

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON PUPPETEERS OF
SELECT STATES OF INDIA
TO
COMPETE AND SURVIVE IN THE COMPETITIVE WORLD**

**A
FINAL RESEARCH REPORT
SUBMITTED TO
NEZCC, DIMAPUR
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, INDIA
FOR
TAGORE NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR CULTURAL
RESEARCH (TNFCR) FOR 2017-18**



Submitted by

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D.O No. NEZCC/DOC-14/2017-09/dated 3rd April'2019

Letter No: F-1-TNFCR/2015 dated 13th December'2018



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Shri Jitul Sonowal
Director, NEZCC

D.O.No. NEZCC/DOC-14/2018-09/
Dated April . 2019

Dear Binita Devi,

I am happy to inform you that the Ministry of Culture vide their letter No.F-1-TNFCR/2015 dated 13th December, 2018 have accepted the recommendation of NEZCC and has approved to appoint you for the **National Tagore Scholarship for the year 2017 – 2018**.

In this regard, you are requested to submit your joining report to the North East Zone Cultural Centre (NEZCC), to start the **Tagore National Scholarship for 2017 – 2018** for a period of 2 (two) years within April, 2019. The detailed particulars and terms & conditions are enclosed herewith for kind information.

Yours sincerely,

(Jitul Sonowal)

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DECLARATION

I, Ms. Binita Devi, solemnly declare here that the final research report entitled “A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON PUPPETEERS OF SELECT STATES OF INDIA TO COMPETE AND SURVIVE IN THE COMPETITIVE WORLD” submitted to North East Zone Cultural Centre, Ministry of Culture, Government of India for Tagore National Scholarship for Cultural Research (TNFCR) for 2017-18 is the original record of the studies and research carried out by me. It has not been submitted to any other university or institution other than the North East Zone Cultural Centre, Ministry of Culture, Government of India for the award of any scholarship, fellowship, degree, diploma, titles or recognition.



(Binita Devi)

Date: 02/04/2021

Place: Guwahati

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I beg apology for any unwanted mistake I committed in the final research report.

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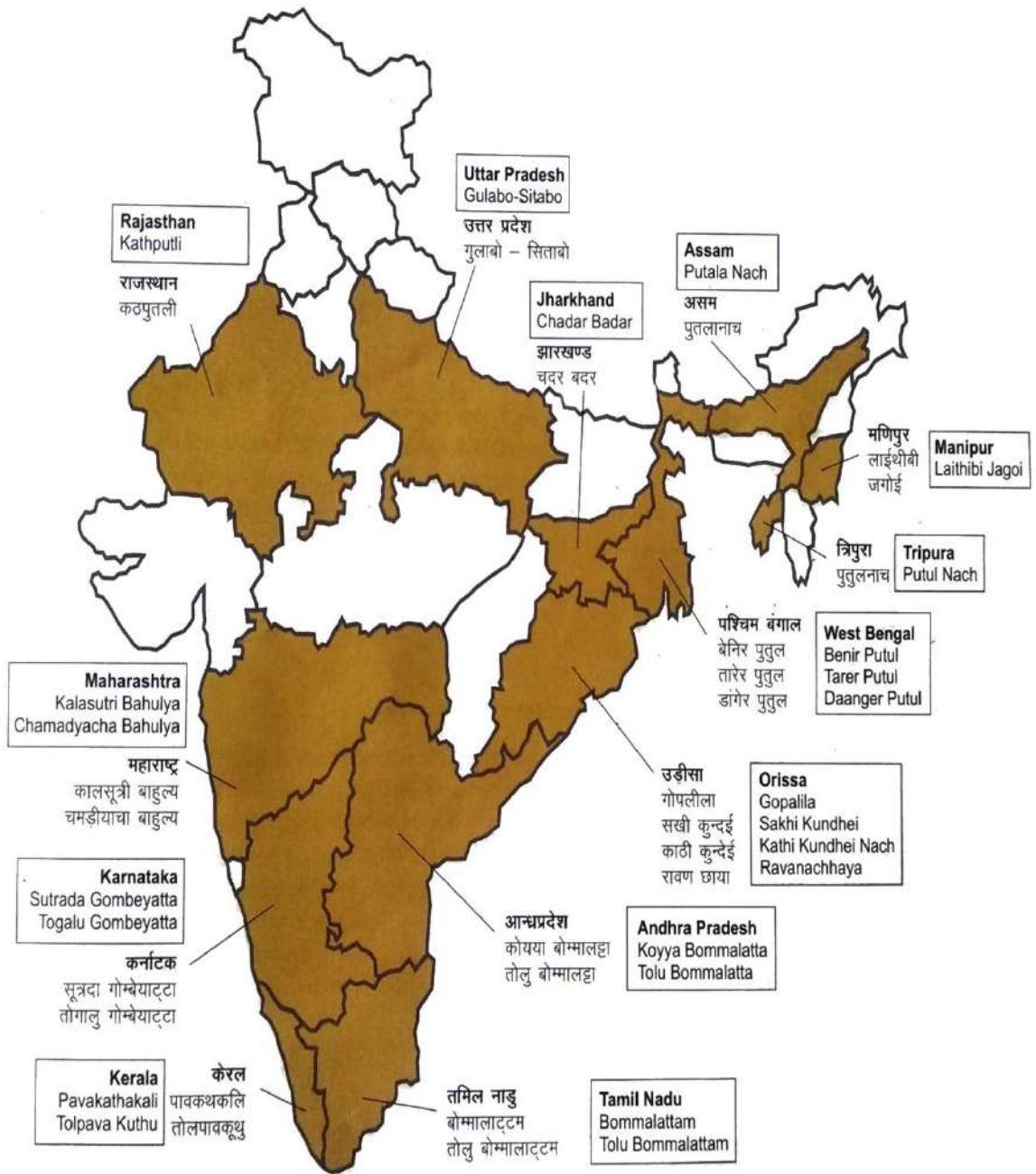
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MAP OF INDIA

*As per the book “Putul Yatra” 2011 of Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, puppetry exists only in 13 states of India

INTRODUCTION

India is a country in South Asia which borders have included many kingdoms and ethnic groups over the ages. Different parts of the country were ruled by different rulers and had their own culture. India is notable for its multi- cultured, multi- language, multi- ethnic groups and multi- religion. Each state has its own cultural identity. Indian cultural history spans more than 4,500years. During the Vedic period around 1700BCE-500BCE, the foundations of Hindu philosophy, mythology, theology and literature were laid, and many beliefs and practices which still exist today.

India has a rich tradition of folklore. RM. Dorson divided Folklore and Folklife into four categories:

1. Oral literature
2. Material Culture
3. Social folk custom
4. Folk Performing art

Folk performing art is divided into another three categories:

1. Folk Song
2. Folk Dance
3. Folk Drama

These traditional and folk-art forms are rooted to the rural Indian culture and society. And one of the influential traditional art forms is include puppetry. Puppetry provide a remarkable contribution towards the spread of moral and religious education from its time immemorial. It is notable that the roots of puppetry have been holding by the rural folk since its inception. It is calling a complete art because it need dance, drama, sculpture, painting, swing, narratives and last but not list the art of presentation. Combination of all these make puppet a successful art.

Indian puppetry has a very long history in the arena of performing arts. The puppets of India are famous all over the world for its many types, unique designs and superb manipulation skills that they have procured from their ancestors.

In India, four basic types of puppets are found. They are:

1. String Puppet
2. Glove Puppet
3. Rod Puppet
4. Shadow puppet

The string puppet tradition is prevalent in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur, Tripura, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and west Bengal.

Glove puppet are found in Kerala, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Rod puppet tradition are found in Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal

Shadow puppet are found in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha and Tamil Nadu.

Aims and objective of the research:

1. To study the present status of puppetry and people involved in puppetry.
2. To study different techniques of presentation of puppetry.
3. To make a comparative study of puppetry tradition of northeast with puppet tradition of other select states of India.
4. To study the change and continuity in puppetry.
5. To find out the solution of problems face by the puppeteers.

Universe of study:

As per the book “Putul Yatra” 2011 of Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, puppetry exists only in 13 states of India as mentioned below:

Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

The universe of the study will comprise of the puppets of bellow mention 8 states out of aforesaid 13 states.

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1. Assam | 5. Rajasthan |
| 2. Jharkhand | 6. Tripura |
| 3. Manipur | 7. Uttar Pradesh |
| 4. Odisha | 8. West Bengal |

Significance of the study:

Puppetry is a very ancient art form of India. This folk art is not come suddenly into today's phase. With the progression of time there are lots of changes are seen in different direction of society like social, economic, political, psychological, environmental etc. These different types of social changes have changed our cultural landscape a lot. Change is a new form of evolution, without change our society will not be able to progress. The gradual change in society has given us the opportunity to seek light from darkness. As a result, human beings have moved towards civilization. To appropriate with present science and technology, new generation puppeteer also bringing some noticeable technical changes to their shows for attracting audience. This is the result of a change in the psychological and emotional state of man. Tradition is a dynamic process so there is alteration, progression and augmentation. Puppetry has not only become a means of entertainment in recent times, it has also become a mirror of reality, a means of applying personal techniques and a means of applying technical techniques. Some young artiste devoting their self through puppetry to bring innovative strategic staging of puppetry for attracting new generation. There are few states in India where puppetry has kept its dignity intact in the recent age of technology and the hereditary puppet shows in North-eastern region of India is almost non-existent. This study seeks to revive the puppetry of northeast through the promotion and dissemination of the art by analysing the cause of the gap between the puppetry of northeast with the other selected states of India. There have been some studies on puppetry in the north-eastern of India, although there has been no comparative study of puppetry in other states with puppetry in the north east. I have chosen this topic by comparing the field of puppetry of other states of India with the north-eastern part of India to find out the problems facing by the art of puppetry in north east and find out its solution. Through the research I would like to contribute in reviving the glory of the art of puppetry in north eastern region which will be useful for further researcher and also for the puppeteer of new generation.

Review of the Literature:

Although India has a rich tradition of puppetry, the availability of literature on puppetry is limited. There are only few books on puppetry of India. But there is no adequate information in written form on puppetry of Northeast region.

The most significant book on puppetry of India is 'Indians Puppets' 2006, written by Sampa Ghosh and Utpal K. Banerjee. This book includes history of puppetry in India, categories of puppets, multiple purposes of puppetry, craft of puppetry and script, voice and music in puppetry. In this book writers also explain that puppeteer of new generation are bringing some changes to their shows for attracting audience. This book helped me in different phases of my research.

'Puppet Theatre Around the World' 1960 contained many articles on puppetry like- former director of the Lok Kala Mandal, Udaipur writes about the puppets and puppeteers of Rajasthan. In this book G. C. Tej discuss about the puppet theatre of Orissa, different types of puppets practice in Orissa and about the stage. Due to the lack of proper patronage, puppet groups have had to transfer from their ancestral profession to other professions, such as agriculture, carpentry and smithy work to earn their livelihood.

The most important book on puppetry of Assam is 'Puppetry in Assam Past and Present' (1999), written by Dr. Birendranath Datta. This book includes history of puppetry in Assam, presentation style of puppetry, belief description of present condition of puppeteer and problems facing by the puppeteer. According to him, puppet shows were once a very popular entertainment and communication medium in rural Assam. But it lost its charm among people with the advent of new media of entertainment such as television, cinema and mobile theatres.

'Puppet Dance in India Origin & Evolution' written by Nisith Chakraborty. This book includes definition of puppetry, its history origin and evolution of Indian puppets.

Dr. Suresh Awasthi, a noted scholar of folk and traditional theatre of India has included a chapter namely 'Puppets and Puppets Performances' in his book 'Performance Tradition in India' (2001). This chapter is a comprehensive account of various forms of puppets practised in different corners of India. This chapter goes on to discuss the rise and fall of puppets down to the multi-faceted progress of the modern theatre after independence. According to him puppetry tradition has declined in India and many of them are in the point of extinction. In some states like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh thousands of puppets have been sold to tourists, museums and research workers, and in both these states, thousands of puppeteers have given up performing and employed themselves in other profession. Old puppeteers are dying and younger members in the

family are taking more lucrative professions. According to him television can play a vital role in popularizing puppetry. But in India it has not shown interest in using puppetry both for educational and entertainment programme. In connection to this Dr. Awasthi says the several European countries are exploiting full potential of puppetry for educational and entertainment programme.

In the book 'The Bihar Theatre' 1960, Dr. Ramcharan Mahendra written an article about the puppetry of Rajasthan, the folk belief about the origin of puppetry and about the royal flavour in the theme of puppet shows.

Besides that, articles of magazines, research journal etc. were very useful source of literature on the art of puppetry. The internet was also most important source of data about history of puppetry.

Methods of research:

The research work is based on extensive field study. I have visited almost all the possible places of India from where I could collect data about puppetry. Visiting of those places helped to know the history, evaluate present status, potentiality problems and prospects of puppetry. I have used both secondary and primary data. For primary data, observation methods were used along with interview method and also create online zoom meetings. I have collected secondary data from various books, scholarly articles, journals, magazines, newspapers and internet. Interview of puppeteers were taken to know present status of puppeteer, changing trend in puppetry, puppet making and manipulation techniques.

I took relevant photographs with due permission of the performers. I used tape recorder and video recorder whenever I felt it necessary. Internet was one of the very important sources of information and I have used some photographs of puppet from the internet. I have visited different libraries for data collection. Library of Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi; library of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi; library of Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Delhi; library of Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra, Guwahati; Krishna Kanta Handique library of Gauhati University are notable among them.

CHAPTER-I

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUPPETS

The art of puppetry is claimed as the most ancient performing art. Indian puppets have been influenced by many factors, mainly religious, political and social. India is a land of immense diversity. Various traditions, rituals, geographic and climatic conditions, lifestyles and cultures have given birth to numerous styles and designs. It has gradually evolved with the evolution of the civilization.

It is incredible how ancient practices and traditions in Indian art have continued since time immemorial. The history of India is a story of unbroken traditions that have continued for over 5,000 years. For centuries, Indian puppets have been famous for their aesthetic and functional value. There are references to different kinds of puppets in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Buddhist work called Therigatha and stories behind the origin of puppetry.

Before discussing the history of puppetry, let's look for some definition and meaning of the puppet. The English word puppet is derived from the Latin word 'pupa' which means a doll. The Sanskrit word Puttalika is equivalent to the English term puppet.

According to Webster's New School and Office Dictionary, puppet is "a small doll or image, especially one moved by wires in a mock- drama – under the influence and control of another."

