



Significance Of Sanskrit Drama Songs And Its Impact On The 19th Century Bengali Drama

Mandira Ghosh

Assistant Professor

Department of Sanskrit,

Siliguri College, N.B.U

Siliguri, West Bengal, India.

Abstract

Songs have been the most important part of Sanskrit drama. The pierian spring of human being is innate but this emotional expression got its final shape in the form of songs mainly during the Vedic era. With the passage of time and situation the role of songs were also changed. In most of the Sanskrit drama, after the worship of the eternal power and the preceptor for successful completion of the play, the anchor invites the actress to perform and sing for the entertainment of the audiences and spectators. Sanskrit drama songs and music always played an important and internal role with emotional appeals, which may varied from drama to drama. The impacts of Sanskrit drama songs on the 19th century Bengali drama are as deep as the overall inspirational impact and legacies of Sanskrit drama towards the 19th century Bengali drama. In the initial stage, lack of proper training was the major drawback of the songs used in Bengali drama. Very intensive and significant use of songs can be observed in different famous dramas. It may be termed as the impact of Sanskrit drama songs on its legatee.

Key words: Drama Song, Sanskrit drama, 'Hārivānsā', Gāndhārvā, 19th century Bengali

Drama.

Introduction:

The occasional use of songs and music in between dialogues of the drama makes the drama more alive, attractive and presentable. There are some dialogues that cannot be used directly on the leaps of the actors or actress of the drama, but that are very necessary in the context of the drama. These forms of subject matter are brought to life through songs and music. In a drama, there are so many things, which seem to be an unnecessary tomfoolery if they are delivered through dialogues. From this perception, that becomes more interesting and acceptable, if delivered through songs or music. Music or Song is a spontaneous emotion of human being. Emotions are expressed beyond words according to time and circumstances and that too in a specific rhythm. It is human instinct. The emotional expression is always revealed in a particular rhythm. The synchronization of songs and music in a drama was started, practiced and nourished through the ancient Sanskrit drama which was very successful and popular. The present paper deals with the source, significance of Sanskrit drama songs and its impact on the 19th century Bengali drama.

Objectives:

- To identify the origin of Sanskrit drama songs.
- To discuss the significance of songs in Sanskrit drama.
- To evaluate the impact of Sanskrit drama songs on 19th century Bengali Drama.

Methodology:

Both descriptive and analytical methods were used in this study. Various relevant data have been collected from different books, research articles, manuscripts, Sanskrit literatures etc.

Origin and Significance of Sanskrit Drama songs:

The pierian spring of human being is innate but this emotional expression got its final shape in the form of songs mainly during the Vedic era. The sages of Vedic era realized the eternal truth and expressed that in the form of chants or *Māntrā*. They were the seer of truth. According to them, the expression of the realization of truth is the expression of self-realization. These *Māntrās* were composed on the basis of the degree of the tonal or vocal sense of sublime, low tone and voiced structure with which sentiments and emotions are mixed. Finally, the combination of voice, feelings and emotions gave birth of song. It is believed that the word '*Sangeet*' was derived from the Sanskrit word '*Sām*' which means beginning.

In the initial stage, special deities were worshiped at special times with songs which were used as hymns. With the passage of time and situation the role of songs were also changed. Songs were started to be used for the worship of human as King. Consequently, songs were finally started to be used in Sanskrit drama in different structure and gesture. Earlier, songs were used to worship of the eternity at the beginning of the Sanskrit drama just before *Nāndipāthā* for the successful completion of the drama. Afterword, the same was extended for the worship of preceptor and king also.

In the *Māhābhārātā*, the word '*Gāndhārvā*' was used as a form of classical music. In the adjuncts or the '*Hārivānsā*' which was famous for the '*khilā*' as mentioned in the *Māhābhārātā* where lord Sri Krishna performs '*Chhalikyā Gāndhārvā*' with his companions. Though, Abhinaba Gupta used '*Gāndhārvā*' and song as different individuals.

