



YATRA AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATION: A STUDY OF HUMAN RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION IN THREE FAMOUS YATRAS OF ODISHA

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Abstract

Tradition plays an important role in the creative artistic pursuits particularly in the field of folk performing arts. Tradition is not only a repetitive behavioural pattern or some persistent symbol of motif in community, culture, it is also an assertion of an identity, a revival and regeneration of life force of the community. According to R. Mukherjee corrective or punitive communication has specific function for effective social control check in, punishing or abolishing blockages and hindrances to communication that impede the modicum of trust, goodwill and cooperation among individuals, associations and classes which is so essential for stability and survival of the community. Yatra always had an intense association with the common people and therefore it has survived at the onslaughts of modern age although not without certain unhappy mutilation. This study focused the social relationship message to the people, yatra preserve social beliefs, social norms cultural excellence and value system. People enjoying rituals and yatra promotes creativity. I have selected three important and famous yatras like Puri Rath Yatra, Bhubaneswar Rukuna Ratha Yatra and Brahmapur Thakurani Yatra of Odisha. Here focused the involvement of people in rituals, social relationship of God and Goddess that focused the human activities and creativity of people for organizing the yatra successfully and good social message for people.

Keywords: *Tradition, Culture, Rituals, Human Relations, Social message, Creativity.*

Introduction

To express, communicate and share something beautiful, gave birth to performing arts. In this process, the living progressive impulse to the timeless universal gets the coherent shape in creative designs. Tradition plays an important role in the creative artistic pursuits particularly in the field of folk performing arts. The folk performing art is changing its structure continuously over centuries, modifying it to the needs of the changing situations, making it functionally relevant to the society. Tradition is the process of transmission of age old values and the contextual manifestation and interpretation of the universal. Tradition is not only a repetitive behavioral pattern or some persistent symbol or motif in community culture; it is also an assertion of an identity, a revival and regeneration of the life force of the community. The traditional performing art is an aesthetic component of the constant concept of belongingness and affinity in a cultural context. The Indian society is a complex social system with different castes, classes, creeds and tribes.

According to R. Mukherjee there are five forms of communication in a society. Factual communication consists of reporting, verifying and schematizing facts about physical events and human situations. It also reflects their inter relations so that the community has common frame of physical references. More over ideological communication stands for achieving an accord in beliefs, opinions and values so that the community could seek common goals, purpose and ideal common value hierarchy as the frame of reference for social action. Mukherjee says corrective or punitive communication has specific function for effective social control-checking punishing or abolishing blockages and hindrances to communication that impede the modicum of trust, goodwill and cooperation among individuals, associations and classes which is so essential for the stability and survival of the community. He opines, conjunctive communication consists of blending, reconciling and coordinating the various fields of social, economic, intellectual, artistic and religious aspects of life. The purpose of such communication is to secure smooth and harmonious social adjustment and intellectual adventure without any lag between the different sectors of life and mind. Lastly, he advocates that utopian or evocative communication which is established by morals art, metaphysics and religion that transcends the unity and continuity of the community, embodies concepts feelings and striving of affiliation to the community of mankind and cosmos- a common frame of reference for man with cosmos transactions.

Yatra always had an intense association with the common people and therefore it has survived the onslaughts of modern age although not without certain unhappy mutilations. By the early 19th century there was already a flourishing tradition of Ram Yatra, Durga Yatra, and Siva Yatra in different states.

A yatra performance is not restricted to the precincts of a temple or any other religious institution. As its names signify, it is a journey, a travel involving mobility. On one of the these are seated the percussion players with dholak, cymbals and bells on the other are seated instrumentalists comprising a clarinet player, a flutist, a violinist, trumpet players and harmonium player.

Objectives

- To study the social relationship message to the people
- To study the preservation of social beliefs, social norms and cultural excellence and value system.
- Yatra is administered with simple rituals and encourage creativity.



Methodology

Secondary data was collected from various books and online portals. The primary data which have been gathered from the selected persons.

The three famous yatras which is functioning in the form of human relationship defined below.