David Currell in his book An Introduction to Puppets and Puppet-making wrote, "A puppet is not an actor and a puppet theatre is not human theatre in miniature, because while an actor represents, a puppet is, it brings to the performance the essence of the character and no more; it has no identity outside its performance, so brings no other associations to the stage. It is this quality of the puppet and the power with which it conveys character and emotion that have attracted the attention of such artists as Edward Gordon Craig, Jean-Baptiste Moliere, Jean Cocteau, Paul Klee and George Bernard Shaw."

Margareta Niculescu the directress of UNIMA Centre in France, called puppet "a plastic picture endowed with the ability of acting and presenting somebody."

A perceptive definition comes from Helen Binyon in her work *Puppetry Today*: “Puppet is man-made actor, inanimate object to which human beings have found a means of giving an appearance of life.”

The most famous puppeteer of the erstwhile Soviet Union and director of the State Central Puppet Theatre, Moscow, Sergei Obraztsov said, “Puppetry is theatre of representation.”

Man must have created a puppet with animation long ago. Since puppet-like masks and cave-paintings formed part of the magical rituals of ancient men living in caves, an urge to create his likeness or caricature and to give it movement might have been a compelling factor for the creation of a puppet. In his book *The Art of the Puppet*, the noted American puppeteer Bill Baird said, “Masks, particularly hinged and jointed, like the Shaman’s, are just an evolutionary step or two away from the puppet. When a single masked dancer began to appear as a performer before the rest of his group, it was the beginning of theatrical performance and a stepping-off place for the mask to become a puppet.”

The well-known economist and philosopher Amartya Sen once drew our attention to India’s extraordinarily large historical literature on such subjects as arithmetic, algebra, geometry, linguistics, phonetics, astronomy and so on, not to mention liberated analyses of sexual pleasures, extensive discussions of games and puzzles, and big volumes of fables and conundrums. The latter were elaborated by the European scholar Richard Pischel in his book *The Home of the Puppet Play*, stating that “The birth place of fairy tales has long been recognised to be India. They wandered from India to Persia and then the Arabs brought them to Europe. The puppet player Potheinos was so much sought after in Athens that the Archons gave up to him the very stage on which the dramas of Euripides had excited the enthusiasm of the populace. Countries like France in the time of Moliere and Beaumarchais, England under Shakespeare and Sheridan, Germany in the days of Goethe and Schiller had numerous attended marionette shows which at times proved formidable rivals to the theatrical companies.”

Puppets in ancient India:

According to historians, puppets are as old as human civilisation. Man is a worship of beauty. This beauty is created from our creative mind. From time immemorial, human civilization has created architectural art, craft, performing art through natural techniques in search of beauty. These arts, created in search of aesthetics, provide entertainment and moral education as well as bind us with the bond of unity. Puppetry is very ancient among the arts created in search of aesthetics. The dolls, which the ancient men created out of their natural skill and produced objects, symbols and images inherent in magic and rituals, have still survived. Dating back to 2500 BC, the ancient civilisation of Harappa and Mohenjodaro, spread over thousands of kilometres, left for us a variety of archaeological relics which included a terracotta bull which a detachable head that could be manipulated by a string. Another figure found is a terracotta monkey that slides up and down a stick: creating a vertical movement. It indicates that puppetry has a long tradition in India.

There are many legends prevalent about the origin of puppetry. According to a legend, the origin of puppetry is attributed to Brahma. It is said that for the entertainment of his wife Saraswati, Brahma created and gave life to the Adi, the first Nat puppeteer. He then created another figure for the Nat to manipulate and thereby entertain the Goddess. However, Brahma was not very pleased with the effort and he therefore, banished the puppeteer to earth and hence was the birth of the first Bhat. It is conjectured that this legend might have originated in Rajasthan since the Nat Bhat are the puppeteers belonging to the region. The earliest reference of the art of puppetry and shadow theatre in India is in the Mahabharata, which reached written form around the 4th century BCE though oral stories themselves date to the 9th century BCE. When the princess Uttara and her friends entreated Arjuna to bring back the fine, gaily coloured, delicate and soft garments for their dolls, the allusion was to puppets. The Mahabharata has a large number of verses: about wooden dolls, manipulated by the hands of the puppeteer, which compare to the control of people by the gods and their fate. In a chapter of Mahabharata, Draupadi asks Yudhishtira a question- 'just as the Sutradhar creates the Darumayi Nari and connects the organs there, so does God create the whole of life and motivate them.'

The best reference is probably from the Gita where the three qualities of the Sattah, Rajah and Tamah, found in men, are compared to three strings pulled by the Divinity, to lead men in life. There is also a mention of puppetry in early Buddhist texts. The two epics, Buddhist text and early works like Kamsutra and Arthsashtra are full of terms denoting their puppets, and there are metaphorical references to puppets.

Panini, the Sanskrit grammarian of 4th century BCE, and later Patanjali of 2nd century BCE, the author of Yogasutra, mentioned puppets to illustrate the rules of grammar. Tiruvalluvar, the Tamil poet of 2nd century BCE, who wrote: “the movements of a man who has not a sensitive conscience are like the simulation of life by marionettes moved by strings.” Dramatist Kalidasa in his Sanskrit play Abhijnanam Shakuntalam gave a few dramatic instructions, apparently drawn from puppet show: for entry of the king on his chariot chasing deer or for use of the sky-route by the king and his charioteer. The famous dramatist around 10th century Rajashekhara in his play ‘Balaramayana’ mention two wooden dolls representing the epic characters Sita and her stepsister Sundarika. The well-known story of Ravana’s love-talk to Sita, prior to her abduction, was invented in the play where the puppet dolls were made to speak and carry-on dialogue with Ravana. There are references of the existence of puppetry in Jumbudweep in the rock inscriptions of Ashoka era. Jambudweep was the ancient name of India. These are the evidences which says that puppetry has a deep root in Indian culture and society.

Folk belief of the origin of puppets:

In the initial period, puppetry had close intimacy with religion rather than entertainment. The connection of puppetry with religion is supported by numerous writings of researchers and scholars of world. Gradually the art of puppetry came out from the periphery of religious rites as it began to enchant people with its superb manipulative skills and made its place among the performing arts. One of the main views propounded by Indian scholars regarding the origin of puppets is that effigies and idols were first created as symbols of ancestors and deities and later they took the form of moving puppets. The eagles also each Hindu family has its own deities, which are enshrined in the form of idols and other symbols. In primitive tribes, pillars made of

stone or wood are set up for each dead person. They are chiselled into human figures and are worshiped on special occasions. Various small stone idols are also installed around the idol of the presiding deity of each Bhil family who are called ancestors and are worshiped as the family deity.

Established in the memory of ancestors and respected people, these idols were associated with thousands of songs, dances, theatrics, festivals and at one time it also came that they were taken in procession from one place to another. They were decorated with clothes and various dance songs were sponsored around them. These idols and effigies were considered to fulfil many wishes of human beings by joining them with the beliefs on human prestige and over time they were also operated by humans in an archetypal manner.

There was a time when the belief and religious rituals associated with these idols and effigies were weakened and they remained only a means of entertainment. The people of Rajasthani effigies also consider their effigies to be symbol of some kind of divine power. They worship these effigies made by their ancestors. They do not destroy the clothes grown on them, put new clothes on them and when they are not fully functional, immerse them in water with due ceremony. Similarly, the shadow puppeteer considers their puppets to be a symbol of some divine power and they do not see puppet the light of the sun. Every day before the performance, they take of their Arati. The puppets of Orisha, Assam and are also associated with the temples and ritual ceremonies.

The tradition of singing, dancing and performing character stories through puppets of the departed venerables, rather than being presented by human beings, has been prevalent in almost all countries. In India, these puppets have been considered as the mother of Indian drama due to this characterization. These traditional puppets have come out of their religious themes and have not fully absorbed the purely recreational elements even today. Many traditional puppeteers do not adopt any other story apart from religious stories. The puppeteers of Orisha are only performed the stories of Krishna. Even the Rajasthani puppeteers who capture the most entertaining elements do not accept any new subject by abandoning their traditional puppet play Amar Sing Rathor.

All these traditional puppets, may not have appeared from purely educational point of view, yet they are providing valuable contribution to the Indian public in

remaining their patrons and establishing the ideals propounded by them. Their effectiveness is much more than human drama. These puppets have been very successful in entertaining the audience at some point of time.

Puppets in abroad:

The tradition of puppetry is prevalent in almost all the countries of the world. Besides India, Asian countries like Japan, China, Vietnam, Afganistan, Korea, Java, Thailand and Iran also have the tradition of puppetry. There is no fixed evidence of the origin of puppetry. However, scholars of India claim that string puppet was born in India and from here it migrated to Indonesia and Japan. European scholar Richard Pischel in his book 'The Home of the puppet play (1902)', stating that "..... It is not improbable that the puppet play is in really everywhere the most ancient form of dramatic representation. Without doubt, this is the case in India, and there, too, we must look for its home." David Currell in his book 'An Introduction to Puppets and Puppet-making' mentioned that "Much of the early history of puppet theatre is conjecture, but its origins are thought to lie mainly in the East Later it flourished in the early Mediterranean civilizations, toured Europe with wandering showmen in the Middle Ages and was used in churches to portray the scriptures." In view of the above, it can be inferred that puppetry has spread from India to other parts of the world.

According to Rene Simmen, primitive people in Africa and Australia even today use moving figurines in religious observance. Among different evidences about the long history of puppetry, the most popular evidence is ancient Egyptian practice of displaying moving figures of the Gods in holly processions. Even some Scandinavian large figurines were moved by hand- with the movements later achieved mechanically. These mechanisms were activated by the weight of water, sand or mercury. From Herodotus (484-425 BC), we come to know that during the Osiris festivals, the women priests carried string manipulated images of the dog-faced god Anubis with moving arms. The God Manducus, who was believed to eat children, was carried in Roman processions as represented by a statue, which had a mouth that could be opened and closed. The Christian Church of Constantinople in the Middle Ages used this illusory method to help their priests. As early as the 7th century, figurines representing Christ, the Virgin Mary,

and saints, who could be moved by strings, must have been quite common. Korean literature reveals that puppets came first in God's image and, later on, for ancestral worship. Even later, almost after a millennium, puppets came to be used in Yeondung and Palkwan festivals during Buddha's birthday and opening of new shrines. There is a legend that, around the time of Christ's birth, the kingdom of Silla used animated wooden lions, to scare the inhabitants of Wusan Island into submission.

Scholars claim that the word marionette came from the little figures of the Virgin Mary. Due to the entry of comedy into marionette performance of church, banned was imposed on marionette. As a result, puppeteer began to perform puppetry outside cathedrals and become more popular

The Roman string puppet and glove puppets are known to be as old as 400 BC. After the fall of Roman Empire in the 5th century AD, the puppeteers were banished from the countries. They played in Europe and the Mediterranean region throughout the dark ages- reviving again as rivals of the theatre, around the 13th century.

China is called the birthplace of shadow puppet. There is reference of existence of shadow puppetry since ancient time in China. But it is difficult to trace the origin of puppetry in China as the Chinese language has used the same phrase 'Kuei lei hsi' to mean both puppet and mask. It is said that Yang Shih was the first puppeteer in the court of the Chu Emperor Mu-Wang around 10th century BC. In China, a land full of thousands of puppeteers exhibiting shows of string, glove, rod and shadow puppets, there are stories galore. During Song period, puppetry was very popular in China. There was patronage of Song dynasty to puppet. Puppet groups were often invited in royal palace. Puppetry was also very popular during Yuan Dynasty and Ming Dynasty. Puppet was finally made to portrayed characters feelings of happiness, sorrowness, anger etc. Fujian province was the main centre of puppet tradition.

It is believing that puppetry of Korea and Japan were came from China. The Korean traditional puppet 'Kkoktu' came from a Chinese word for doll 'Kuotou' and belong to the genre of puppet plays, Kuotou of China, from the Han period pertaining to the first three centuries AD.

Japanese puppets are older than 1000 years and probably came there from China and Korea. However, scholars of India claim that string puppet was born in India and

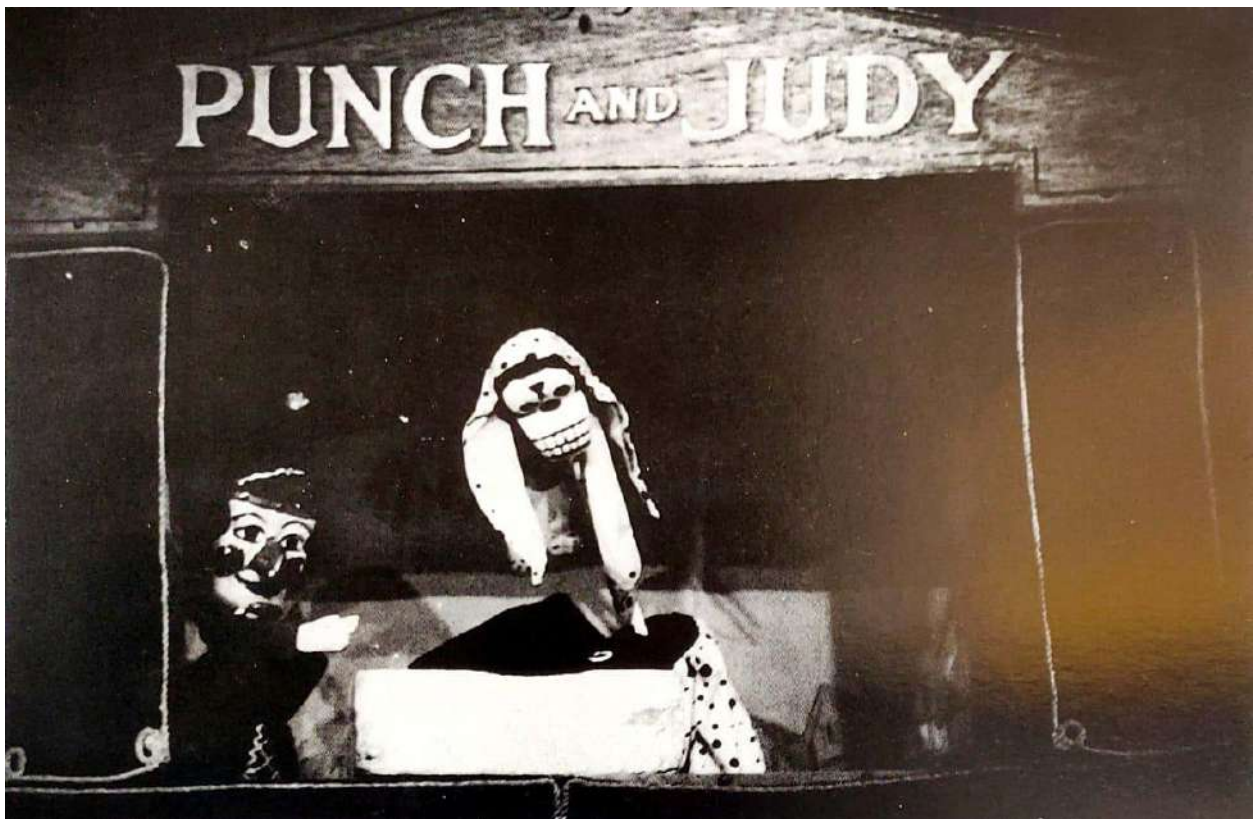
from here it migrated to Indonesia and Japan. Bunraku is one of the very attractive form of puppetry practicing in Japan. Bunraku was originated in temple of 'Shinto'. However very soon it broke its boundary of religion and came to outside of temple as a popular and aristocrat puppet performance. The puppets are 3 or 4 feet in height. Manipulated by rod and trigger. Three puppeteer is needed to manipulate a puppet. It is important to have a great understanding between the three puppeteers while manipulating the puppet. The chief puppeteer control head and one hand. His one helper control shoulder and another hand second foot of the puppet. While performing puppeteers wear black dress called Kimons.

