hai. Vesh-Bhusa Kein Lok Priyata Ka dhyan Rakha Jata Hai."\(^{14}\)

Here mention may be made to the salient features of a folk-drama given by Dr. Shyam Parmer, who studied intensively the folk-dramas of different regions of India and then analysed them. He described dialogues, stage performances and lack of the Shastriya knowledge as the prime and general features of these dramas\(^ {15}\) which are the decisive factors for a folk drama. He added the following features also.

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14. *Lok Sahitya Vignam*, Dr. Salendra, p. 508
15. Ibid, p. 9
The language of a folk-drama is quite poetic. Since these dramas are the means of mass expression the poetic dialogues have the ability to express the collective imagination. So there is less use of prose. Prose has been used only in humorous acting of the Bhad and narrative cases. But such a prose usually becomes poetic when words are so arranged to move very quickly with the actions. The tradition of using dialogues in a poetic form have been in vogue since the middle ages. There are certain portions in these dramas which are sung in the tune of a folksong and are interwined with words of ancient folk-language.

Dr. Shyam Parmer expressed his views on the plot construction (Kathanak) of a folk drama as follows:

The plot of a folk-drama may be of various subject-matter. Most of them are Puranic and historical; but less social. Generally two forms of Kathanak are available:

The views of two more scholars besides Dr. Parmer may be cited here, who studied the folk-drama of certain regions and found some specialities there. These salient features are quite clear useful and based on facts. The first of them being Dr. Shankarlal Yadav who studied the Swang i.e., the folk songs of Haryana and on the basis of his study he found the following salient features: 17

(i) There is no imitation of any personal perception of any individual;

(ii) Pre-eminence of music;

(iii) Open platform and no screen;

(iv) Absence of division into acts' seriality of the scene is pre-planned and addition of songs and dances;

(v) Use of gestures in place of language to make it more natural;

(vi) Several forms — Puranic, Religious, historical, love affairs — all may be its subject matter;

(vii) The plot construction is loose the first part is quite slow while the later part becomes very quick, There

16. Ibid, p. 10
17. Haryana Pradesh ke Lok Sahitya, S.L. Yadav, pp. 407-8
is no merriment in the plot itself, but it comes only when the incident takes place;

(viii) All the members of the group performs everything; any actor can be its director and the director its actor in turn.

The other scholarly writer is Dr. Mahendra Bhanawat who lived in Udaypur with the Lok-Kala Mandal of Udaypur, a very active association for performing folk-dramas of Rajasthan. He went deep into the matter and spoke of the following fifteen salient features:

(i) It is originated not out of individual genius but of social splendour;

(ii) It is based on the Lok-dharma and the Lok-dharme tradition;

(iii) It is also based on Lok-rurhi and Lok-vishwas;

(iv) Primacy of dancing and singing and less acting;

(v) It acts as the social, religious and cultural background;

(vi) It is evergreen;

(vii) No pre-practice, experience and training;

(viii) Although imitation of reality yet there is reflection of reality on it;

(ix) It does not follow principles but it is quite harmonious with principles and it creates principles;
(x) The promptitude and agility of preparation is its life-force;

(xi) The actors and the audience equally feel oneness in their entertainment;

(xii) It brings forth concentration in the mind of the players and their individual-self is absorbed in it;

(xiii) Absence of separate entity in the minds of the audience;

(xiv) Purifies nudity, inelegance and obscenity and there is no evil influence;

(xv) In drama for female the actors and the audience are all women, but in dramas for males, there is no restriction for audience.

Finally, mention may be made also of the opinion of Jagadish Chandra Nathur who studied folk-dramas from practical point of view. Shri Nathur finds the following salient features of a folk-drama:

(i) A folk theatre gives expression to the instincts and emotions and sentiments of the mass people or the society and not the ideas and experience of any individual. It is in the natural language of the mass people and therefore the dialogues are in the poetic form;

(ii) All characters are type characters i.e., representing particular instinct or particular section;
(iii) Open platform, and no change of scene (Generally one screen is placed at the back side);

(iv) Use of dances and gestures in performance;

(v) Puranic stories, introduction of the Vidushak, insertion of ideals and advice in between stories, decrying the contemporary troubles and difficulties or hatred of low castes against the high castes;

(vi) Less importance to plot construction and more to enjoyment through entertainment as the subject-matter is known to all;

(vii) All members of the team well adept in all performances and functions. Everyone can be the director, the actor or the Vidushaka;

