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16th - 18th Century Lavani - An Image Of Social Life

Study of Thanjore Marathi Lavanis

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Abstract: This study has been undertaken to investigate the indepth subjective interpretations of Marathi Lavanis particularly performed during the period of Tanjore kings. It consists of around 90 compositions popularly used by the the dance artists in tune with the rich traditions of Royal elegance. The proposed study is based on compositional varieties from a book preserved in Saraswati Mahal library composed by different authors. The compositions are examined with the help of their theme, characters, and the writing style.

Index Terms - Sangeeta Pada, Nirtya Pada, Tanjore kings, Themes of Padas.

Introduction

There is no doubt Marathi Shahiri has secured a vital place in Marathi literature field, and many scholars have elaborated the related topics too. All the poets and composers of Shahiri works are called as patriots. Later-on, the aura of this shahiri work started diminishing, but the study of the shahiri work were going on through the ages. The so called people who used to compose lavani were considered to be the only poets for their bread and butter, but the process of lavani composing has been never stoppped. Lavani never attained social status but its compositions never ended. It has become popularised for the name sake of Lokanatya. It was also not compared to abhijat kavya category. The popularity of lavani and its situational roots were supposed to be found. Till date whatever studies have been proposed regarding Lavani were about its existence, social appearance, ethics of lavani and mythology, and its romance approach limited to these. Also all the inputs of researches we got are too important but still deep digging was required to understand more about Lavani. The records of Marathi Lavani in South India is a charming story of cultural exchange and the mixing of regional traditions. Lavani, a traditional form of folks track and dance from Maharashtra, has had a extensive have an effect on in components of South India, particularly in the states of Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Telangana, though its roots are pretty Marathi.

Objective of the study

- To check reflections of Social life on Lavani
- To identify different themes of performances of Lavani

Origin of The Lavani

Lavani as a genre of performance art originated in Maharashtra for the duration of the 18th century and is characterized by using its energetic rhythm, sensual dance movements, and evocative lyrics, often addressing subject matters of affection, longing, and social problems. The time period "Lavani" is derived from the word "lavanya," this means that splendor, and the songs are generally set to a fast-paced rhythm referred to as "Dholki" or "Taal."

Historically, Lavani performances have been an integral part of folk theater and were performed by way of girls referred to as "Lavani dancers" or "Tamasha dancers." They done at social gatherings, festivals, and gala's, and Lavani songs have been regularly used to talk numerous feelings, from flirtation to social remark.

Impact of Lavani in South India

Even as Lavani itself is rooted in Maharashtra, its influence started out spreading to South India due to the cultural interactions between areas, mainly within the coastal areas and trading facilities where Marathi-speake people had huge touch with South Indian communities. A few vital elements contributing to the spread and evolution of Lavani in South India encompass:

1. **Cultural change:** The Marathas, who had a effective presence within the Deccan plateau (which includes components of contemporary-day South India), contributed to the cultural diffusion among Maharashtra and neighboring states. Lavani performances commenced to resonate in locations like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana, wherein factors of Marathi people traditions blended with neighborhood performance arts.
2. **Impact in Cinema:** inside the twentieth century, the recognition of Indian cinema, specially Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada movies, saw a tremendous incorporation of folk songs and dances. The have an impact on of Lavani may be seen in a number of the conventional dance forms in South Indian cinema, in particular inside the way women's roles had been portrayed in songs and dances that included comparable issues of romance and societal norms.
3. **People Traditions and Dance forms:** South Indian folk dances which includes "Koli," "Garba," and "Banjara" have a few structural similarities to Lavani, especially in terms of rhythmic footwork and lively, expressive moves. Over time, elements of Lavani had been absorbed into those traditions, even though they retained their distinct neighborhood forms.
4. **Integration in famous tune and Dance:** In contemporary South Indian movie industries, inclusive of in Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada cinema, the impact of Lavani is obvious in certain conventional dance performances and the use of comparable song genres. The rhythms and motion style have been adapted and popularized in film sequences, particularly in tune and dance numbers.
5. **Shared subject matters:** The subject matters explored in Lavani — love, social commentary, desire, and often a playful or funny remedy of relationships — also are time-honored in South Indian folks traditions. Those thematic similarities made it easier for the style to combine into regional practices, specifically in theatrical performances and festive settings.