European countries have ancient tradition of string puppets. Since the Renaissance it has had an unbroken tradition of Europe, from where, in the nineteenth century, emigrants took their national traditions to America and established the foundations for today's great variety of styles. In Europe, puppetry is recognizing as very effective medium of communication. Particularly in rural Europe, puppets are used as tool of Education for the illiterate people. Stories of Bible was described through puppet. Initially puppets were used in Church for various purposes. Till 17th century puppets were used in church. However, puppetry was banned due to its contact with secular themes. In 18th and 19th century puppetry was so popular in Europe that, puppeteer started permanent theatre and performance of Puppet operas. In England also puppetry was very popular performing art. Folk tales and popular Old Testament stories were performed by puppetry. Punch and Judy are two very popular character of Glove puppetry of England. These two characters influenced by Pulcinella of Italy. Influencing by popularity of Punch and Judy, puppeteers of other European countries also created their own characters which became very popular. Like, 'Guignol' in Franch, 'Petrushka' in Russia and 'Kasperl and Hanswurst' in Germany.

Puppetry is popular art form and occupying important place in the history of culture of the world. However, the origin of puppetry is not free from controversy.



Terracotta bull with detachable head. Mohenjodaro, Pakistan



Punch Show: England.

CHAPTER-II

PUPPETS OF NORTHEASTERN REGION

INTRODUCTION:

Northeastern Region is located in the easternmost region of India. Topographically, the northeastern region of India lies in an extension of the sub-Himalayan zone- consisting of lofty mountainous terrains and river- fed valleys. These north East Indian states include Sikkim and the Seven Sister states of India which are Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura and Nagaland.

From the Geographical and Administrative point of view, it occupies a great significant position. It serves as a narrow corridor through which cultural elements are spread into the Indian Sub-Continent at different time.

Since very early times of North-East has been the home of the Kiratas or Indo-Mongoloids. Although Austric and Dravidian sub- strata have been discerned by scholars in the racial and cultural make-up of the region and although waves of Aryan culture have swept over parts of the region- particularly the valley in Assam, Manipur and Tripura –the predominance of the Indo – Mongoloid racial and cultural features is much too obvious.

North-East is multi-lingual, multi-culture, multi – religious and multi ethnic groups. North-East has a rich tradition of folk performing arts including folk drama, folk dance, folk music these rich traditions are still being preserved and hand over generation after generation. RM. Dorson divided Folklore and Folklife into four categories:

1. Oral literature
2. Material Culture
3. Social folk custom
4. Folk Performing art

Folk performing art is divided into another three categories:

1. Folk Song
2. Folk Dance
3. Folk Drama

And one of the influential folk drama is include puppetry. Puppetry provide a remarkable contribution towards the spread of moral and religious education from its time immemorial. It is notable that the roots of puppetry have been holding by the rural folk since its inception. It is calling a complete art because it need dance, drama, sculpture, painting, swing, narratives and last but not list the art of presentation. Combination of all these make puppet a successful art.

In North-East region of India puppetry is prevalent in Assam, Manipur and Tripura.

PUPPETS OF ASSAM

Puppetry is a very popular performing art of Assam. Before knowing about the puppetry of Assam we have first understand about the people who practicing this art form, from generation after generation. Without knowing the background of puppeteer their social influence their interest, we never understand about puppetry and where it come from. Like other states of India Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Kerela, puppeteer of Assam is not belonging to a particular community and caste. The puppeteer of Assam is mixed caste ranging from general to schedule caste. Puppetry is performed in different corners of Assam. But present active troupes are found in Marigaon, Nogaon, Kamrup, Darrang and Nalbari district.

Puppet groups of Assam:

Sl No	Group Name	Puppeteer	Address	Establish
1	Asom Puppet Theatre	Narayan Deka	Makhibaha, Nalbari	1985
2	Asomi Putola theatre	Langte Barman	Makhibaha, Nalbari	1985
3	Nataraj Putola Theatre	Ajay Sarma	Gandhiya, Nalbari	2004
4	Mohkhuli Putola Nach Samiti	Radhakanta Barman	Mohkhuli, Gopal Than, Nalbari	1885
5	Navaratna Putola Theatre	Giridhar Senapati	Bhalukmari, Nagaon	1979
6	Panchratna Putola Theatre	Putumai Bordoloi	Bhalukmari, Nagaon	1978
7	Rubi Puppet Theatre	Abani Sarma	Dakhala, Bijoy Nagar, Kamrup	1974

8	Sagorika Puppet Theatre	Manoranjan Roy	Oujari, khetri, kamrup (M)	1998
9	Rupalim Puppet Theatre	Raju Bora	Kakmari, Nagaon, Assam	2016
10	Surojit Academy (Contemporary)	Binita Devi	Assam Engineering College Campus, Jalukbari, Guwahati	1997
10	Ma Manasha Puppet Theatre		Gandhiya, Nalbari	
11	Arnab Putola Dal (Contemporary)	Mira Sarma	Panjabari, Guwahati	
12	Pallavi Puppet Theatre	Dhiren Thakuria	Makhibaha, Balabori, Nalbari	
13	Bashudev Putola Nach		Gandhiya, Nalbari	2008
14	Panchajanya Putola Kendra (Contemporary)	Barman	Noonmati, Guwahati	1984
15	Mukak Puppet Theatre (Contemporary)	Simanta Sarma	Jalukbari, Guwahati	2004
16	Bishnu Jyoti Putola Ghar (Contemporary)	Purna Bora	Nabin Nagar, Guwahati	

Puppetry is an age-old performing art of Assam. The actual time and place of existence of puppetry of Assam is not clear. It is mentioned in Katha–Guru- Charita of early 18th century biography of Vaishnava saint of Assam that shadow puppet was performed at sankardeva’s father Kushambar Siromoni Bhuyan’s residence on the twenty second day of his birth.

Between 9th& 11 centuries book Kalikapurana also has reference of existence of puppetry in Assam. Kalikapurana use the term “Panchalika Vihara”. Here the Sanskrit word “panchalika” means puppet or doll and panchalika – vihara is supposed to have meant a particular type of puppet show. Kalikapurana use the term Panchalika Vihara it indicates the existence of puppet tradition in those times.

The Assamese Bhagavata Purana mentions Kashtamaya or daru Putula, wooden puppets as also shadow puppets, a tradition which has vanished over the years.

Different name of puppet in Assam:

Putola Nach: Generally, the string puppet theatre is call “Putola Nach” in Assam. Here the word “Putola” means puppet and “Nach” means “Dance”. Putola Nach refers as Puppet Dance.

Putola Bhaona: In the plains of Assam puppet theatre is call Putola Bhaona. Bhaona is a traditional form of entertainment, always with religious messages, prevalent in Assam. Like Bhaona is with similar attired of Gayan-Bayan (musicians) and the Sutradhar figures.

Putola Bhaoria: In Lower Assam, the puppet plays are based on the popular Khulia-Bhaoria theatre. Puppeteer of this region adopt stories, costume and performing style from Khulia Bhaoria, which is a popular folk theatre of lower Assam.

Bati Putola: In Kamrup area puppetry is also known as Bati Putola, it is considered by some as the Batris Putola or thirty-two puppets of King Vikramaditya.

Tatak or Tatek-Natak: Sankardeva and the neo-Vaishnava literature of that time mentions the puppet show as Tatek-Natak. Some reference of Tatek-Natak is:

“Tatekiya yena jada putolaka yantrata tuli nachawe”

As the showman makes the lifeless puppets dance on the machine.

Chaya Putola: The Assamese Bhagavata have some references of Chaya Putola (shadow puppet) are: *“Gopiko nachanta jen chaya putolaka”*

As the Gopies are made to dance in the manner of shadow puppet

Theme of puppet plays in Assam:

The theme of Putola Nach is mainly drawn from the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas. Nowadays new theme also adopted by the traditional string puppet group of Assam. Themes of the puppet plays are including:

Mythological: Kalidasr Sakuntala, Baula Lakhindar, Roja Harischandra, Devi Durga, Sita Banabas, Sabitri Satyaban, Sati Baula

Folk tales: Tezimola, Champawati

Historical: Sati Jaimoti, History of Assam

Social: Miri Jiyori, Kargilor Judha

Awareness: HIV/AIDS, Clean Drinking Water, Witch Hunting, Jaga Grahok Jaga, Toilets, Beti Bachao Bati Padhao etc.

A traditional show starts outside the stage by performing Gurughat (puja). Special rhythmic patterns are then played inside the stage on the khol and tal, with Vandana (invocation) and other special songs. Bayen used to hold a Chowar (yak tail whisk) in his right hand and moved among the audience along gangways, with dance like steps and gestures. Some Bayens put on a turban and a long chadar (shawl) hanging down from his neck, the end of which he holds with his left hand, while singing and gesticulating. Then come Kalu Bhelu or Kalua-Bhelua, two puppets who sweep the stage floor. Often a modern looking figure, called Chengra or Master, not only includes in horseplay but also passes social comments. When a main character takes entry, Bayan asked question. Before asking the second question, Bayan interprets the squeaked reply of first question and then proceeds further. Dr. Birendra Nath Dutta named it “Instant Flashback Method” and believed that a relationship between audience and puppets develops in this way. Nowadays, most traditional and semi traditional troupes are given to the influence of the extremely popular mobile theatre and start their shows with short dance- drama for 10 to 15 minutes in lieu of preliminary entertainment. After the dance drama the main show starts, with music taken from folk form and from various folk songs.

String puppet making process

Puppet making is a very careful and organized process. It begins with making a three dimensional frame work for the body. The traditional string puppets of Assam which are about 2 to 3 feet high are made from sholapith locally known as “kuhila”. Kuhila is a dried white sponge plant grown in the marshy water-logged areas of Assam. It can be easily cut and shaped into any object. In traditional, the puppets are made of solapith or some soft wood by joining together different parts forming the head, torso and limbs with the help of cloth.

They prepared a paste of clayey soil and water mixed with the husk of paddy. This paste is applied over the head for a number of times as per requirement and then facial features are carved out on each of the wet frames using a special bamboo stick. After that they cover the head and hand with piece earliest when there was of cotton cloth dipped in

a paste of soil and water mixed. When it dries different colours are applied on them and curving out of eyes, nose and lips are done.

Colour used in puppets

Natural colours were used in earlier when there colours are applied on them and it dries, different were no any artificial colour the puppeteer prepares colour from cinnabar powder, turmeric powder. They use seeds of tamarind to prepare gum. First of all, they dry the seeds of tamarind and to bring out white portion of the tamarind seeds and cook the seeds for three days to make gum and the gum was mixed with the cinnabar powder, turmeric powder, indigo plant was colour the puppets by those colours. They were prepared black colour from amla and myrobalam, yellow colour from turmeric, red colour from cinnabar and blue colour from indigo plant. But now artificial colour from the market are use. Rama and Krishna puppets are blue, while ladies are light yellow or pink. Demon and other evil characters are deep green or blue. In earlier time's hair were made from water hyacinth and jute. After making puppet puppeteer dress their puppets as per demand of the character.

Stage of string puppet

Stage of string puppet show is made of a frame of bamboo poles covered by black screen on three sides. A small raised plate form is set up inside with the lower and upper areas screwed off. Leaving a 3 to 4 feet opening in the front. The manipulate stand behind a black screen at the back on the floor or on a low bench, hidden from view. Musician sit in front of the curtain with their musical instrument.

Musical instruments

Music is a soul of any puppet plays because it is a dance and music based folk drama. In a traditional show dialogues of the puppets are in a high-pitched tone with sharp squeaking sound by Pyapa (whistle), made of a bamboo frame and a leaf or rubber membrane inside. Traditional string puppet groups used folk musical instruments like Khol, Cymbal, Flute, Nagara, Harmonium etc. However most of the modern troupe use pre-recorded music where harmonium, flute, bihu dhol, sitar electric guitar, mandolin and other modern instrument are use.