(viii) Mention of customs and conventions or the ceremonies of the mass people is compulsory; and in it the songs and proverbs (sayings) prevalent among the masses are to be incorporated.\(^\text{18}\)

5.6 Popularity of a folk-drama:

A folk-drama attains popularity due to the salient features cited above. In practice a folk-drama reflects the simple life of a common man, and therefore the audience feels oneness with it and there ends the difference between the

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18. Jammelan Patrika (Lok Sanskritik Visheshank), pp. 356-7
actors and the audience. While composing these dramas it is
done in accordance with the liking of the people and there­
fore general audience feels oneness with it and enjoys it
with great interest. The music in the dramas also adds to
its attraction. The 'karr-karr-Dham' sounds so mysterious
that it gives birth to some curious life-force to the common
people. Therefore, it is not an overstatement to say that
music is the life force of a folk-drama. Nobody can withstand
himself when dances with exciting gestures and postures are
presented. A folk-dance is presented in such a simple and
natural way that it can easily absorb the mass audience.
Further it also incorporates languages of the masses (Lok­
bhasa), the exciting gestures of the actors, sweet folk-music
which all can easily captivate the mass audience.

5.7 Classification of folk-dramas:

Different scholars give their own opinions about the
classification of folk-dramas of different localities in
India. The following can be regarded as the basis of classi­
fication of these dramas:

(i) Dialect or language;

(ii) Geographical circumstances;

(iii) the platform;

(iv) the elements of folk-drama;

(v) The Parvs or the ceremonies;
(vi) object or the purpose;
and (vii) performance, musical instrument and the songs.19

5.7.01 Dialect or language:

The folk-dramas in some are named after the dialect or
the language of the region. In one region there may be differ­
ent forms of folk dramas and they may be called by different
names. But all these forms of folk-dramas can be grouped
together under the nomenclature of the language prevalent in
the region; e.g., the Bundeli Loknatya; the Maithili Loknatya;
the Braj Loknatya etc. But some scholars donot accept this
view on the ground that in many cases of basic performances
of the drama, the expression is given through some gestures
which are in no way related to the dialect.20

5.7.02 Geographical circumstances:

The second basis of the classification is geographical
circumstances and on this basis the folk-dramas are described
as the Pathani, the Maidani, the Pahadi, the Junglee etc.
But this classification is also not found to be proper one.
Because, even in the case of the Maidani dramas there are vari­
ous forms of folk dances which can never be grouped together.

19. Lok Sahitya, Jiddhant aur Prayog, p. 153
20. ibid, p. 153
5.7.03 **Platform:**

The Hangmanch, i.e., the platform of the drama can also be regarded as a basis of classification of these dramas. Considering this criterion, we can see the different aspects of a folk-drama and thereby classify them. But there are certain cases where there is no use of platforms. As such the basis of platform is likely to be one-sided.

5.7.04 **Elements of folk-drama:**

If the classification is based on the consideration of the importance of certain elements in a folk-drama like dances, songs, dialogues, acting, make-up, music etc., it would have been possible to give a clear shape to classification. But it is difficult to find out where the importance has been laid in a particular drama.

5.7.05 **Parva or ceremony:**

The dramas which are performed in certain particular 'Parva' may easily be named after them; and as such the ceremonies may be treated as a basis of classification. But there are certain folk-dramas which are not related to any such particular ceremony; and therefore, they can never be classed under any such ceremonial drama group.
5.7.06 **Object or the purpose:**

Folk-dramas can also be classified on the basis of their aims and objects as in most cases they are performed for the upliftment of certain castes, trades and callings etc. But in almost all cases these dramas are meant more for the congregation of people and therefore, it can never be a proper basis of classification.

5.7.07 **Performances, musical instruments, songs etc.:**

A folk-drama can also be classified on the basis of the style of performance, musical apparatus used, music etc. But in most cases a mixture of different styles are found; and therefore, they are difficult to be classified under any group. So if one classifies folk-dramas only on the basis of these factors, the result can never be a satisfactory one.

Dr. Shyam Parmer has classified the Lok-dharmee dramas into the following classes:

1) **Samayik Laghu Prahasan**;
2) **Dharmik**;
3) **Aitihasik**; and
4) **Laukik**.