The Role of Maratha Kings in Improvement of Lavani

1. **Cultural Patronage:** The Maratha rulers, mainly Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (1630–1680) and his successors, were customers of arts and culture. While Shivaji is extra famously recognised for his army prowess and management, he also diagnosed the significance of fostering cultural and artistic traditions. His court had poets, musicians, and artists who contributed to the development of Marathi literature, folk song, and dance. The flourishing of Marathi folks subculture at some stage in his reign supplied a fertile floor for the growth of bureaucracy like Lavani, which emerged as an expression of popular folks culture, often reflecting the social and cultural ethos of the time.

2. **Tamasha and Lavani:** The "Tamasha" become a famous shape of entertainment within the Maratha courtroom, which was a blend of song, dance, and drama. Lavani became often performed as a part of Tamasha performances. These performances were active, lively, and had issues starting from romantic love to satire and social remark. The Tamasha became a key medium thru which Lavani songs were finished, and the Maratha kings could were familiar with those performances at their courts.

Although Shivaji himself did now not at once patronize Lavani, the cultural ecosystem throughout his reign allowed for the boom of such people bureaucracy. Later, beneath the rule of the Peshwas (specially Bajji Rao I and his successors within the 18th century), Tamasha became more formalized, and Lavani performances

have been famous inside the courts and at royal gatherings. The Maratha elite were uncovered to those paperwork, which also started out to influence famous amusement.

3. Lavani as Social commentary: Lavani songs frequently expressed the feelings and studies of girls in society, in particular regarding themes like love, longing, and social norms. Within the context of the Maratha Empire, Lavani regularly carried diffused political undertones or social critique, addressing troubles of the time along with magnificence structures, royal politics, or even the valorization of the Maratha warrior ethos. Given the strong presence of women performers in those arts, Lavani additionally have become a platform for the expression of women's voices, which might now not have gone ignored by the Maratha rulers who were touchy to public sentiment.

4. Peshwa technology and the rise of Lavani: underneath the Peshwas (the high ministers who dominated on behalf of the Chhatrapatis within the 18th century), the cultural patronage of the Marathas increased similarly. The Peshwas have been splendid supporters of arts, and underneath their reign, Lavani as a form of folks music and dance reached new heights. Lavani performers gained extra prominence, and the Peshwas often hosted grand cultural activities wherein Lavani became finished alongside different traditional styles of dance and music. The Peshwa duration became marked by the centrality of the Tamasha and Lavani performances in social and cultural gatherings.

Lavanis position in Maratha Identity

Lavani, as a popular cultural expression, reflected the spirit of the Maratha human beings—proud, lively, and ready to celebrate life regardless of challenges. Whilst the Maratha kings themselves may not have directly supported or created Lavani, the cultural environment they fostered turned into key to the artwork form's popularity. The association of Lavani with Maratha identification grew inside the seventeenth and 18th centuries, and by the time of the Peshwas, Lavani had become a symbol of nearby satisfaction.

While the Maratha kings and rulers did not at once create or in particular patronize Lavani, their support for arts, tradition, and people traditions helped set the stage for Lavani's development. The royal courts, especially throughout the Peshwa length, played a enormous role in the cultural milieu that nurtured folk performances like Lavani. Over time, Lavani have become now not best a form of enjoyment however also a essential part of Marathi cultural historical past, intertwined with the socio-political material of the Maratha Empire.

Kalgi Tura Lavani is a famous Marathi Lavani folk tune, showcasing the active and rhythmic musical fashion of Maharashtra, India. Traditionally accomplished through Lavani artists, this track blends Marathi people song with effective, expressive lyrics that regularly delve into social topics, romance, and the beauty of rural existence.

Lavani's modern-day position

Nowadays, even as the classical Lavani shape is in particular preserved in Maharashtra, its legacy can nevertheless be seen in some of the people performances in South India. The upward push of pan-Indian cinema has similarly fused exclusive local styles, and Lavani-inspired songs and dances once in a while floor in South Indian films, specifically in contemporary mass enjoyment contexts.

In conclusion, while Marathi Lavani keeps its distinct identity in Maharashtra, its impact has unfold throughout South India, specially via cultural interactions, film, and the shared appreciation for people music and dance.

The Maratha kings, specifically at some stage in the seventeenth and 18th centuries, played a critical role within the patronage and merchandising of Marathi tradition, inclusive of various styles of art, dance, and music. Lavani, as a shape of folks track and dance, emerged at some point of this era and became an important part of the cultural panorama of Maharashtra. The Maratha kings, especially the Chhatrapatis of the Bhonsle dynasty, contributed drastically to the improvement and popularization of Lavani. However, the relationship among Lavani and the Maratha kings is more about the social context, patronage, and cultural have an effect on in place of direct involvement inside the art shape itself.