Narayan Deka and his wife from Asom
Puppet Theatre



Jambubant from epic Ramayana,
Asom Puppet Theatre



Langte Barman with group member,
Asomi PutolaTheatre



Puppet head made by wood,
Nataraj PutolaTheatre



Puppet keeping wooden box



Langte Barman, Asomi Putola Theatre



Ajay Sarma, Nataraj Putola Theatre



Puppet hand made by wood, Nataraj Putola Theatre



Radhakanta Barman, Mohkhuli Putola Nach Samiti



Radhakanta Barman with his Puppet



Giridhar Senapati, Navaratna Putola Theatre



Banner of Putola theatre



Abani Sarma, Rubi Putola Theatre



Abani Sarma with puppet, Rubi Putola Theatre



Manoranjan Roy, Sagorika Putola Naach Theater



Puppet body made by kuhila, Manoranjan Roy, Sagorika Putola Naach Theater



Puppeteer of Sagorika Putola Naach Theater



String puppet, Sagorika Putola Naach Theater



Researcher with Putumai Bordoloi (Panchratna Putola Theatre)



Puppets of Panchratna Putola Theatre



Bihu Nachani, Panchratna Putola Theatre



Puppet Making, Panchratna Putola Theatre



Raju Bora with researcher, Rupalim Puppet Theatre



Puppet, Rupalim Puppet Theatre



Ma Manasha Puppet Theatre



Bishnu Jyoti Putola Ghar



Ravana Puppet made in 1885,
Mohkhuli Putola NachSamiti



Arnab Putola Dol



Pallavi Puppet Theatre



Panchajanya Putola Kendra



Bashudev Putola Nach



Mukak Puppet Theatre

PUPPETS OF TRIPURA

INTRODUCTION:

Since time immemorial the geographical expression known down the annals of history as Tripura has always been known to be a land of pristine peace and co-existence of diverse human communities. Formerly a princely state, Tripura became a Part C state of the Indian Union in 1949. It was made into a Union territory in 1957 and conferred full statehood in 1975. The geographical situation of the state is as follows: Bangladesh on the north, west and south-west, Assam and Mizoram on the east. A narrow strip through Assam (Barak Valley) and Mizoram links it with the rest of India. The capital is Agartala, near the Bangladesh border in the northwestern part of state. Geographically Tripura can be divided into three broad zones- the hill region, the flat plains and the river basin. It is located in the northeastern part of the subcontinent. It is among the smallest of India's state and is located in an isolated hilly region of the country, with various indigenous peoples or tribes. The original inhabitants of Tripura have been tribal groups like the Tipras, the Rheangs and the Hrangkhols, most of who belong to the Bodo group of the Indo-Mongoloid family. However, the royal dynasties had come under Hindu-Aryan influence quit early and had patronized Aryan culture. Subsequently Bengali language and culture found favour with the ruling and elite groups. In the process, there arose a gulf between the "Sanskritized" ruling elite and the rank and file of the local population. In recent times the unusually heavy influx of East-Bengali settlers has brought in such a drastic change in the demographic pattern of the state that the indigenous population has been reduce to a weak minority.

Varied culture of the tribal and non-tribal people of the state forms the backbone of Tripura's cultural tradition. The cultural activism based on performing arts like dramas, recitations, dances and folk theatre and celebrations of anniversaries of stalwarts like Rabindra Nath Tagore, Kazi Nurul Islam.

History of puppets of Tripura

The string puppet theatre of Tripura is locally known as Putul Nach. The origin of puppetry in Tripura is, in fact, directly ascribed to West Bengal and Bangladesh. Most of the puppeteers came from Comilla, Mymensing and Sylhet districts of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), after partition. They had witnessed puppet shows or were attached to puppet theatre there. As the puppeteers came to Tripura in 1947 or after, there is hardly any old group. In undivided Bengal, many groups used to come from Bihar and perform puppet and magic shows. Gagan Acharjya of Comilla districts started his group by watching those performances – with 1-foot puppets made of solapith. One man sang and spoke all the dialogues by sitting outside the stage. They performed Nauka Vilas, Nemai Sanyas, Harishchandra, Ravan Badh, etc. They used tents for shows with tickets costing 2-4 paise and attracting 300-400 spectators. The stage was 20x6x3 feet. The shows use local dialect, starting with Nam Sankirtan and then the concert, with palm-leaf pyapya (whistle), dholak, harmonium and kartal.

In Tripura puppets are represented by Gopal Chandra Das born in Sitarampur, Comilla District, and east Bengal in 1943. He learns putul nach string puppetry and music under his father Bipin Chandra Das, from childhood. He moved to Tripura in 1990 and performs throughout the north – east of India. He has been honored with a Sangeet Natak Akademi award in 2011.

A puppetry wings was formed in 1957 by the Department of Education, Government of Tripura. The wing was started by officially employing three puppeteers from the traditional string puppet troupes of Tripura at that time namely Gaur Ch. Das, Manindra Ch. Das and Late Sachindra Das. The puppetry wing did a lot of works in the field of mass awareness. They went to the villages and performed puppet show on adult education, anti-alcoholism, dowry system to creating awareness among the uneducated people of villages. The late Haripada Das, was on in charge at that time. He was work as a technical supervisor in Education Department. His work was to show documentaries of the film division to the villages. After noticing the weakness of the village people towards puppet shows, he starts his work by keeping the motto educate and entertain

people from puppetry. This was the first time in Tripura that puppetry has been used for an awareness campaign.

Earlier, puppet show was performed with flute, dram, song and from behind, one of the artists sing the mythological stories of Ramayana, King Harishchandra and the puppets are displayed. However, when the government puppetry wing, formed in 1956-57, started performing puppet shows in the villages, it started using dialogues with puppet dances just like in theatrical dramas.

Puppet groups of Tripura:

For a proper primary investigation, I came to Tripura in 8 August 2019. In my visit to Tripura, I have found 4 puppet groups are active in Agartala district.

Sl No	Group Name	Proprietor	Address	Establish
1	Jai guru Sajal Opera Putul Nach	Goutom Das	SD Mission Colony, West Tripura, Agartala	
2	Ma Tripurwari Puppet theatre	Suresh Ch Das	Araliya Santipari , Tripura, Agartala	1967
3	Sri Krishna Puppet Sangtha	Nityananda Sarma	Gunjoria Tilla, A.D Nagar, West Tripura	1988
4	Tripura puppet Theatre (Contemporary)	Prabhitangshu Das	Tripura, Agartala	1984

In Tripura, a group usually has 10 puppeteers, including 4 musicians. Anybody from any caste can join the group. Most of the puppeteers are farmers or labourers. They are generally paid on per-show basis and perform about 60 shows per year. They speak Bengali in the show and at home. 200-250 persons come to a performance. Sometimes they perform in local dialect. They do not get any financial help from Government. Most of the puppeteers study up to fourth standard. Women do not take part in the show, but help to make the puppets. Audiences like to see mythological plays. Cubs, rich men and

organizers of mela (fairs) sponsor the shows, which travel all over Tripura. Ticket-rates are kept low. The groups have their own tents. Duration of the play is about half an hour to 1 hour, without any intermission. Sometimes, they perform 5 shows in a day. Like Assam Tripura have the tradition of string puppet. “Ma Tripurary Puppet Theatre”, “Sri Krishna Puppet Sangtha” and “Jai Guru Sajal Opera Putul Nach” these three groups are practicing string puppetry.

String puppet making process

Puppeteer of Tripura make their puppets very skilfully. From its inception they used to make puppets from solapith, but as solapith is not easily available in Tripura, they make the puppets either from wood or from paper pulp. These day puppets are made from the timber of local trees like mander and champa. Pasteboard, clay, stuffed cloth and papier-mache are also used. Sometimes, they make puppet faces by clay and hands by cardboard. Puppets have 7 strings: 2 strings on two hands, 2 in waist, one string on head, one in front and one on the backside. Sword, flute, bow, arrows are tied on the puppet's hand, when necessary. One group has a puppet of Manasa (snake god) with 16 hands and snake hood on head, which is the main character of Behula-lakhinder play. They keep puppets sequence-wise and on the backside of the stage. They have puppets of tiger, snake, crocodile, deer, peacock, fish and birds. Puppets weigh 150-500 gm and are 10 inches-2 feet, like Tarer Putul. Puppets have joints at shoulders, elbows and waist.

Theme of puppet plays

The theme of Putul Nach is mainly drawn from the Ramayana and Puranas. The traditional string puppet group of Tripura performed mainly mythological plays of Sita Uddhar, Sabitri Satyaban, Behula Lakhindhar, Raja Harischandra, Nouka Bilash, Radhar maan bhanjan, Mahisasur Badh etc. they performed in Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Manasa Puja, Shivratri and local festivals. Over time, some new themes have also been included. Stories of Nobel laureate Rabindra Nath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and other renowned novelists are being portrayed through the puppet dance or Putul Nach. At present puppet play a very crucial role to bring social awareness among the masses by introducing new themes on HIV/AIDS, Clean Drinking Water, Witch Hunting, Jaga Grahok Jaga,

Sanitation, Beti Bachao Bati Padhao etc. Apart from the mythological theme, the puppeteers of Tripura depict cartoon-like tales with a folk character, called Mona (dear chap), in a series called News. The latter are tales describing various misfortunes and misadventures of Mona during fishing, hunting, rowing etc. one such News is: Mona going to river for fishing. The singer outside the stage tells him not to go there because of a crocodile that could come any moment. Mona does not listen and ultimately the crocodile catches him. The same incident happens in the forest as well, where the tiger takes Mona. Puppeteer also perform some humorous News on Vaisnav-Vaisnavi, Jagai-Madhai Uddhar etc, with folk music. It is said that Vengu Das from Nabinagar, Bangladesh had started the News first. At times they show News alone, which enjoyed high popularity in the past. Usually, the show has 2-3 News items.

Music in puppetry of Tripura

The show uses local dialect, starting with Nam Sankirtan and then the concert, with palm-leaf pyapya (whistle), dholka, harmonium and kartal.

The musicians sit outside the stage, using harmonium, khol, fute, ghunguru and sarinda (string instrument). They begin the show with Nam Kirtan (names of the gods) or aradhana of Rama and then the main show started. Men speak all the dialogue and also speak dialogue of women. The role of song is very important in Tripura's puppet dance. There are 8-25 songs in a performance, minimum three song and dance before the beginning of the main play and many songs in between the main play, with one-man sings all songs, using the tunes of Kirtan and folk songs.

For example:

Bhalo Koira Bajao go dotara sundari Kamala nache
Sundari Kamala chorone nupur rini-jhini koira baaje re.
Sundari kamala porone sariya rode jhal-mal kore re.
Sundari kamala naake nolok tol-mol koria dole re.
Ebari hoite Obari jayire ghatapani jhil mil paani re
Aamar I bhijilo jama-joda Kanya'r o bhijilo sari re.

This Bengali folk song sung by a male puppet by holding 'Sarinda' (local musical string instrument) in his hand and female puppet dances to the beat of the song.

Shadher laau banailo more boiragi
Laauer aaga khailam dogo go khailam
Aaga khailam dogo go khailam
Laau di banailam dugdugi
Ami laau di banailam dugdugi
Shadher laau bonailo more boiragi.

This song sung by a male puppet by holding 'Ektara' in his hand and the female puppet on the rhythm of the song.

After these two dances they have one snake charmer dance on the music of 'been', which is taken from Hindi Bollywood movie. The puppet's tricks make it look as if the puppet is really playing the 'been'.

Some song of the mythological play Ravan vadh:

Ram jaire bono base
Sange jaire Sita,
Ramer bhai Laxman jaire
Ajudhya sariya.
O' bidhi re, O'bidhi re, O' bidhi re.
Bhai kande Ma kande, kande nagar basi
Ajudhya sariya jaibo
Ram bonobasi.

Song from the mythological play Raja Harichandra:

.....
Phuler bagane
Koto koto sundar phul phulse bagane.
Phulse bagane, o' go sathi phulse bagane,
Koto koto sundar phul phulse bagane.
Phuler madhu khaya bhumro,
Gungunane jai,
Phuler mala dekhe mora Indra sabha jai.

Indra sabha jaigo sathi, Indra sabha jai,
Phuler mala dekhe mora Indra sabha jai.

Stage of puppet show

The whole stage is 10X7X3 feet, with 2 drop-scenes that are 5X3 feet. They have boat, throne, chair, etc. as stage-props, made of bamboo and use electric lights and microphone nowadays. Puja is performed before starting a new play. They keep puppets sequence-wise and on the backside of the stage.

Contemporary puppet of Tripura:

The practice of Rod puppets in Tripura is not very old. In 1973, puppeteer Haripada Das was inspired by the puppet show of Suresh Dutta of Kolkata Haripada Das introduce the contemporary rod puppet in Tripura.

An interaction with renowned contemporary puppetry artist of Agartala, Tripura, Mr. Prabhitangshu Das says he learn puppetry from his father Late Haripada Das and Late Haripada Das learn the skill of local traditional puppet from Late Gour Chandra Das and make a wooden string puppet of famous tribal dance 'Hojagiri' was the first footstep of his experiment. He started new group "Tripura Puppet Theatre" in 1974. He made the puppets by using raw materials found in Tripura to impart a unique feature on it. Tripura is also called as 'Home of Bamboo'. Bamboo and its associated craft are found in day-to-day life and hence bamboo comes as a primary essence of culture of state. So, he also decorated the puppets with bamboo, the head of the puppet is made from the root of bamboo. Like string puppet contemporary puppet of Tripura also reflect folk song, folk dance, traditional costumes, and folk culture of Tripura. He learns rod puppet from Suresh Dutta. After the sad demise of his father in 1999 Prabhitangshu Das took the charge of Tripura Puppet Theatre. His group participated in several national and international puppet festival at Jarmani in 2012. He practices Rod, Bunraku, shadow, glove puppet. Some important productions scripted and directed by Prabhitangshu das are Moment with Mahatma, Chandalika, Green Green, Bisarjan etc. He successfully completed his graduation from MBB College of Tripura, fine arts certificate course from Tripura Rabindra Parisad, T.V Production course in FTII Pune. For his services to art, Prabhitangshu Das has received honors including the Srijon Samman (2008), the Tripura

Samman (2015) and receives the Sangeet Natak Academi Award for his contribution to the art of puppetry of Tripura.



Researcher with Prabhitangshu Das, Tripura Puppet Theater



A wooden string puppet of famous tribal dance 'Hojagiri'



Rod Puppet from the play Chandalika of Puppet Character: Lakhman, Suresh Ch Das, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Tripura Puppet TheaterMa Tripurwari Puppet theatre



Puppets, Ma Tripurwari Puppet theatre



Gautom Das with Researcher, Jai guru Sajal Opera Putul Naach



String Puppet made by sangeet Natak Natak Akademi awardee Late Gopal Chandra Das, Jai guru Sajal Opera Putul Nach



Nityananda Sarma,
Sri Krishna Puppet Sangtha



Puppet leg made by thermocol,
Sri Krishna Puppet Sangtha



Puppets are waiting for their turn in backside stage.

PUPPETS OF MANIPUR

INTRODUCTION

Manipur is vibrant with colours and boasts of rich culture. Their history and culture are likely to attract many people from around the globe. It is a state in northeastern India, with the city of Imphal as the capital. It is bounded by Nagaland to the north, Mizoram to the south, and Assam to the west, Myanmar lies to the east. Ninety percent of this land is made up of hills which surrounded the small but fertile Manipur valley placed almost at the centre. While there are a number of rivers crisscrossing the valley, the famous Loktak Lake has its own importance in various ways- topographic, economic, social and cultural.

The Meitei people are the majority ethnic group of Manipur. The Meiteis themselves belong to the indo-Mongoloid stock although they have adopted Hinduism and their culture has been considerably influenced by Vaishnavism of the Chaitanya sect. While the Hindu-Aryan influence has led to the flowering of a highly refined cultural and artistic tradition. Influence of Vaishnavism is also reflecting in their folk drama, folk dance and folk music. Puppetry of Manipur is also having influence of vaishnavism.