Dr. Satyendra classified folk-dramas into for classes on the basis of their nature as follows:

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21. *Lok Sahitya Vijnan*, p. 431
1) Nritya Pradhan;
2) Natya Hasya Pradhan;
3) Sangeet Pradhan Kathavandh; and
4) Natya Varta Pradhan.

5.7.08 The Nritya Pradhan:

What is referred to in the Ain-e-Akbari as the 'Kirtan' is now-a-days found in the shape of 'Raas'. In the Raas, there is the pre-eminence of a kind of dance known as the Raas Nritya. The characters in a Raas not only sing but dance along with the music also. Here the music is generally a classical one.

5.7.09 The Natya Hasya Pradhan:

The 'Bhads' are the creations of some intelligent professional dramatists with sharp presence of mind who began to carry it as hereditary profession. Its existence is also referred to in the Ain-e-Akbari. Most probably the term 'Bhada' is the colloquial form of Sanskrit term 'Bhana'. There is pre-eminence of humour in these plays.

5.7.10 The Sangeet Pradhan Kathavandh:

In these plays there is the pre-eminence of musical dialogues. The plays like the Nautanki, the Bhagat, the Maach etc. come under this class.
In these plays there are dances and use of music and few dialogues.

The above classification of Dr. Satyendra can also never be taken as perfect one; because it is quite difficult to ascertain the elements which have pre-eminence in a drama.

Dr. Mahendra Bhanawat, after analysing many bases and example, classified the Rajasthani folk-dramas on the basis of the art or the technique which can be regarded as free from defects. On this basis he classified the Rajasthani Loknatya into:

1) Khwyal;
2) Swang; and
3) Lilaye.22

Although this classification can never be applied in case of folk-dramas of other regions directly; yet the classification of folk-dramas can easily be made on the basis of art23 or technique, and as such the classification is quite acceptable. This classification may be made in the following manner:

1) Dharmik Natak; (e.g. the Ramlila)

22. Loknatya Parampara aur Pravritiya, p. 16
23. Lokdharme Natya Parampara, p. 8
ii) Aitihasic Natak (e.g. the Raja Harischandra);
iii) Natya Pradhan (e.g. the Raas Lila);
iv) Prem Pradhan (e.g. the Nautanky); and
v) Hasya Pradhan Natak (e.g. the Bhad).

5.8 The Loknatya of Vaishali:

After an analysis of the above classifications of folk-dramas it is evident that the one made by Dr. Mahendra Bhanawat and the basis on which it is done are quite acceptable. Therefore, we propose to analyse the folk-dramas of Vaishali on that basis.

First, we shall go through the folk-dramas under the above classification briefly which can never be regarded as, of course, the folk-dramas of Vaishali proper as these dramas are performed in almost all parts of India with little or no variation in the plot construction or in the subject-matter. As such all these folk-dramas can never be regarded as folk-dramas of Vaishali, but they are also played here in Vaishali. Next, we shall analyse dramas which completely belonged to Vaishali only.

5.8.01 The Dharmik Natakas:

It is believed that the 'Ramlila' originated during the time of Sant Tulsidas. But some scholars like Jagadish Chandra Mathur believes that the Ramlila originated prior to the time
of Sant Tulsidas. The Ramila with some variations is performed throughout Northern India. The followers of Lord Rama used to entertain through the Ramila. The Ramila has its own rules and regulations. It is not performed on one dais but on separate daises for separate scenes, e.g., the scene of Vanabas, of the gardens, of banks of Ganga, of the royal places etc. are shown on separate daises. For such daises, it is necessary that there should be a large field where on one side scenes of Ayodhya and on the other scenes of Lanka are depicted; and acting is performed in between them. The audience sits on one side of the dais. When the drama begins, Ravan enters from one side and Ram from the other and come to the dais. The plot is carried on through dances and songs and with the introduction of the 'Padas' and the 'Chanpays'.

The main specialities of such a drama are the rural costumes and rural atmosphere in them. The raxasa uses 'masks'.