'*Bhārātā*' himself stated that the origin of songs or '*Sangeet*' was from the '*Sāmvedā*'. In most of the Sanskrit drama, after the worship of the eternal power and the preceptor for successful completion of the play, the anchor invites the actress to perform and sing for the entertainment of the audiences and spectators. For example, in *Kālidāsā's 'Abhijānā Sāuntālām'* the singer sang-

“Suvāgā sānilābāgāhā patālā sānswārgāsurasurabhibānā rajā:

Prachhāyā sulāvānidrā divāsā parinamā ramaniyā”

Apparently, it was a description of a hot humid summer, but it also an underlying description or comparison between summer and the lust of king '*Dushmantā*' and '*Skuntālā*'.

In the 5th act of the same drama, song had another great significance where *Hānsāpādikā* the wife of king *Dushmantā* compared her husband with an affectionate bumble-bee.

*“Abhinavā mādhololupāstwān
Tathā parichumbā chutāmājārim”*

Hence, Sanskrit drama songs and music always played an important and internal role with emotional appeals, which may varied from drama to drama. In the ‘*Swāpnābāsābādāttām*’ of *Vāsā*, King *Udayānā* was the music teacher of *Bāsābādāttā*. *Udayānā* fell in love with *Bāsābādāttā* while he taught her music.

All these examples reflect the significance of songs in Sanskrit drama with its diversified acceptance and emotional appeal.

Impact of Sanskrit drama songs on 19th century Bengali drama:

The impacts of Sanskrit drama songs on the 19th century Bengali drama are as deep as the overall inspirational impact and legacies of Sanskrit drama towards the 19th century Bengali drama.

From the study of different literature and manuscripts it is clear that songs were the integral part of the Bengali drama with more significance than that of Sanskrit drama. It may be termed as the impact of Sanskrit drama songs on its legatee.

In the initial stage, lack of proper training was the major drawback of the songs used in Bengali drama. Impure and incompetent melody was disrupting the emotion and rhythm of the drama. But, due to the immense popularity and demand of songs in Bengali drama, proper training for the actors- actress was arranged by the drama producers. This was started in an organized manner during the 19th century. Renowned dramatist and producer Ardhendu Sarkar of Emerand theatre arranged proper training for drama actress and singers.

Very intensive and significant use of songs can be observed in the dramas of the famous dramatist Girish Chandra Ghosh. In his plays like ‘*Chhatrapati Shibaji*’, ‘*Tapoban*’, ‘*Shankaracharya*’, ‘*Ashoka*’, ‘*Abhishaap*’, ‘*Viswamitra*’ and ‘*Mirkashim*’ Debkumar Bagchi, Bhutnath Basu, Tapabrata Roy were the music composer accordingly. In his ‘*Sirajdaullah*’ drama, Kashinath Chattopadhyay was appointed as the music teacher. These are the reflection of the importance of songs in the Bengali drama.

In the famous drama ‘*Kulin Kulasarvasya*’ by Ramnarayan Tarkaratna, after the worship of the eternal power, the anchor invited the actress to perform a song for the entertainment of the audiences.

*“Chutamukulakuta sanchalachalikuta-
Gungun ranjan gane.”*

This is an example of the significant impact of the ‘*Abhijānā Sāuntālām*’ by *Kalidasa* as the same situation can be observed in both the dramas.

Again, in the drama ‘*Krishna Kumari*’ by Michel Madhusudan Dutta, though songs were not used directly in the prologue part, but in the second act, the background music which was used relevantly was quite similar with the song of *Hānsāpādikā* in ‘*Abhijānā Sāuntālām*’ by *Kalidasa* discussed earlier.

Similarly, background songs and music were also used in the 'Nil Dwarpan' drama by Dinabandhu Mitra to reflect the emotional outburst of the farmers.

*“Jokhon khate, khate bose dhan kati,
Mor mone jage, o tar loyan duti.”*

Lastly, in the drama 'Biswarjan' by Rabindra Nath Tagore, a song was used in the second act to show the way to eternity or 'Bramha', which is also an example of the impact of the Sanskrit drama songs on the 19th century Bengali Drama.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that song was the most significant part of the Sanskrit drama. With passage of time, though the presentation and implementation of songs may have changed in the Bengali drama; it cannot be repudiated that the impact of Sanskrit drama songs on the 19th century Bengali drama was indispensable and deep-rooted.

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