History of puppetry in Manipur

Puppet has a separate name of its own: Laithibi Jagoi here the word Laithibi meaning doll and Jogoi meaning dance. Manipurians are Vaishnavites, with strong sense of traditional propagation of religious rites and rituals. Their Vaishnava cult dates back to the 17th century when the king of Manipur came to Nabadweep in West Bengal and became an ardent disciple of Sri Gauranga (the great Vaishnava saint of the 15th century). Along with Vaishnavism, string puppetry came to Manipur from Nabadweep, though only in the last century. It has now taken strong traditional roots in Manipur.

It is believed by many scholars that there was a kind of glove puppet, representing a human figure on the royal family's chariot of Lord Jagannath. During the chariot festival, the puppet protruded its head and torso from the back window of the chariot and clapped its hands as the chariot progressed, much to the delight of the onlookers.

Puppeteers of Manipur

The all-time maestro of string puppets was Uddhab Singh (1890-1960), a resident of Uripok. Uddhab received training from his father Lal Singh. He received several medals for his artistry from the successive Maharajas and was noted for his proficiency in many forms of art. Uddhab Singh's puppets, now kept in the State Museum, are made of bamboo and painted with natural colors without varnish. There is a strong suggestion of local facial characteristic in their design. He performed the plays Yamrajar danda, Savitri Satyaban etc.

Brajamohan Sharma is the most noted string puppeteer of Manipur. Many others have left the profession for more lucrative professions, like making dance-costumes.

During my visit to Manipur on August 23, 2019 I have found only one puppet group namely "Moppet Decoration and Cultural Centre" situated in Thiyam Leishangkong, Imphal West, run by the chief puppeteer Gurumayum Basant Sarma. He has received junior fellowship award in the field of puppetry in 2006-2007 from Ministry of culture govt. of India. His father Gurumayum Jadu Sharma was the founder of "Moppet Decoration and Cultural Centre" it is establish in 1993. Basant Sharma learn the nuances of puppetry from his father. Their group performed puppet shows in local schools and festivals as well as national puppet festival in Kolkata, Bhopal, Tripura, Delhi, Shillong, Silchar etc. They have 20 group members All group members have knowledge of puppet making and manipulation. "We have got 3000 to 5000 in per show but we have spent more money on making and organizing the shows", says Basant Sarma.

Themes of puppet show

The themes of puppet theatre are mostly based on myths and legends and stories from the epics. The puppetry in Manipur is mostly used as a relief item between the intervals of Manipuri dance. The string puppet tradition of Manipur that takes Vaishnava themes, especially Radha Krishna stories, Radha Krishna Brindhaban story and Lord Krishna for Rasleela, Manipuri traditional Nat Sankritan 30- to 40-minute-long dance drama about Manipuri tradition. String puppetry, resembling human or divine figures, is performed at Rasleela, whereas puppet-shows with animal and demonic forms are performed during Gostha Leela.

Puppet making process

Puppets of Manipur having excellent designs and accurate anatomical proportion. Easily available and low-cost materials are generally used in making of puppets. Puppets are made of light weight wood. With the help of sharp tools like knife, different body parts of puppets are carved on wood, cloth and thermocol are also used. The puppets represent women characters are decorated with traditional jewellery and costumes. There puppets are in about 2.5 feet in height. The joints are at the neck, shoulders, elbows and knee. Three or four strings are attached to the puppet at one end and the other end round a bamboo stick held by puppeteer for manipulation. Masks of demon figures and animals are used along with puppets. Masks are worn and manipulated by the performers on the ground

Stage of puppet show

A platform, 7-10 feet high, is erected temporarily, upon which the puppeteers sit. A black screen is hung from the platform-floor reaching the ground. The puppets are lowered to the ground and manipulated with the aid of black strings, which become invisible against the black backdrop.

The spectators sit on the ground and, as there is another curtain placed in front of the puppeteers, the latter remain unseen. Operating the puppets from such a height impedes the puppeteers to get a good view of the puppets and often they have to rely on their practice and intuition. Gurumayum Basanta Sharma used to live at Imphal and perpetuated the traditional skill by inducing his family members into puppetry.

Use of music

Laithibi Jagoi is the string puppet tradition of Manipur that takes Vaishnava themes, to local music of mridanga (drum), khon-pung, harmonium, table and flute. Music is playing a very important role in puppetry. Except puppetry in the other form of drama, any character can express different emotions and feelings by changing facial expressions. But the puppet face is static music helps to express its emotion. Music should be according to the emotion and mood of the play. Even fighting, crying can be express by music.



Puppet Play: Kali daman and Srikrishna lila



Puppet Play: Kali daman and Srikrishna lila



Manipuri traditional Nat Sankritan Puppet, “Moppet Decoration and Cultural Centre”



Radha from Rass Leela

PUPPETRY WORKSHOP IN NAGALAND

From September 2 to 6 one workshop was conducted by me as the resource person to revitalize the dying art for many states and to introduce a new art form for many tribal dominated states like Nagaland, Children Education and Training Centre, under the Indigenous Cultural Society organized a five-day state level puppetry training at the World Impact Community Church, Padum-pukhuri.

A five-day state level puppetry training on glove and string puppetry was held with an aim for promotion of puppetry ministry for children ministry/ church or even for a creative teaching method.

A total of 25 candidates successfully completed the training programmed from various tribal and denominational churches.



Students are preparing String puppet



During Puppet manipulation training



Glove Puppet making



Students with their string and glove puppets



Students during learn to manipulate string puppet

CHAPTER III

PUPPETS OF RAJASTHAN

INTRODUCTION:

Rajasthan is a state of northern India. The state covers 10.4 percentage of the total geographical area of India. Rajasthan is located in the northwestern side of India. It is the largest Indian state by area and seven largest by population. It comprises most of the wide and inhospitable Thar Desert. Rajasthan has a rich heritage of its peculiar art, culture and architecture. Rajasthan has many beautiful artistic and cultural traditions which reflect the ancient Indian way of life. Many of these art forms have survived through ages and are even part of the present culture of Rajasthan. Kathputli, Bhopa, Chang, Teratali, Ghindar, Kachchhighori, Tejaji, parth dance etc. are the examples of the traditional Rajasthani culture. Rajasthan also called Rajputana, is known for its royal history & Rajput artistry. Rajasthan has secured its rich charming cultural heritage throughout the centuries. The Land of kings, has majestic forts, splendid temples, spectacular palaces, traditional & colorful culture, delicious cuisine and wonderful & bright costumes.

In Rajasthan No fairs and festivals gain completion without folk performances. Under the folk performances of Rajasthan, puppetry is an indispensable part. The puppets of Rajasthan are one of the popular sources of entertainment in the state. No village fairs, no religious festivals and no social gathering in Rajasthan can be completed without ‘Kathputli’ (string puppets). It is believed that Kathputli ka Khel, originated in Nagaur near Jodhpur, on the edge of the Thar Desert. Puppeteers live in Nagore, Jaipur, Ajmer, Udaipur and Bikaner district of Rajasthan. The string puppet is perhaps the most common form of puppetry in India, in common with the rest of the world. Even now, many people understand the puppetry in India as manipulation of kathputli and think in terms of the gorgeous puppets of Rajasthan manipulated by Bhatt.

The puppetry of Rajasthan is called “Kathputli”. The word “Kathputli” literally means a ‘wooden toy’, being a combination of ‘Kath’ (wood) and ‘Putli’ (toy). In Rajasthan puppeteers are known by the name of the “Kathputliwalas”.

History of puppetry of Rajasthan:

It is said that puppetry of Rajasthan is more than a thousand years old, but there is no written evidence of it. We can get references only in the folktales and ballads. “Our general history shows that the puppet is from the time of Akbar” said Kuldeep Kothari, son of Padma Shri Komal Kothari. Komal Kothari made contributions to the study of musical instruments, oral traditions and puppetry. According to one popular Rajasthani legend which is Dr. Ramcharan Mahendra writes in one of his articles:

“Once upon a time there was a man named Sewakram. He had the interest in making toys for the whole day. It was a matter of one day that he made many beautiful toys of wood. Seeing their beauty, Sevakram himself became very happy in his mind. He slept after putting those toys on the side of a mango tree. When he was in deep sleep, lord Shiva and Parvati started taking human form. Seeing him sleeping, lord Parvati said to lord Shiva that, Sevakram who has kept these, how it would feel if you and I had entered into these wooden effigies by Sevakram? Sevakram will be amazed. Lord Shiva remained silent, but Parvati went to such an extent that at the end, he was forced to fulfil Parvati’s wish and he entered in those toys. They had to admit that all the toys came alive and started dancing. After listening to their dance and noise, Sevakram’s sleep became enraged. Sevakram was surprised to see such a miracle! Now he moved towards those wooden toys and wanted to capture them, but he could not catch hold of them. This kept happening for a long time. At the end Sevakram was able to succeed in his efforts, but all those toys became dead again as soon as they hit hands. Now Sevakram began to suffer heartache. He became depressed. He went mad in this turmoil. Then Shiva and Parvati came again. They told Sevakram that these toys are inanimate. They will remain lifeless. But there is a solution. You can tie a string to these effigies and you can make them dance and act as you wish. Lord Shiva and Parvati became intuitive after saying this but there was no limit to the happiness of Sevakram. He tied strings in all wooden toys and started moving them. On his matchless success, he started wandering from village to village and exhibited his unique art. Walking from village to village and exhibit shows”.

On the basis of this legend, it can be said that the place of origin of puppetry is India. It is said that Sevakram showed the puppet dance to Birbal. Birbal was pleased and showed this puppet show to Akbar, which he liked very much. Then the puppet show

became a means of entertainment in the royal court. Scenes of the secret courts were presented through puppets. After Akbar, it remained popular in Shah Jahan's court as well.

The art of puppetry is practiced by the Bhatt community, The Bhatt community makes these puppets as well as performs with them from village to village during the dry season when cultivation is not possible. Those people have been associated with Rajasthani string puppet to carry forward their traditional occupation. Though they belong originally to the Nagaur area in the Marwar region, they travel all through the countryside to exhibit their skills. These people are called Nat and claim that their ancestors had performed for royal families, and received great honor and prestige from the rulers of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab. The Kathputli Nats of Rajasthan believe that they are different from others and possess special aptitudes for Khel and Tamashas as a means of livelihood. Their legend goes back to the times of King Vikramaditya of Ujjain whose throne Simhasan Battisi had 32 decorative dolls dancing and doing acrobatic feats. So, apparently the first Nat produced a play with 32 puppets about the life of Vikramaditya and his progeny performed it for hundreds of years. It is said that King Vikramaditya had a huge wooden puppet by his throne, which he consulted wisely to confirm any unpleasant or crucial judgment. During the Mughal Period, however, the Bhatt's were gradually reduced to dire penury and had to depend on small landlords who had neither taste nor the resources to support and nourish this art.

Much later came Prithviraj Chauhan of Delhi who gave the Bhatt's money to produce a play on his achievements. The episodes of the princess Sanjukta and Prithviraj became very famous. Gradually, Rajasthan was split into several kingdoms, one of which was under Amar sing Rathor of Nagare, known for his great heroic deeds, 400 years ago. He gave special patronage to the Bhatt's and they produced a play on his heroic deeds.

Theme of puppet plays:

Going back to the history of Kathputlis, the legendary which was produced by the first Bhatt was based on the life and achievements of the Great King of Ujjain, Vikramaditya. This show involved the act of 32 puppets and it became so remarkable and glorious that it was carried by his descendants for hundreds of years. Much later a play

based on Prithviraj Chauhan's life and achievements was enacted; he himself expressed this wish and even gave money to do so. As it has been already written that the stories of Rajasthan puppet come from the many kings of Rajasthan who patronage this art form to narrate their heroic tales to the remote countryside. For instance, the stories of Prithviraj Chauhan and Amar Singh Rathor were woven around puppetry and are popular till today in the villages and towns of Rajasthan. These stories find place in poetry.

For some examples-

Amar Sing- Aamar ki kamar main kahe ki katari?

Jodhpur garwai,

Katara umraw dukh de gai|

Amar Sing katari rang le gai||

Birbal- Gokul se Ganga bahi, piche kharah wajir|

Sobha sab darbar ki, le gaya birbal wajir|

Saiya teri godi main gendha ban jaungi|

Jo mere saiya ko pyas lagegi,

Ganga Jamuna aur tirweni ban jaungi||

Jo mere saiya ko bhukh lagegi;

Makhan misri aur perdha ban jaungi||

In Mediaeval India, by the time, 500 years ago, Rajasthan was split into several sectors, with several big and small feudal rulers under the shadow of the Mughal Emperors of Delhi. Amar Singh of Nagpur is known for his great heroic deeds. These Bhatt's received special patronage in his hands with the result that another play was made on the life and achievements of this personality. The episode of his death, was added to the play afterwards as a mark of respect to the great hero. This puppet play was, however, done on a small scale and within limits of these small states.

The Mughals in Delhi and Agra had other entertainments of a bigger and more glamorous nature, and the Rajas who came into close association with the Mughals, imitated their ways of life and modes of entertainment. Musicians, poets and dancer received patronage, but the Bhatt's were ignored and had to depend on smaller and inferior Yajmans, who has almost no status, no money and no taste for art. The Kathputli Bhatt's were gradually reduced to extreme poverty, ignorance, and a degraded status in

society, creating problems of livelihood, family quarrels and professional jealousies down to this day. The play Amar Singh Rathor still survives but is in a deplorable condition, its story distorted to an extreme extent and its aesthetic values brought down to the lowest level.

Other stories are included Anarkali dance in the king court, Nagarawala, Juggler, Horse riding, A snake charmer is another attraction of the show. One of the most attractive part of all these puppet shows is the story of a weaver called Julahi. Once a king gave a weaver lots of thread to prepare cloth. The cloth that weaver made was very rare. So, the king speaks to him, I had given a lot of thread, where have you hidden it? Please return it to me. She hides the entire thread on her stomach. How the king extracts all the hidden thread this story is shown through puppet. The king never leaves the corrupt, how does the king capture the corrupted people with his cunning and prudence is trying to show by this story.

Kathputli has always been used as a teaching method for socio political issues, religion, conflict resolution and moral conduct. Kathputli teaches children to be active participants within their own education providing creative inspiration. The specialty of this Kathputli dance was that they were just not the source of entertainment but also, they taught society about social and moral issues.