5.0.02 The Aitihasik Natakas:

The Raja Harischandra is an important historical play. It is generally played in the northern India. It is also widely played in Vaishali. The play is based on the truthfulness of king Harischandra. The plot goes like this — Harischandra king of Ayodhya stunned both the worlds and heaven with his truthfulness. As a result Dev Raj Indra, Lord Vishnu,

Narad and other gods wanted to test his truthfulness. Lord Vishnu begged him of land measuring foot-paces only; and the king promised to give him the land. But when measured the whole of Ayodhya came under one pace and Harischandra offered his own body for the another pace. Then the king was sold to chandal of Kasi. Even his queen Shaiva and prince Rohitash had to lead the life of a slave. But Harischandra did not give up the path of truthfulness. In the meantime their son Rohitesh died of snake bite. Now sorrow and distress of Shaiva knew no bounds and yet prepared for cremation of her dead son with tearful eyes. By that time Harischandra appeared there as a Chandala and told her that without covering the dead body with a 'kafan' there can be no cremation, Shaiva thereupon torn off her own 'Anchal' (end of her own cloth) to cover the dead body of Rohitesh as a 'kafan'. Immediately there was a 'Puspa Vristi' (rain of flowers) from the heaven and the Gods appeared there. The gods acknowledged the supremacy of king Harischandra's truthfulness; and prince Rohitesh also came to life. The play ends there; and the following began to resound:

— "Satya Dharmapalak yug-yug tak
Bharat Bhumi Mein Jan mein,
Pawan Ta Sauhard, Prem Jan Jan Ke
Or mein paupe,
Shashwat Manavata Ki Gaye
Jagat Nirantar Gatha;
Jaya He ! Jaya He ! Jaya Jaya Jaya He."25

25. Satya Harischandra Natak, Shri Jugal, p. 64
The Raas lila; there is a difference of opinion about the origin of the term 'Raas'. Sometimes the term 'Raas' has been related to the 'Rasak' (a kind of farce compiled in one act). But it is better to associate it with a particular type of dramatic style (Natya Shailee) i.e., the 'Raas lila'.

The Raas lila in its prevailing sense is related to Lord Krishna and his 'Leela' i.e., the wonderful performance which are presented in the shape of dances and other dramatic performances. In it there are certain dialogues along with the dance and music. It now acquires a popular shape and is performed in open daises.

The plot of the Raas lila has been taken from the Shrimadbhagawat where Lord Krishna destroyed the haughty nature of the Gopis (women of Vraja) and after which the Gopis by virtue of their reverence and devotion to the Lord made him available to them.

There is another hearsay which wants to relate the Raas lila with the Manipuri traditional dance. After the killing of the Kali Nag, Lord Krishna performed the 'Sap Nach' i.e., the dance of the snake before the people at Vrindavan. Practically speaking this dance came to be known as the 'Raas' later.
In the 'Raas lila', Krishna is the hero and Racha the heroine; and Kansa appears as the villain. Traditionally the hero and heroine speak in poetry while others in prose. The dialogues of the actors are all verbal but e.g., some cases, the mangalacharan and other Ashirvachan are found in the drama itself.

The dais for the Raas lila is decorated in white, and in one side a screen is usually placed so that the actors and the musicians may take their seats before entering the dais. The Raas lila is a mixture of the Hasya and the Shringaar Rasas. It is of course necessary that the 'Aarati' should be performed both in the beginning and the end of the play.

Below we cite some excerpts from the Raas lila:

" Radha — Nand Kishore Mohan Kunj Bihari

Krishna — Chaliye Saghan Van Ki Or
Shrimom Pran Piyari
Bole chatak, Mor Fuli Ati Fulwari.

Radha — Mai Na Chalu Van Ki Or
Tu Natwar Girdhari,

( Darshak — Bhagwan Krishna Kee Joy)

Tum Pritam Chittchor
Ulti Rit Tumhari.

Krishna — Ho, Ha Kah Kahawat Chor,

Tum Chitchor Tihari,
Niwashai Kripa Ki Or
Tum Radha Pyari. 26

The Nautanki is also known as the Swang or the Bhagat. According to Pandit Ram Chandra Shukla, the Swang has been originated around the beginning of the RitiKaal i.e., 1700 Sangwat. During this period the Shringaar entered not only in the courts but also entered into the parlour of the mass people. So long as the arrangement of a dais (Rangmanch) was there, the Shringaar was not a new thing and therefore the Shringaar Rasa easily entered into the Nautanki or the Swang and into the Bhagat during this period. At the beginning the Nautanki was in Urdu folk-songs. In support of this idea Kalika Prasad Dixit 'Kusumakar' says that most probably the first nautanki is the Heer Ranjha, which has a particular place in the Punjabi folk songs; and was originated in between the 11th and the 12th centuries. It has been fathered by the Dholak players of different castes like the Malla (Jat), the Rawat (Rajput), the Ranga (Julaha) etc. who performed folk-dramas for their livelihood. During the 13th century it developed fully under the endeavour of Amir Khusroo and during the 18th century it spread throughout the Northern India. It is also played in Vaishali also.