Puri Ratha Yatra (International famous Car Festival)

Lord Jagannath is a total symbol of Odisha's identity.-Social cultural, religious and spiritual. He is the source of the Hindu beliefs, social norms and relationships, cultural excellence and value systems. The Rath yatra of Lord Jagannath at Puri is the most important festival of Odisha which attracts pilgrims from all over India and international arena. Every year in the second day of bright fortnight of Asadha, the idols of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Mata Subhadra are dragged forth in a grand procession on the three separate chariots along the Grand Road (Bada Danda) from the Srimandir to the Gundicha Temple. For its profound religious fervor, magnificence and display of color, the car festival of Lord Jagannath is perhaps the most spectacular religious ceremony in the world. Jagannath is the God of people and his auspicious Ratha Yatra is for the good of humanity. He is called Patitapabana: the redeemer of down-trodden, for he comes out of His temple once a year for the salvation of the down-trodden.

The Car festival is a universal one. Here the untouchables, the social outcast, the down trodden mingle together with so called upper castes on Bada danda. The system of *Chhera-Panhara* done by the successive Gajapati (Kings of Odisha) reminds as Rajadharma for the service of God and Man. Thus the concept that the king is the first among the equals gets strengthened. One of the most unique features of the festival is the presence of brother and sister in the car. The love and affection of the elders for the younger sister is typically presented in the festival setting aside, the claim of wife and other family members. We have detailed description of the vast concourse of the people who attend the annual festival and ponderous cars of Jagannath and his brother and sister drawn by the pilgrims to his Aunt's (Mausi: sister of mother) house.

The Car (Ratha) of Balabhadra popularly known as Taladhawaja consists of 14 wheels and is decorated with green and red clothes, ploughs, bunch of corns and purna kumbha (the pitch full of water). This car represents creativity and agriculture that are the root cause of human prosperity. It symbolizes the royal qualities of human life or Rajabhava.

The 12 wheeled Darpadalan, chariot of sister Subhadra is marked by talabhava or balanced qualities of human life.

The 16 wheeled Nandighosh, the chariot of Lord Jagannath is represented by Sattabhava or serene and holistic qualities covered with red and yellow clothes. The Lord is the master of Shola Kala or all 16 qualities needed for human life-hence 16 wheels. Again the word Nandighosh consisting of two syllables (Nandi+ghosh) means happy journey. In other words, the Rath yatra stands for journey of happiness, journey of devotion and journey of trances amidst the all pervading fervour of the Lord.

The festival is an institution by itself. Its genesis, growth, spread, implication and magnificence are but the reflections of spiritual, metaphysical, universal, Catholicism of our socio-cultural heritage. The various names of the festival like Ghosh yatra, sri Gundicha yatra, Patitapaban yatra, Adapa yatra, Dasavatar yatra are the other ways of index of its multifarious significances.

Rath Yatra of Lord Lingaraj on Ashokastami

Bhubaneswar is famous as a Shaiva khetra and Lord Lingaraj is its presiding deity. Lingaraj, otherwise called Kirtivasa, Kruttivasa, Bhubaneswar and Tri-Bhubaneswar, is believed to be the most sacred of the 12 Jyotirlingas in India and is held in high esteem by every Pious Hindu.

A natural line that exists in the Swayambhu Linga (Lingaraj) is generally pointed out as the line demarcating the Siva and Vishnu portions of the same deity who is invoked as Harihara. The leaves of Vilva and Tulsi, which are favourites respectively of Siva and Vishnu are used in daily worship.

Rukuna Ratha Yatra

The car festival of Lord Lingalaja is celebrated at Bhubaneswar on day of Ashokastami. This festival takes place on the 8th of the wane in the month of chaitra (March- April) the day preceding Ramanavami on the day of Ashokastami towards mid-day three deities i.e. Chandrasekhar (the representative of lord Lingaraj), Rukmini and Basudeva are ceremonially brought to ascend the car. The image of Chandrasekhar is a four-armed Siva image two arms in abhaya posture, the third holding an axe (Parashu) and the fourth holding a deer (Mruga). The image of Basudeva is four armed Vishnu image holding Sankha,



Chakra, Gada and Padma. The image of Rukmini is a four armed Durga image holding Sankha, Chakra and sula in two hands. All are bronze images. Rukmini is seated in the middle, Chandrasekhar to her right and Basudeva to her left. An idol of Brushava and big wooden image of Brahma, who is said to be the charioteer (sarathi) of the car, are placed in the car. The four wheeled, 35ft wooden chariot rolls from the 11th century shrine to Mausima temple as it is pulled by thousands of devotees.