In Jodhpur, the Rupayan Centre was run by the late Komal Kothari now it is run by Kuldeep Kothari and has a traditional puppet group under them. While they perform only string puppet of Rajasthan, Komal Kothari has helped and encouraged the complete revival of the tradition. So, the expert puppeteer of Rajasthan Kheratiram Bhatt and Babulal Bhatt has been working on new script viz. Shraavan Kumar, Raja Harichandra, panchatantra stories etc. since 1988-89. These stories are also spoken like poems. The king of Ayodhya Dasharath stepped into the forest with an intention to hunt.

Sutradhar: Maha andheri raat thi

Patte biche the raho mai

Pair ki aawaj sunkar

Dasharath tir le liya hatho main.

Hearing the sound, Dasharath mistook it as the sound of a deer drinking water. He aimed his arrow breezed through the air and pierced straight into the chest of Shравan Kumar.

Parents of Shравan Kumar cursed King Dasharath for killing their son.

Char putra tere honge
Kam ek na ayega
Hai Ram hai Ram karke
Dasharath tu chala jayega.

Four sons will be yours but Dasharath you also die due to loss of your son.

They also portrayed other themes on major social issues like illiteracy, dowry system, women empowerment, unemployment, poverty, hygiene, as well as environment. The best part was they just not portrayed the problems but also provided the solution to tackle these problems.

Puppet making process of Rajasthan:

In the past puppets have been made from the Akra plant or the Boradi tree. Nowadays puppets are made from the Aradu tree. The Akra plant produced material that was light insect resistance, the Boradi tree has multiple uses related to carpentry and agriculture, and the Aradu tree produce wood that is easy to mould and sculpt into a maker's vision. There are two kinds of Rajasthani puppets, Hindu Rajas and Mughal Nawabs. Female characters are mostly depicted as dancers. The primary source of differentiation between characters is found in their costumes and facial appearances. Hindu Rajas typically have beards that are short and parted in the centre, or an upward pointing mustache, and wear spreading garments. Muslim Nawabs have full beards or a downward pointing mustache, and wear heart-shaped garments. Rajasthan puppets are one to two feet in height. In the puppet shows of Rajasthan there are numbers of wooden dummy dolls that are dressed up in bright and colourful attires. These puppets are attached with strings that the puppeteers use to move them around. The Rajasthan puppet have no legs and movement are free. Some puppets, like the acrobats and the wrestlers, have legs, but these are simply for show and not to be manipulated. Puppeteer make their own puppets. A very important feature of these puppets is their elongated and stylized

eyes. Their bodies and limbs are made of mango wood, are stuffed with cotton. String puppet making starts from cutting an 8-9-inch wooden stick which is then given a desired shape. Then clean with hard series paper, then painted in white. After the white colour dries, the white, yellow, and red colours are mixed together to create skin colour. The wood is painted in skin colour for three times and the delicate details of the face are done. A thin brush is used to make the eyes, lips and nose on the face. Small pipes are used to create the hands of the puppets which are further wrapped and stitched in a traditional cloth. Then the whole body is covered with bright coloured beautiful clothes to give a perfect shape to the puppet. And then it is embellished with the jewellery and other accessories to give it a ravishing look. Finally, the strings are attached to its hands, back and shoulders to make it moveable. And the puppet is then perfectly ready for the dance. Though it is a traditional method of making puppet but it could be created with different materials like plastic, paper, socks, wood, clay, cardboard etc. Many puppets hang on one rope: with one hand tied to the head and the other to the waist.

Manipulation of puppets:

Puppets are lifeless but puppets get life in the hands of puppeteer. Puppeteer put their life in puppets. That's why puppet is called as lifeless puppets those who move only at the gesture of figure. "Manipulation of Kathputli is not every one's cup of tea. It requires a lot of practice for the puppeteers to do so" said 60 years old puppeteer of Nagore District 'Babulal Bhatt'. He himself does not know from how many years he has been associated with the puppetry art. He has been doing puppetry since a very young age. Now he can operate puppet even by blindfolding. He said, "Even closing my eyes keeps my mind and finger moving". Puppeteers moves the jointed limbs of the puppets with the help of strings attached to each of them and a slight jerk of the string is meant to cause movements of the puppet's hands, neck and shoulders. The puppeteer bends the string around his fingers and manipulates the puppet. Anger is shown by a quick jerk of the puppet done with a slight movement of the hand. Laughter is shown by jerking the puppet in such a way that the shoulder makes quick upward and downward movements. Indifference or rather contempt and anger, is shown by turning one puppet away from another puppet, bringing the latter round to face the first puppet, and repeating this

movement in several times. Fighting puppets are moved towards each other with great speed, and with swords and other weapons in their hands. The lifting of a weight is done in a very humorous way. The puppet is bent over with the help of its strings until it touches the object to be lifted. Delivery of inspiring speeches is made by moving the hands of the puppet in an upward direction and giving a little jerk to it. Greeting and saluting is done by bending the puppets and leaving their arms to hang loosely. Rebuking and beating is done by throwing one puppet to the other. An affectionate meeting is shown by bringing the shoulders of two puppets together. The dancer Anarkali took more labour for making and manipulation because she is a dancer so it has several dance movements, it has joining in neck, hand and waist, and it needs six strings. Two for waist, two for hand, one in head and one in back. Her limbs are sewn in such a manner that, with the slightest jerk, several dance movements can be shown. The neck swivels on a hook so that neck-movements can be produced. Characters like the horse-rider and juggler have intricate movements. Most of the puppets have only one string with two ends, one tied to the head of the puppet and the other to the waist, with the loop around the fingers of the puppeteer. This simple device produces wonders.

Language never becomes a hindrance to understand the art and culture of a place. It can be said after watching performance of Rajasthani puppet show that there is no need-to-know Rajasthani language to understand the language of their puppets. It is their language of movement through which they express almost all the meaning that a human being can conceive of, hence perhaps Rajasthani puppet is popular all over the world. The strings, the puppet, and the fingers that manipulate the scene and constitutes the language of the puppet.

Stage of puppet:

A miniature stage is set up with the help of a cot that is laid by length. The puppeteer tacks his puppet over a rope joined to the upper legs of the cots. The cots are covered with sheets in order to conceal the puppeteers from the view of the public. Previously, puppeteer use to perform in a tamburi (tent). Nowadays, they create an instant stage by placing two cots together vertically and tying bamboo around them horizontally. A curtain, generally dark in colour, is at the backstage and a colourful

curtain with three arches, called Tiwara or Tajmahal, hang at the front. No property is used on the stage. Most of the puppets are hung on a bamboo bar at the backstage. The puppets are tied with dark strings, which do not show against the dark backdrop, and dim lights are used.

Rituals associated with puppet:

Puppets have played an important role in ancient cultures. They were often employed as symbols of an occult or magic power. It is said that King Vikramaditya had a huge wooden puppet by his throne, which he consulted wisely to confirm any unpleasant or crucial judgment. For the Bhatt's, puppets are part of divinity. They treat puppet like God, puppets are also worshiped in the same way as God because puppets give them livelihood, peace, activity and joy. For puppeteers, puppet is their daily bread also it gives them identity as "Kathputliwala" and this identity give them respect, said Kherati Ram Bhatt, is a traditional puppeteer of Rajasthan. Puppet is the existence of puppeteer, if puppet exist, then puppeteers exist or else they do not exist. So, puppet is the God of those people. Bhatt's worship the puppet in Navratri as per the tradition of puppeteer. A goat is also sacrificed to puppet during Navratri if puppeteer is present. Otherwise, rice pudding is offered in pure ghee, otherwise it offers pudding. First, all the puppets are kept in a clean place on the bottom of a clean cloth. Then the mouth of all the puppets is washed with clean water, Ganga jal or milk. After that, Kheer Halwa, whatever sweets are prepared for puppet, put it in the mouth of the puppet, that is, to feed the puppet. After that all the puppets are blown with a clean cloth for 5 or 10 minutes. Then all the puppets are greeted by the people with folded hands and lift them all up and put them in the box again. Puppet is worshiped on Ashtami or Navami in Navratri. In Ashtami, if there will be Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday, then on those days, they do not worship and do on Navami.

They never destroy a puppet, but consign broken puppets to a sacred river and allow them to flow away with the stream, on the way back to their celestial home. The Kathputliwalas regard their puppets almost as they do humans. Each puppet is handed from generation to generation, and when it can no longer be used, a prayer is whispered

and it is floated down a river to mark its death. It is believed that the longer the puppet stays afloat, the more blessed its existence is supposed to have been.

Music in puppet:

Music is a soul of puppetry. The movement of puppetry is based on its music. The puppet themselves do not speak but small squeaks are emitted as the puppets voice through the puppeteers' modulator or boli. In Rajasthan a whistle is used for puppet music, it is called as "boli". The first and foremost music which is used in puppetry is "boli". Another musical instrument is "dholak" or drum is basically played by the female. Along with the playing the dholak, some Rajasthani folk songs are also sung. The whistle is play by the breath and in this gesture, the drummer understands what to play. Drummer moves in the rhythm of whistle. Another musical instrument is ghungru, the narrator takes ghungru in his hand and played in accordance to rhythm. Traditionally, men work the puppets while women provide accompanying music by playing dholak. The song is sung by women interspersed by whistles. Popular legendary stories like Amar Singh Rathore are enacted with the folk music of Rajasthan.

Puppeteers of Rajasthan among the modern audience:

In the past, rural puppeteers were bound by caste lines and the art form was passed on hereditarily from father to son. The same tradition still exists in some quarters. Roles within the performance can be interchangeable between each family member whether male or female. Due to developing society puppeteers are forced to explore beyond their rural communities as a way to generate income and reach a wider audience. Now, they perform at hotel, restaurants and sites that cater to tourists. To stay relevant, they have expanded their repertoire to include contemporary and popular stories, including those influenced by Indian films. Contemporary puppetry is becoming a universal art form. Caste lines no longer dictate who can become a puppeteer or who can practice Kathputli. New generation of puppeteers are cautiously designing original puppets, themes and stories as a means to keep the art form tradition to modern society.

After Independence, many puppeteers of Rajasthan, went frequently to Delhi to perform. In the early 1960's, the area where Kathputli exist was mainly a jungle. But

over the next few decades, the performers set up tents and began clearing the jungle to make it more habitable. As the colony grew, so did Delhi. Soon, not just the performers, but migrants from places like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere began to settle in Delhi. Nearly one thousand artist families live in this colony of four thousand families located near Shadipur Depot area of Delhi. The artists are puppeteers and folk dancers from Rajasthan, acrobats from Maharashtra, and magicians from Hyderabad, animal trainees from Uttar Pradesh and wood carvers from Gujarat. This colony of these artists from Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and South India is a mini-India.

Natak Akademi Award for puppetry by the President Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam in New Delhi on 26 October 2004. Puran Bhatt is originally from Rajasthan, Nagoar District, was born in a family of traditional string puppeteers currently living in Shadipur Depot, West Delhi, 2003 awardee Puran Bhatt learn puppetry with his father Malu Ram. Later, he trained in modern puppet theatre with among others, Meher Contractor, S. Rahi and Dadi pudumjee. Puran Bhatt is a master puppeteer in the Kathputli tradition, who has developed this culture as a fine art and he is also an impressive singer of Rajasthan folk style. He has collaborated with contemporary artists and expanded the repertoire of Kathputli ka Khel string puppetry with new creations. 64 years old puppeteer Puran Bhatt is now associated with his company Aakar Puppet Group, founded in 1991, he has developed works on literacy and environ-mental issues. Using traditional rod, string and shadow puppets, Akar presents shows dealing with social awareness and programs for mentally-ill children through traditional storytelling. When I went to Kathputli colony I met Shri Puran Bhatt who was presented with Sangeet

He served on a project with Bal Bhavan and the national center for education, NSD repertory company, Shri Ram Centre puppet Repertory in 1982 and performed widely in India and abroad, especially in Western Europe and the United States. Now also, he is performing in India and abroad with his own theatre group Akar Puppet Theatre. They have 2 to 21 members to perform in a play. Puppetry is their family business. His 5 sons viz Ranjit, Ajit, Sajit, Lucky and Aksay are helping their father. I also meet his son Ajit Bhatt who is the most famous contemporary puppeteer of India, he was also working in “Gali Gali Sim Sim” an educational sketch comedy puppet show animation telecasted earlier in DD National.

Lala Bhat is a 35 years old young puppeteer born in Kathputli colony of Delhi his father late Naurang Bhatt was migrated from Rajasthan to Delhi in searching of a better way of life with puppet art skill with his itinerant family. He received Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in kathputli making. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Independence activist and folk-art promoter, saw his potential and help him to prepare his own new plays, such as Rajasthani folk heroes in Amar Shing Rathor and Pabuji and the son of Ram and Sita in Lav – Kush. Naurang Bhat presented and exhibited in India and Abroad. I met his son Lala Bhat associated with puppetry from his childhood as a helper of his father. He learns traditional string puppetry from his father and contemporary puppetry from Puran Bhatt and Dadi Pudumjee. In addition to performing puppet dances in traditional dramas like Amar Sing Rathor, Dhola Maru, he also does awareness raising dramas like Health Care, Swatch Bharat, Environmental issues, Beti Bachao Beti Parhao etc to raise awareness among the audience about the burning issues of today's society. He received Bismilla Khan Yuba Puraskar in 2009 from Sangeet Natak Akademi for his efficiency and dedication in puppetry.

The Rajasthani puppeteers settled in Shadipur area of Delhi have rendered yeoman's service to bring puppetry to many religious festivals, marriage ceremonies, and birthday gathering and craft fairs, enhancing popularity of their traditional form among the modern audiences in India and abroad.

Conclusion

Puppetry is one of the oldest folk drama of Rajasthan. This six-month study deals with the puppetry of Rajasthan and a comparative study of Northeastern puppet with puppet of Rajasthan. This study is divided into ten parts. The first part is deal with Introduction part. While studying the puppetry of Rajasthan, I first studied the history of Rajasthan and found that Rajasthan is known for its Royal history and Rajput artistry. Influence of royal history are also seen in its art and culture.

Second part is about the history of puppetry of Rajasthan. It is said that puppetry of Rajasthan is more than a thousand years old, but there is no written evidence of it. Studies on history of puppetry of Rajasthan show that Puppet has been practiced since the time of King Akbar.

Third part is about the stories of puppet show. If we imitate the history of Rajasthan then we can see the story of heroism of Raja Maharaja there and the stories of the heroism of this king and royal history are being performed by all the puppeteer of Rajasthan. At present, in addition to traditional stories, they also portrayed social issues and provided the solution to tackle these problems.