The Nautanki is also known as the Swang or the Bhagat in the Northern India. It is a means of entertainment in the

rural areas.

The use of Urdu metre viz., Bahretnil (Bahar-cchand, Navil Lamba) is a speciality of the Nautanki e.g.,

"He Ravan Tu Dhamki Dikhata Kise,
Mujhe Marne Ka Khanfo Khatar hi Nahin."

For a nautanki, Swang or Bhagat, the dais is erected in an open field and is raised to a bit higher level than its surrounding with the help of bamboos or long wooden staff. A screen is placed in one side and the drum players sit beside it and play their drums in a particular style. The second important feature of the nautanki over and above the Urdu metre is its particular musical instrument. A chair is placed on the dais, which performs the function of a throne on which the kings and gods sit and other characters keep standing during the performance. The required actors make the conversation and others move to the other side of the screens. Nacharam of Hathras, Tirmohan of Farukhiwad, Shrikrishna Radhesyam Kathavasak and Labardav of Kanpur are the writers of the Nautankis. Certain other writings in Urdu are also classed as Nautanki of which the Indra Sabha of Amanat is a famous one. Among the new writings, the Laila Manju, the Shariforhad, the Sultan Daku, the Dahiwali etc. are also important Nautankis.
Hasya Pradhan Natakas:
(The Bhad or the Bahurupiya)

These dramas where humour or the Hasya Rasa is given predominance is known as the 'Bhad'. They are also known as the Bahurupiya. These dramas generally produce simple humour in their presentation as well as in their subject-matter.

The folk-dramas which are analysed under the classification of Dr. Mahendra Bhanawat are played not only in Vaishali but also in other parts of India; and as such they can never be claimed as the Vaishali folk dramas only. The following are the folk-dramas which are mostly prevalent in the Vaishali region:

1) The Jata-Jatin;
2) The Dom-kacch;
3) The Sita-Kitra;
4) The Bagli; and
5) The Sama Chakwa.

From the above five folk-dramas the rural masses of Vaishali got inspiration and therefore, these five may be regarded as the folk-dramas of Vaishali proper. These dramas of Vaishali have been analysed below:

The Jata-Jatin:

This is originally a love story of the Jat tribe of Punjab. But it gradually spread throughout the northern
India and changes its original colour and becomes equally a love story of men and women in Bihar and other parts of North India. The womenfolk of Bihar filled the whole atmosphere with melody under the moon at the arrival of lovely autumn season. After supper they get together at a neighbourhood place and sit in two groups. Of the groups one belongs to the Jat or the boy and the other to the Jatin or the girl. In this Jata-Jatin play there is no place for a man; and all parts are played by women only. They play the whole story of love between Jata and Jatin. In some cases even the night breaks up when the story ends.

The two parties, of the boy and the girl remain within own boundaries. The Jatin party is to begin the love story first. They begin to sing and move towards the Jata party, and finished their story near the latter party. Then the Jata party begin to sing and answer the question raised by the Jatin party. They also move towards the other party while singing and when finished singing they come back to their seats.

The Jata-Jatin story goes like this: The Jatin asked for ornaments from Jata. Whereupon Jata went abroad for more earning so that he might fulfill the wishes of his beloved. Jatin also goes back to her mother's house. After some years Jata comes back to meet his beloved, and Jatin also comes back from her mother's house to meet him. All the story is
a comedy and many interesting stories about love are incorporated in it.

Below we narrate some interesting episode of Jata-Jatin play:

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**Jatin**: Nathiya Jab Jab Magli Ho Jata,
Nathiya Kahen Lail Ho,
Hari bali Umriya Ho Jata
Videshawa Kahe Gamail Ho?

**Jata**: Nathiya Jab Jab Lajhi Ao Jatiniya,
Nathiya Kahe Na Penhale Ge.
Hari Bah Umariya Jatinia
Naiharwa Kahe Gamaule Ge?