Heritage of Lavani

Lavani is a style of folks music and dance, widely recognized for its powerful rhythms and sensuality. Originating in Maharashtra, it combines conventional Marathi beats with swish, dramatic expressions. The songs are characterized by using rapid, elaborate footwork, passionate gestures, and the fundamental sari draping style referred to as "nauvari" or nine-backyard sari.

"Kalgi" and "Tura" are traditional head ornaments worn via men, frequently through Maharashtrian warriors in historical instances, representing honor and valor. Inside the Lavani track, those symbols are used metaphorically, frequently to focus on themes of pride, bravery, and romantic love.

The tune "Kalgī Tura Lavani" is famous during festivals, cultural events, and in particular in Maharashtra's conventional "Tamasha" performances.

Examples of Lavani from Thanjavur Marathi Lavani Songs which shows different themes of Lavani-

1. *paḍa paḍa paḍato pāvusa gaḍade aṇḍāri rāta*
Kenvhā jāīna sajanācyā mhālā kaśi rāhu yethe.... Nature seasons
2. *sāsurācī jācaṇī soṣenā sakhayā malā*
calā mājhyā māherlā..... Inlaws torture
3. *Ramayana Lāvaṇī- ramayana tails are explained in this composition*
4. *Lāvaṇīs glorifying great saints and the deity.*
5. *Ādi pāsuni aṇḍa raḥanā- Explains about science behind birth*
6. *Ādi māye praṇavākaārī- Devotional*
- 7.
8. *Kaṭu kaiśi mī rāta- Deception from lover*

Lavani is a dynamic and expressive folk artwork shape from Maharashtra, deeply woven into the place's cultural heritage. Recognized for its compelling storytelling and evocative performances, Lavani covers a wide range of issues:

1. Love and Romance

Love, each fulfilled and unrequited, is one of the most outstanding issues in Lavani. The lyrics regularly explore the pleasure, playfulness, and longing related to romantic love. The performances capture feelings from flirtation and ardour to heartache, making them deeply relatable and attractive.

2. Ladies's perspectives and Empowerment

Lavani presents a platform for women to voice their feelings, dreams, and frustrations. It often addresses issues of female empowerment, independence, and resilience, giving insight into girls's social roles and struggles in a patriarchal society.

3. Social commentary

Lavani regularly addresses social troubles, the usage of satire to highlight political, financial, and social demanding situations faced through regular human beings. Via humor and wit, those performances critique injustices, making Lavani an art form that is each interesting and notion-frightening.

4. Eroticism and Sensuality

Regarded for its bold expressions and flirtatious moves, Lavani openly celebrates sensuality, which changed into groundbreaking in its time. This element of Lavani has lengthy been each praised and critiqued, but it stays important to the form, emphasizing topics of preference and splendor.

5. Folks and Cultural Traditions

Lavani songs often pay homage to Maharashtra's people way of life, traditions, gala's, and deities. Performers sing of nearby customs, rural lifestyles, and non secular beliefs, maintaining and celebrating the cultural identification of the vicinity.

6. Heroism and Valor

Many Lavani songs recount stories of bravery, heroism, and historical activities, celebrating legendary figures, warriors, and resistance to oppression. Subject matters of honor, sacrifice, and pleasure in a single's historical past are not unusual in those performances.

7. Elegance and Caste Dynamics

Lavani sometimes explores the realities of caste and sophistication in Maharashtra. Via giving voice to marginalized groups, the artwork form highlights the social struggles and aspirations of those organizations, aiming to bring cognizance to their plight.

Conclusion

Lavani's issues seize the total spectrum of human feelings, making it a effective medium for storytelling this is at once wonderful and socially relevant. The Maratha rulers in Thanjavur (1674–1855) had been instrumental in nurturing Marathi culture, language, and artwork paperwork in the southern state, resulting in a completely unique blend of Marathi and South Indian influences in classical track. Lavani compositions often deal with love, passion, social issues, medicine practices, nature, politics making it a strong commentary on society.

As it highlights lives of women, including their desires, pain, resilience. It also challenges patriarchal norms by giving a platform to female voices often in a proactive way.

Hence, Lavani remains an important cultural expression of the working class, showing how art serves as a mirror to society and medium of social commentary. Hence, Lavani is a vivid portrayal of social realities, celebrating both aesthetics of performances and depth of every day experiences.

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