Forth part is about the puppet making process of Rajasthan. Discussed with description of making process of different characters. Puppets are make so technically that a slight jerk of the string is meant to cause movement of the puppet hands, neck and shoulder.

Fifth part is about the manipulation of puppet. They pay special attention to the performance of the puppet.

Sixth part is about the stage of puppet. The stage of puppet is very colourful. This part is discussed about the stage its colour, making techniques.

Seventh part is discussed about folk belief and rituals associated with puppetry of Rajasthan. Folk beliefs are related to every folk performing arts. Puppetry is not exception. Puppet is a means of livelihood for Bhatt's so they worship puppet like God.

Eight part is about the music of puppetry. Briefly discuss about the role of music in puppetry, musical instruments use on it.

Ninth part is discussed about Rajasthan puppeteer among modern audiences and enhancing popularity of their traditional form among modern audiences of India and Abroad.

Tenth part is discussed about a comparative study of the puppets of North East with puppetry of Rajasthan from different corners. There are several of similarities are seen but due to historical, regional difference there are some dissimilarities in making process, presentation techniques and themes of puppetry. Also discuss about problems and find solution.



Puppeteer Kheratiram Bhatt



Puppeteer Kheratiram Bhatt repairing his puppet



Researcher with puppets of Rajasthan



Bind sword and shield in the hands of puppets



Anarkali dance puppet



Weaver puppet "Julahi"
(A school student extracts all the hidden thread during puppet show)



Horse riding puppet



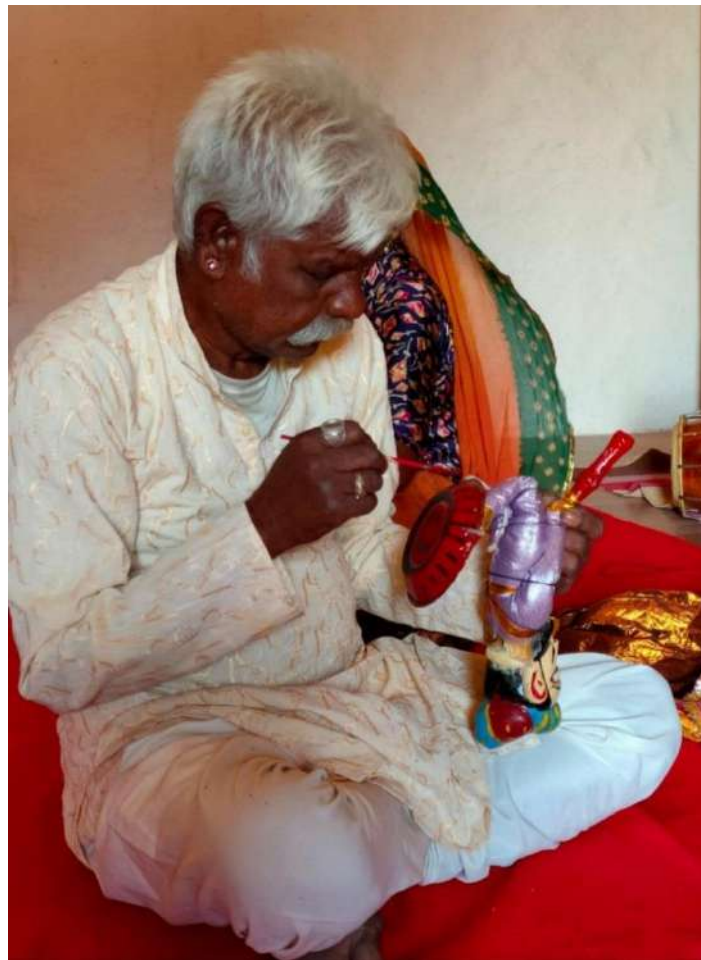
Puppet curving tools



Some puppet heads are made of single wooden block



During the making of puppet



During the coloring of puppet



Puppet have no legs



A magician puppet



Researcher took training to manipulate Rajasthani puppet



Puppet Stage



School students are enjoying puppet show



Babulal Bhatt's wife Chiriya Bhatt playing dholak during puppet show



Puppeteer Babulal Bhatt playing "Boli"



With master puppeteer Puran Bhatt



With young puppeteer Lala Bhatt



Traditional puppeteer's during puppet making training organized by Sangeet Natak Akademi



Traditional puppeteer's during puppet making training organized by Sangeet Natak Akademi



Puppets are ready for show. Photo from Sangeet Natak Akademi workshop



Gate of Arna Jharna: The Desert Museum of Rajasthan



Padmashri Komal Kothari



Researcher interviewing with Kuldeep Kothari



Researcher, Chiriya Bhatt, Babulal bhaat and Kheratiram Bhatt

CHAPTER IV

PUPPETS OF WEST BENGAL

INTRODUCTION:

West Bengal is located in the eastern part of India. The geographical position of the state is in between 27⁰ -21⁰ north latitudes and 85⁰-89⁰ east longitudes. West Bengal stands surrounded by Assam and Sikkim in the northeast, Orissa in the southwest and the state of Jharkhand and Bihar in the west. The state shares its international border with Bangladesh and a part with Nepal and Bhutan. The state also shares ethno-linguistic similarity with Bangladesh. The state's main ethnic group is the Bengali, with the Bengali Hindus forming the demographic majority.

West Bengal has a rich cultural and artistic heritage. Due to the reign of many different rulers in the past, arts and crafts and culture in West Bengal underwent many changes giving an artistic diversity in the forms of traditional handicrafts, masks, painting and carving, dance, music, puppetry etc. Like other art forms, puppetry has been playing a significant role in the art, craft and cultural field of West Bengal. In one hand the artistes of villages are practicing traditional Glove, String and Rod puppets and on the other hand urban practitioners are working on the emergence of new form of puppetry known as contemporary puppetry.

In some district of West Bengal there are traditional puppet troupes but contemporary puppet groups are available only in Kolkata district. West Bengal is now divided into five administrative divisions and 23 districts-

[1] Presidency division:

Howrah District, Kolkata District, Nadia District, North 24 Parganas District, South 24 Parganas District.

[2] Medinipur division:

Bankura District, Jhargram District, Pachim Medinipur District, Purulia District.

[3] Burdwan division:

Birbhum District, Pachim Badhaman District, Hooghly District

[4] Malda division:

Dakshin Dinajpur District, Malda District, Murshid District, Uttar Dinajpur District.

[5] Jalpaiguri division:

Alipurduar District, Cooch Behar District, Darjeeling District, Jalpaiguri District, Kalimpong District.

Out of these 23 districts the tradition of puppetry is prevalent in only some district discuss in bellow.

*The popularity of puppetry in Bengal was evident from Chaitanya Charitamrita (1557) by Krishnadas Kaviraj where the puppets were visualized to be imitation of gods and men^{*1}. The rise of devotional performance in the 16th century Bengal with its praise of Vishnu created human and puppet performances popular for hundreds of years^{*2}. Today, however, puppetry is more likely to draw its repertoire from jatra, an urban popular melodramatic musical theatre, rather than from the epics and Puranas^{*3}. Puppetry of West Bengal is call ‘Putul Nach’ here the word ‘Putul’ means ‘Doll’ and ‘Nach’ means ‘Dance’. There are three types of traditional puppetry prevalent in West Bengal, those are Rod puppet, Glove puppet and String puppet.*

Traditional Puppet Groups of West Bengal-

Sl No	Group Name	Puppeteer	Address
1	Gyanada Opera Putulnac Party	Satish Chandra Chakraborty	Vill: Khagrakona, P.O: Sadhurhat, Daimondharbar, South 24 Pargona.
2	Jadunath Putul Nach Opera	Jagadish Chandra Haldar	Vill: Khagrakona, P.O: Sadhurhat, Daimondharbar, South 24 Pargona.
3	Mahalakhi Opera Putulanach Party	Makhanlal Biswas	P.O: Durgapur, South 24 Pargona.
4	Rajarampur (Beniyabati) Putulnach Party	Schidanand Naskar	P.O: Rajarampur, South 24 Pargona.
5	Shri Shri Opera Putulnach Party	Shankari Mukharjee	P.O: Bajarbodiya Mandirbajar, South 24

			Pargona
6	Mahamaya Opera Putulnach Party	Shambhunath Mandal	Vill: East Durgapur, P.O: Dostpur, South 24 Pargona
7	South 24 Pargona Putulnach Party	Porimol Chakroborty	Vill: Marjada, P.O: Hotr, South 24 Pargona
8	Shribhishmodev Haldar Destana Putulnach Party	Shri Phaltola	P.O: Raydighi, South 24 Pargona.
9	Anup Natya Tarer Putulnach Party	Harendranath Haldar	Vill: Haldarhat, P.O: Ghoser Peni, P.S: Mathurapur, South 24 Pargona.
10	New Bhagyalakhi Opera Putulnach Party	Nararayan Chandra Naskar	Vill: Atasura, P.O: Maitir Hat, South 24 Pargona.
11	New Gyanada Opera Putulnach Party	Madhab Chakroborty	Vill: Khagrakona, P.O: Sadhurhat, Daimondharbar, South 24 Pargona.
12	Bagamur Opera Putunach Party	Suchitrakumar Haldar	Vill: Khagrakona, P.O: Sadhurhat, Daimondharbar, South 24 Pargona.
13	Purba Durgapur New Bharati Opera Theoretical Putulnach Party	Kachiram Mandal	P.O: Dostipur, South 24 Pargona
14	Debendra Sorola Tarer Putulnach	Gobinda Naskar	Vill: Kamarer Chock, P.O: 36 No. Hat
15	Shantimata Putulnach Party	Amuly Ray	Vill & P.O: Mragada Colony, Bogula, Ndiya.
16	Annada Ganga Tarer Putulnach Party	Ajay Kumar Chakrborty	Vill & P.O: Monirtot, Nadiya
17	ShriShri Mahakali Opera Putulnach Party	Goutam Gayen	Vill: Pukuriya, Mandirbajar, P.O: South Bishnupur, South 24 Pargona,
18	1 No. Toki Kalikrishna Haldar Putulnach Party	Biswajit Haldar	P.O: Chetanya, South 24 Pargona.
19	Shri Shri Satynarayan Opera Putulnach Party	Nirapod Mandal	Mayahauri, P.O: Mayahauri, (Jiwan Mandeler Hat), Jaynagar Thana, South 24 Pargona

20	New Narayani Toki Putulnach Party	Brajendranath Mandal	Vill & P.O: Suparijhara, Via: Kashinagar, South 24 Pargona.
21	Kamarer Chock Debendrasorola Putulnach Party	Gobind Chandra Naskar	Vill & P.O: Kamarer Chock, 36 No. Hat, Kultoli, South 24 Pargona
22	Subal Chandra and Saprdai Putulnach Party	Subal Chandra Halder	P.O: Chetanyapur, (Jaynagar), South 24 Pargona
23	Dhirendra Natya Tarer Putulnach Party	Krishnapad Sarkar	Vill & P.O: 6 No. Jalaberiya, Via: Nimpith, P.S: Kultoli, South 24 Pargona.
24	Sarshwati Natyasamaj Putulnach Party	Sudarshan Purkait	P.O: Roshponjji, South 24 Pargona
25	Dharamaraj Theoretical Putulnach Party	Lalbihari Sarkar	Khanjatapur (Karaiberiya), South 24 Pargon
26	Shri Shri Kalimata Putulnach Party	Prafulla Karmakar	Vill & P.O: Rajarberiya, P.S: Mandira Bazar, South 24 Pargona
27	Radhashri Putulnatya Samaj	Satish Samaddar	Vill & P.O: Haldipara, Bogula, Nadiya
28	Ma Sarda Putulnatya Samaj	Nikhil Barui	Vill: Bogula, Madhypara, P.O: Bogula , Nadiya
29	Bharat Mata Putulnach	Mantu Mistry	Vill & P.O: Bogula, Nadiya
30	Rampad Ghorai Bene Putul		36 No. Boshpukur, Prantik Palli, Hatishur Colony, Kolkata- 700042
31	Bashanta Ghorai Bene Putul		Vill: Padmatamali, P.O: Dumurdari, P.S: Bhupotinagar, Purba Medinipur
32	Shaktipad Ghorai Bene Putul		Vill: Padmatamali, P.O: Dumurdari, P.S: Bhupotinagar, Purba Medinipur

33	Ajay Ghorai Bene Putul		Vill: Padmatamali, P.O: Dumurdari, P.S: Bhupotinagar, Purba Medinipur
34	Ganesh Ghorai Bene Putul		Vill: Phulbari, P.O: Brajalal Chock, P.S: Chandipur, Purba Medinipur
35	Bishnupada Ghorai Bene Putul		Vill: Phulbari, P.O: Brajalal Chock, P.S: Chandipur, Purba Medinipur
36	Jogomaya Putul Theatre	Saktipad Pramanik	P.O: Narghat, Purba Medinipur
37	Aragami Putul Theatre	Kartik Chandra Giri	Vill: Khanaka Thuria, P.O: Dhanghora, P.S: Kathi, Purba Medinipur
38	Jagabandhu Singha Tarer Putul		Vill & P.O: Barboriya, P.S: Dhantola, Nadiya

Rod puppet:

The Southern region of West Bengal specially Howrah, Midnapur, Murshidabad, Birbhum and 24 Parganas Districts have a rich tradition of rod puppetry. The traditional rod puppet of West Bengal is known as 'Dang Putul Nach' or 'Daanger Putul Nach' herethe word 'Dang' or Daanger means 'rod'. The emphasis on this form of puppetry is more on drama than dance. There is a great influence of the Jatra (a traditional theatre form of Bengal) tradition in this form of puppetry in the costumes, themes, script and enactment. The traditional repertoire of Daanger Putul Nach comprises a dozen of plays from the Ramayana and the other popular social and historical plays of Jatra, Bengali tales and films. (PY) Some of the families have been carrying this art for generation together- as much as hundred years or more. Earlier, puppeteers would travel miles from one village to another, carrying the heavy wooden puppets on their heads.

Rod Puppet Theatre, is a tradition that goes back to the end of 14th century. Yusuf Julekha is a 15th century Bengali romantic story in verse which is considered one of the greatest literary works of medieval 'golden era' of Bengali literature, written by Shah Muhammad Sagir mention about the prevalence of puppetry in Bengal and so did Vrihat Dharmapuran in the context of the creation of the Ganga River.