**Jatin**: Kangan Jabar Magli Ho Jata,
Kangan Kahe Na Dele Ho.
Hari Chadal Jawaniya Ho Jata,
Videshawa Kahe Gamail Ho?

**Jata**: Kangan Jabar Delio Jatiniya,
Kangan Kahe Na Penhale Ge?
Hariwalli Umriya Jataniya,
Naihar Kade Vinaule Ge?

**Jatin**: Jhumka Jabar Mangali Ho Jata,
Jhumka Kahe Na Laul Ho?
Hariwalli Umriya Ho Jatawa,
Ghishawa Kahe Na Gamgal Ho,

**Jata**: Jhumka Jabor Laile Jatiya,
Jhumka Kahe Na Penhala Ge?
Hariwalli Umriya Jatiniya
Naihar Kahe Gamaule Ge?
II

Jatin : Jab Jab Tikwa Mangliyo Ho Jata,
Tikwa Na Kahe Layam Ho, Tikwa Karan
Jatba Jiya Tarasol Ho.

Jata : Jab Jab Tikwa Lalvanke Jatni
Tikban Na Kahe Penhalege Tikwe Binu
Jatni Samacha Lajwala Ge.

Jatin : Jab Jab Delwa Manglio Ho Jata
Helwa Na Kahe Layal Hi Thilbe Binu
Jatwa Jiya Tarasoal Ho.

Jata : Jab Jab Thelwa Lalvange Jatin
Thelwa Na Kahe Penhale Ge.
Thelwa Karaj
Sabha Mein Lajanle Ge.

III

Jata : Lomke Chalihe Ge Jatiniya,
Lamke Chalihe Ge.
Chadal Jaw Jawaniya Tohar
Lamke Chalihe Ge.

Jatin : Nahiye Lambaur Jata
Nahiye Lamban Re
Ham Ta Babuke Dulari Dhiya
Anthak Chalbaur Re.

Jata : Lamhi Paratan Ge Jatin
Lamhi Paratan Ge.
Dhanma Ke Sis Jaise Lamhi
Paratan Ge."

.................. etc. etc.
The term 'Dom-kacch' literally means the 'Swang played by the Doms'. It is also played by women for women, and men are not allowed there. It is played when all the male members of a house are away on account of the marriage of the son. The womenfolk then gather together in an open space and play a Dom kacch. The story goes like this:

There was an orphan boy named Jaluba was brought up by a couple the dom caste. Some interesting portions of the Dom Kacch have been cited below:

**Domni:** Kat Lahi Re Domna Kat Lahi Re.

**Dom:** Bans Lali Aoo Ge Domni, Bans Lali Aoo Ge.

**Domni:** Saj Dehi Re Domna, Saj Dehi Re.

**Dom:** Saj Deli Aoo Ge, Saj Deli Aoo Ge.

**Domni:** Bin Dehi Re Domna, Bin Dehi Re.

**Dom:** Bin Deli Aoo Ge Domni, Bin Deli Aoo Ge Aje Raja Haveliya Se Bech Labali Ge.
Bech Lali Aoor Domna, Bech Lali Aoor Re Uje Raja Havelia Se Bech lali Aoo Re Kee kalaoo Ge Domni Kee Milaoo Ge.
Uje Raja Havelia Mein Kee Milalao Ge Rupaiya Milal Aoor Re Dom, Rupaiya Milalan Re.

Uje Raja Havelia Rupaiya Milal Aoor Re Na Lebai Ge Domni Na Lebai Ge
Uje Raja Havelia Se Fer Lahi Ge Mar Khayab Re Domna, Mar Khayab Re
Uje Raja Havelia Se Mar Khayab Re

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+++  +++
Kee Milalan Ge Domni, Kee Milalan Ge,
Raja Havelia Mein Kee Milalan Ge.
Sachha Milalan Re Domna, Bachha ..... 
Uje Raja Havelia Se Bachha Milalan Re.

Mar Khayab Re Domna, Mar Khayab Re
Gav Ke Sipahiya Se Mar Khayab Re,

Babu Ram, Babu Ram Jagra Bechaita
Domni Herall Re Kee,
Bhaiya Ram Bhaiya Ram Bhehi Re Nagriya
Domni Ayol Re Kee,
Babu Ram, Babu Ram Daura Bechaita
Domni Herall Re Kee.
Bhaiya Ram Bhaiya Ram Bherire Nagariya
Domni Na Ayol Re.
Babu Ram, Babu Ram Kahan Fakaba
Domni Ke Dekhab Re Ke
Bhaiya Ram Bhaiya Ram Na Hai Herab Re Ki.