The car is drawn westward up to Badhei Banka and from there northward to the Rameswar temple situated at a distance of 1.5k.m. from the Lingaraj temple. The women folk do not pull the car, but get satisfaction by touching the rope. The deities are taken to the Rameswara temple and are kept for four days in a small apartment which is called Gundicha Ghara. During their stay at Gundicha Ghara, in a striking resemblance to the car festival at Puri, Parvati comes on the 3rd day to express her indignation as she was not made to accompany her consort Lord Lingaraja in the car. She breaks (the priests of Parvati act for this scene) a portion of the car and goes back to the temple. On the fifth day, the three deities start the return journey called Bahuda. While returning, the car is drawn to the temple from the backside. (The car does not take turn. The alter of the deities is only changed). When Lingaraja is about to enter the sanctuary, Parvati shuts the door and a mock quarrel takes place between the two parties of priests on behalf of Lingaraja and Parvati. However, Parvati is pacified later on and allows the deities to enter the temple. Thus the festival ends.

Berhampur Thakurani Yatra

The people of Berhampur are emotionally linked with Thakurani Yatra celebrated over past 244 years. Traditionally most of the indigenous families of the city invite their married daughters and close relatives to visit the yatra. While some visitors stay for short time, others spend long summer holiday with family and friends. Usually once a married daughter reaches her parental house during the yatra period, she has to stay till the end of the yatra. She is parted with presents either by her parents or in their absence, by the brothers leading as the head of the family.

Budhi Thakurani (Goddess) is the reigning deity of Berhampur. Her visit out of the temple to the people is an occasion for celebration. People indulge in marry making with family and friends throughout the month long yatra. The yatra is administered with simple rituals and encourage creativity in Beshha, Ratha, Kalakunja management. Beshhas are the funniest part of the yatra. Starting from animals to pages of mythology to social characters, one can imagine anything to attire himself move around friends.

During Berhampur Thakurani Yatra, Subha Khunta and Dharma Jhanda are erected at the site of the temporary abode of the Goddess as per traditional norm. The temporary abode of the Goddess is constructed in front of the residence of Desi Behera on the public road. Though there is peetha (place of worship) for the Goddess inside the residence of Desi Behera. The Subha Khunta is taken to Bada Thakurani Temple in procession along with the large crowd gathered outside the residence of Desi Behera to finalize the dates for yatra in a public meeting. Invitation for the yatra is extended by Desi Behera to Bada Thakurani and as a symbolic agreement after obtaining a garland of mandar(a red colour flower) the Subha Khunta is taken back to residence of Desi Behera to be fixed at the ground.

During this festival several persons done special tiger dance attire as homage to goddess Budhi Thakurani. Their bodies are painted in unique stripes of Royal Bengal tiger. These human tigers add extra glitz to the carnival spirit of Thakurani Yatra although other devotees dress up as mythological characters. Although these amateur performers are not perfect in their steps, the ritualistic tradition has kept the folk dance alive, said Bighneswara Sahu, convener of folk Foundation. The tiger dance of Berhampur is said to have emerged from a tribal dance form. It was codified by late Padmashree Bhagaban Sahu, who had learnt it from several tribal gurus. This folk dance form was main element in the critically acclaimed film Bagh Bahadur which was choreographed by late Sahu.

Rathas (decorated exhibits of mythological characters) and Kalakunjas exhibits depicting mythological scenes) are the third major attraction of Berhampur Budhi Thakurani Yatra following the Goddess's procession and Beshha (role play). Major Rathas in the yatra include Ramachandra, Laxman, Eswar, Narayan, Jagannath, Hari Arjunn, Nagarjun, Nrusingha, Karna, Parsuram, Sibarudha Kali, Shyamakali, Kanaka Durga, Hanuman and Kamadhenu etc. Traditionally Binchana (Fan) Ratha of Bachubari street and Doli (swing) Ratha of santarani street are exhibited during the yatra.

Apart from the return journey on the lastday Ghata also visits Mausli Ghara during the evening procession of yatra period the women folk who carry Ghatas is considered as 'thanks giving task'. Most of the women take part in the ceremony as a family tradition. Some others who 'promise a wish' to carry a Ghata during the yatra in the event of facing a crisis in the family life perform the rituals as mark of 'thanks' to Goddess. All the Ghatas which follow the Goddess's Ghata from the temporary abode to bada Thakurani Temple are crushed in the temple compound.



Discussion and Conclusion

I have defined three yatras which are very famous in Odisha. In Puri Ratha Yatra one of the most unique features of the social relationship is the presence of brothers and sister in the car. It signifies the love and affection of the elder brothers for the younger sister. Another social relationship is Mausima's (Aunt's) attachment with sisters children. Here this relationship indicated the affection like mother. A typical emotionality has shown here that the claim of wife Goddess Laxmi and she breaks the portion of car. Next day the three cars of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra go back this is Bahuda Yatra. In Rukuna Ratha Yatra focuses the friendship between two friends Chandrasekhar (the representative of Lingaraj the Lord Shiva) and Basudeva (Srikrishna) and Rukmini. Parvati (the wife of lord Shiva) comes on the third day to express her indignation as she was not made to accompany her consort Lord Lingaraja in the car. She breaks a portion of the car and goes back to the temple. On the fifth day the three deities start the return journey called Bahuda. When Lingaraj is about to enter the sanctuary, Parvati shuts the door and a mock quarrel takes place between the two parties of on behalf of Lingaraja and Parvati. However Parvati is pacified later on and allows the deities to enter the temple. Here also the relationship with mausima temple is highlighted.

In Berhampur Thakurani Yatra is linked with the traditionally indigenous families of the city invite their married daughters and close relatives to visit Yatra. Usually once a married daughter reaches her parental house during yatra period, she has to stay till the end of the yatra. She is parted with presents either by her parents or in their absence, by the brothers leading as the head of the family. This yatra also focuses the brother-sister relationship and get togetherness of friends and relatives. Here also the links of mausima ghar is highlighted.

Yatra preserves the social beliefs, social norms and cultural excellence and value system. Lord Jagannath is the God of the people and his Ratha yatra is for the good humanity. He comes out of his temple once in a year for the salvation of the down trodden. This festival is a universal one. Here the untouchables, the social outcast, the downtrodden mingle together with the so called upper castes on Bada danda.

In Berhampur Thakurani Yatra people indulge in marry making with family and friends throughout the month long yatra. The yatra is administered with simple rituals and encourage creativity in Besha, Ratha and Kalakunja.

The car festival besides its deep religious sanctity, spiritual appeal and aesthetic glamour has deep rooted influence on the socio-cultural trends of Odisha. In addition, the car festival of the lord Jagannath has manifested itself in the realm of architecture. The concept of chariot drawn by horses driven by the charioteer has been duly represented at konark. Here the entire structure is conceived in the form of a chariot for the worship of sun-God. The popularity of the car festival especially among the artisan class of the society has been indirectly strengthened.

In Thakurani Yatra, the practice of exhibition of Kalakunjas dates back to 1961 and 1963 yatra period. Residents of few streets adjoining the yatra venue started erecting scenes from mythology instead of single character as in the case of Ratha. They invited artists from cuttack to build-up such scenes. With availability of electricity the kalakunjas and the roads leading to such exhibits could be colorfully decorated. The visitors of yatra moved from one street to another to witness Rathas and Kalakunjas.

The analysis of three yatras focused some similarities that is the involvement of women in the rituals prove its gender sensitivity. Another social relationship between brother –sister, emotional reactivity with husband-wife priorities have given to the character of mausi (mother's sister) than mother and face to face (direct) relationship with God with People. These yatras are binding force for reinforcing family bond. These are in evidence of how spiritualism brings together millions and keep them united. Yatras in itself wherever held becomes a fertile ground of intercultural communication.

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