5.9.03 Sita—Sita :

This drama is played after the Jata—Jatin play by the young girls. One of them plays the part of Sita and another Kita. Sita hides herself and Kita seeks her and others sing songs. Kita inquires of Sita — 'Have you seen my Sita? To this others reply — 'Ha, Ha (Yes, yes) and then they say —

"Ladkiya — Tohari Sita Kumbara Se Lobhayela,
Age May Mahi Ge Sita,
Kolhua Aisan Sita Mor
Age May Mohi Ge Sita,
Bhar din Matia Do—Abai
Age May Mohi Ge Sita."
In this manner all the participants sing till Sita is found out by Mita. This play is full of ‘Shringaar Rasa’ and humour.

5.9.04 Baglee:

The Baglee is also a folk-drama performed in Vaishali.

A verse form is used in the drama and the subject matter contains dialogues between a ‘Bagla’ and his sister. The dialogue takes the following form:

*Diddi — Kahme Ke Rasal Kahma Jaichaya
     He Baguli,
*Baguli — Sasura Ke Rasal Nahira
     Jaichi He didiya,
*Diddi — Kaun Karanka Rasal Jaicha
     he Baguli

28. Akalavya, Muniswar Rai Kunis, p. 37
The conversation goes on until they arrive at the bank as soon as they arrive at the bank the drama ends there. This is another very popular folk-drama of Vaishali.
5.9.05 Sama-Chakeba:

This play in verse reflects the affection of brothers and sisters; sarcasm of sister-in-laws and love of husband and wife. Here the story relates to two brothers and sister — Sama and Chakeba.

This play is performed from the 'Sukla Saptami' to the Purnima in the month of Kartik. The rural womenfolk makes several toys like the 'Satbhaiya', the Bantitar, the Kutta, the Chugla, the Aithla-Ginthal the Bat dekhni etc. All these toys represent the characters of the play and are placed in a circular way around the image of Lord Krishna playing a flute and the girls begin to sing and dance. There is no dialogue in the play but the songs contain question and answers in them — The girls do the acting of the characters which are none but the toys of clay.

This 'Sama-Chakeba' is related to civilisation based on agriculture. From the point of sociology agricultural civilisation began through women and therefore, this play is regarded as very old one. Here in the play a brother has been honoured and it ends with laughter and happiness.

Below some excerpts from the Sama-Chakeba are cited below:

— "Chakba Bhaiya Kera Dhani Fulbariya He.
Ki Ful Lote Challan Bahiniya He.
Fulba Lorhalte Bahiniya Kumhalai Gel He.
Ki Dhani Re Gel Sir Ke Senurwa He.
Ki Dhami Re Gel Nayana Kajalwa He."
Chatba Lele Daoral Jamin Chakeba Bhaiya Ha.
Ki Baith He Bahini Aho Chhatachhiya He
Paniya Lele Daoral Jamin Samo Bhaajo He.
Ki Pihu He Nanado Aho Sital Paniya He.
Samo Bhaajo Kera Keriya Chaor Dole He.
Ki Tahire Kesiya Guthboi Chamelia Ful He.
Ki Tahi re Kesiya Guthboi Ful He.

+++ +++ +++
Ane Samo Baujo Lelan Lulu Am Nanad Kahe Angon he.
Ahe Etna Bachniya Jabe Sunlan Chakeba Bhaiya He
Bhaiya Kare Laglan Barchi Dhumaye Bahin Kaha
Payem He.

Kahe Bhoujo Lealahu Luluaye, Shonjo Jab Rahihan Bhay
Bap Ke Hajtele Samo Khelaba He,
Ahe Chuti Jayahan Bhay Bap Ke Kaj
Chhoram Kauri Angan He,
Ahe Chuti Jayhan Sakhiya Sabhar
Chhoram Kauri Angan He,
Apna La Likihawa Bhaiya
Gao Ke Godev Bhaiya Hamarela
Likhiham Des Dur Paltio Na Ayam He
+++ +++ +++ +++
Chakba Bhaiya Challan Aheriya
Kharaich Bahini Deli Asis Ho Na,
Jisha Ho Mero Bhaiya Jio Bhaiya
Lakh Baras Ho na.
Hathe Kamal Mukh Bikha Bhaiya Ke
Barhi Sir Pagiya
Bhaajo Ke Barho Sirwa Sindurwa Ho Na.

These are the folk-dramas which people of Vaishali
enjoy. They have been maintaining their tradition through
these dramas. These dramas become the source of pleasure
for the mass people.