Rod puppet making:

The Daanger putul of West Bengal is realistic in design. While it is entirely carved out of wood, the face is further coated with a clay- and- cloth layer. Rod puppeteer Tapas Karmakar said that they make puppet from Jogu Dumber tree. This wood, he claims, will last for at least 200 years. It is kept soaked in a pond for over a year and then dried under the sun. This makes the wood soft and pliable. A full-size tree can yield around 36 puppets. The puppet is painted and always clothed in gaudy, glittering costumes. There is a hole in its hand so that a sword, bow or mace can be inserted depending on the character of the puppet. The puppets have joints at the shoulders, elbows and sometimes even the wrist and do not have legs. The absence of legs is camouflaged with saris or dhotis draped over the puppets befitting the requirement of the character. The head is mounted on a central rod or pole, which passes vertically through the torso and is then tied to the puppeteer's waist.

Rod puppet manipulation:

The puppeteer moves or dances to the music, according to the script, with the puppet attached firmly to his waist. At the same time, he manipulates both the arms with a cord hidden under the clothes.

Stage of rod puppets:

The performance of rod puppets takes place on a makeshift stage spanned by a high curtain over which the puppet performance can be seen.

Music used in rod puppet:

A group of musicians, seating at the side of the stage provide vocal support and the accompanying music. Both music and dialogue are usually very dramatic, in keeping with the traditional folk theatre style. The singers are often puppeteers themselves or there is a separate person singing and delivering the stylized prose dialogues.

*1. *Indian Puppets*, Author Sampa Ghosh and Utpal K Banerjee, page.44

*2. *World encyclopedia of puppetry arts*, UNIMA

*3. *World encyclopedia of puppetry arts*, UNIMA

Rod puppeteers of West Bengal:

One of the oldest traditional rod puppet group of West Bengal “Kalimata Putul Nach Samity” situated in South 24 Pargana district, Mandir Bazar, Bazar Beria village. Forty -eight years old Tapas Karmakar belongs to the 5th generation of a family of traditional rod puppeteers. In fact, Tapas who looks after Kalimata Putul Nach Samity claims that members of his family have been puppeteers for the last 400 years. His father Prafulla Karmakar was honour with Sangeet Natak Akademi award in 2012. Prafulla Karmakar learned danger putul (rod puppetry) from his father, Kishori Mohan Karmakar. Tapas’s three brothers who have chosen other occupations and assist him every time there is a programme. His wife Namita too helps him out with the behind-the-scenes voice acting, as does his twenty-four-year-old son Souvik who has completed his Physics Honours in a college in Kolkata and is now a temporary teacher. Souvik also writes scripts for puppet theatre. Tapas has, with the active help of his son, tried to modernize his shows, using special lighting and a little technology.

Tapas says during the season his monthly earnings goes up to Rs 10000, during the off season, he grows paddy on his small piece of land but mainly concentrates on making puppets.

Satya Narayan Putul Natya Sanstha of South Parganas is associated with traditional rod puppet since 1939. Nirapada Mondal who looks after this sanstha. He says that his grandfather Late Kangal Ch. Mondal is the founder this organization who began stage performances in different places and thus he was successful in keeping alive the heritage. Nirapada Mondal learnt puppetry from an early age from his grandfather and later he got a chance to learn and work with Suresh Dutta. He also took training on puppet script writing from the director of Peoples Puppet Theatre Association Mr. Hiren Bhattacharya. He has received National Scholarship from the Ministry of Culture, New Delhi for the session 1997-1999.

He is a teacher at primary school of South 24 Parganas District by profession. Mondal has not only been organizing shows on mythological themes but also organizing shows in remote areas with an aim to make people aware of current events by staging puppet shows. He said apart from their aesthetic value, they had educative potential in terms of teaching morals to the young and spreading culture and folklore to the uninitiated.

Glove puppet:

Glove puppet of West Bengal is called Beni Putul. Why is it called so? This question was answer by Basanta Kumar Ghoroi an artist from Beniputul that:

“Just as girls make braids with three strands of hair and can swing it as they wish, so can these puppets. The puppet’s name is beniputul because the two arms and the body are like three strands of hair, the whole body is swayed like a braid and the puppet can be folded inside a bag like a hair bun.”

There is a village called Padmatamali in the district of East Midnapore in West Bengal. In the village of Padmatamali, the practice of Beni putul continues for generations. Now the village is known as Beni putul village. The style of puppetry is still maintained in this village of West Bengal. The village is inhabited by the Harijan community and this folk tradition is still present in the community. This beni putul dance is not practiced by the Harijan community or any other community in any other village of the district. In Bengal, the tradition of Beni Putul originated first in the Bagura and Rajsahi areas of pre partition Bengal (now Bangladesh). The roots of the glove puppet or Beni Putul tradition lie in the district of East Medinipur in West Bengal and occasionally in the Murshidabad and the South 24 Parganas. The form is a solo act that has existed for over a hundred years. The Beni Putul puppeteers traditionally belong to the scheduled castes of Kahar (palanquin- bearer). They carry a bag containing two glove puppets and travel from village to village, playing dugadugi (a small tabor playing by moving it with one hand) in theirs hands to gather the people of the village. Village girls, daughter in laws, ladies go round to enjoyed puppet show with their children. They take two puppets in two hands; traditionally shows a man and a woman who constantly quarrel. They do family comedy shows and sometimes they perform on Radha Krishna or mythological stories on request. This is how they collect a handful of rice for their empty stomach and about 70-80 families were involved in this art 30-40 years ago but they also had to be humiliated for this begging profession. So, the artists left this art and started associating with other professions. Now there are not even 10 families associated with it.

Glove puppet making:

Glove puppet heads are traditionally made from wood or by terracotta. The clay used in terracotta is generally a blend of two or more types of clays, found in river beds, pits and drains. They are blended together and then given shape of puppet head. The artists shape clay into beautiful puppet face and highlighted the features. It is then baked at high temperature, to grant puppet head stiffness and stability. Then they paint the eyes, face, nose and decorate them in a stylized manner. At that time, they used puppet dance as a means of begging. Since the use of clay made the glove puppets heavy it was difficult to make them dance, it was also very difficult to walk around all day with the puppets in a tame bag. Later in association of Government of West Bengal Beni puppeteers were invited to took training of making light weight puppets by lighter mediums like papier mache, sawdust and thermocole. Due to the reduction in the weight of the puppets made with the lighter materials, it has become convenient to go around the village and perform puppet shows. Nowadays they make puppet faces with papier mache while the hollow arms and hands are made of wood to facilitate the vigorous, rhythmic clapping. Ghungroo is tied in puppets hands. Colorful costumes are worn according to the character. The female puppet wear bangles or sometimes shakha pola in their hand. Artists beautifully apply nailpolish on the female puppets nail. The height of the puppet, after wearing costume, is a, maximum of 2.5 feet. These puppets do not have legs. The whole is covered with costume.

Manipulation of glove puppet:

The glove puppets are manipulated by three fingers. The glove puppeteer's thumb and middle finger are used, to manipulate the hands, while the forefinger is used to manipulate the head. Although the puppets have no expression of their own, the puppeteer manipulate their puppet in such a manner that Beni Putul become the centre of attraction for all specially children. Female puppets are given an odhana (scarf) on the head which makes it convenient to express her shyness. The puppets can express all kinds of expressions of laughter, joy, sadness and anger with the manipulation by the puppeteer.

Stage of glove puppet:

There is no set format for the movements and there is no stage. In the old days, they would go from door to door demonstrating their performance or they would visit local fairs and festivals. At that time, they were not invited to any professional platform. Whenever they were called for ceremony of Annaprashana or good deed at someone's house they happily performed puppet shows. But nowadays, they are invited to perform beni puppets on some stages, says Puppeteer Ganesh Ghorai.

Music used in glove puppet:

The glove puppeteer is the narrator, singer, actor, providing the dialogue for the both male and female puppet and sometime also plays the musical instrument if it is necessary. Two cymbals are tied in the two hands of the puppets. The puppets keep the beat of the songs with the clap of the hands. The puppets have anklets fixed on arms, which are used to keep rhythm by clapping. They take two puppets in two hands, or sometimes one puppet in one hand and a small drum in the other. The lyrics are often laced with humour and sarcasm while the music is based on either common folk tunes or even popular Hindi or Bengali film songs. Beside songs, they also have a dialogue with the puppets to depict the daily chores of village women. The puppeteers sing during the show and play damaru (small drum) beforehand to attract the crowd.

String puppet:

Traditional string puppet of West Bengal is call 'Tarer Putul' or 'Suter Putul'. Tarer putul is a more popular term. Previously a number of groups performed this art form in different district of West Bengal like Nadia mainly in Bogula, Borberia, Muragacha colony and Sorupgang and North and South 24 Paraganas. Traditional string puppeteer of Nadia came from East Pakistan after partition and they were engaged in agricultural work in the land allotted by the Government in that time. Nadia district puppeteers have inspired the puppeteers from the neighbourhood districts. Earlier several tarer putul groups performed in Ranarghat and Barachat in South 24 Parganas but now unfortunately no group is found there. In South 24 Parganas few string puppet groups are still surviving mainly in Kultuly, Joynagar and Sargorty. Two string puppet group are

still active in Bakura district. Many of them have companies of puppet owned by the individual or sometime jointly owned by the puppeteer on partnership basis. Each group consist of 8 to 12 members. Each and every member has a fix role to play. Group has one master who delivers all the dialogues and also sing all songs alone. He changes his voice according to the male or female characters. He is basically self-trained and more interestingly he remembers all the plays. They usually perform for 6 months or sometime 7 months, and when they come back to their own village, they engaged themselves again in farming.

Traditional string puppeteer of West Bengal mainly performs in the neighboring village fairs and weekend markets. Now some of them got opportunity to performed at the towns and cities, mainly the festivals organized by central or local Governments and by the NGOs who are working for the folk artiste.

Stories of puppet show:

The themes for the operatic puppet shows are mostly myths and legends, the dancing and the acting elements of the performance hinge on the traditions of the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas, with the epic themes being made totally assimilated in the climate of Bengal. Plays are known as 'pala' in their language. Source of the tarer putul palas are- Sitar Bonobas, Lav Kush, Danbir, Raja Harischandra, Behula Lakhindhar, Mahisasur Badh, Abhimonyu Badh, Sabitri Satyabanand many more.

In the beginning usually two dancer puppets appear on the stage. They play small skits before main performance and also appear in between the shifting of the scene during the play. In rural areas audience love to see the mythological stories. They also like to see the plays base on popular cinema or jatra. They are habituated watch the plays for 2 hours. But when the same group performed in urban areas for urban audience, they are getting boarded to watch the show for the two hours. So, some of the traditional puppeteer make their plays shorter to avoid this problem. For village audience they performed the full plays. One of the most interesting part is dialogue deliberation in their play. As they are playing puppet with the live dialogue, they also change their terminology according to the changes in the nature of the audience. Generally, they used local exchanges with various jocks which may sounds verger in urban areas. But these

are popular in rural areas. Now some traditional puppeteers are aware about that and they act accordingly.

Apart from these mythological stories historical, social and even political themes began to be incorporated. They also performed palas like- Bider may Joshna, Emene Fatakesto, Sidur Niyona Muche, Gorib Gharar Boro Bon and so on. Apart from these plays they also working for propagate different Governmental project, various awareness generate campaign, election campaign also. Recently the situation of covid 19 is also projected in their plays. Some group created new play on corona virus.

String puppet making (tarer putul nach):

Puppets of 60 to 80 centimetres tall are made of organic matter, usually Shola pith or sponge- wood, a plant that grows wild in the wetlands, clay, cloth etc. Sola pith is basically thin so puppet maker tied it together with the gum and jute thread and they shape it accordingly. Solapith is the main raw material for tarer putul, the basic structure of tarer putul are made of solapith. They use clay and cloth to make the surface of the face and hands, to make it smooth then they use colour on it. The face shape of these puppets, enlarge and bright eyes, are similar to the idol of our Gods and Goddesses. Puppets are jointed at the neck, shoulder and elbows only.

Strings are tied to a bamboo control stick held by the puppeteer. Mainly six strings are attached with the controller. This controller is call “chat” in local language. In human puppets two string are attached to its hands, two to its head and two strings to its back and front side of its body. They also have animal puppet like snake, deer, lion and tiger. Generally, on animal figure had string on head, tail and legs. Sometime extra strings are used to make puppet more flexible for a particular character. Ex- They have an acrobat puppet it has ten strings.

Design of the dresses and ornaments are influence by the ‘Jatra Pala’. The color and the texture of the fabric used in the puppet depends on the character. Dancers are dressed with more gorgeous color or fabric. On the other hand, when Sita lives in the forest with Ram or Lav Kush she dresses with ordinary saree.

Stage of tarer putul

The group has their own stage setup with the sitting arrangements of the audience. The puppets are hanging behind the stage. They use backdrops for different scenes. These backdrops are colourful and painted according to the necessity of the play. Mainly backdrops are painted by the 'Putuwas'. Few artistes are only engaged in making puppet and backdrop sceneries.

Jagabandhu Sen is the oldest person who make tarer putul and backdrop sceneries in Nadia district of West Bengal. Most of the groups depend on him.

Music in string puppet plays

Music plays a very vital role in tarer putul show. Musician accompany the master during the play. Musical instrument like tabla, dhol, harmonium, pakhowaj, careonate, flute is used in the play. Nowadays they also used keyboard in their plays. Puppeteer manipulate the puppet along with live dialogue and music. In puppet dramas sorrow, joy, frustration, hatred and love are portrayed beautifully with the help of music. Music work as a reaction of every action of puppet. As the facial expression of puppet is fix in this case music works as a ray between the audience and every feeling and expression of puppet.

Manipulation techniques of string puppet:

One puppeteer holds one puppet sometime one puppeteer holds two puppets at a time. In the devotional songs of mythological plays, the puppets are slowly move in a rhythm. The puppets are sometimes pushed back and forth, sometimes the puppet is rotated and made to dance. Hamsasya hasta mudra shape is made in the hands of some dancing puppet. In the same pose, puppeteers open the puppets hand and rotate them. While speaking dialogue puppeteer slowly shake puppets body and shake the right hand. Shake the whole body while laughing. In social dramas, the puppet's belly is sometimes bounce and sometimes the waist is bounce to entertain the audience.

Some string puppeteer and puppet group of West Bengal:

Nataraj Putul Nach puppet group was established in 1976 by Shri Sudan Halder. Unfortunately, all the belongings of the group were completely destroyed by the massive

floods in 2000 in West Bengal. Sameer Halder and Kanai Halder, sons of Late Sudan Halder revived the troupe once again in 2010. Now the group is run by Sameer Halder. He was born in 1967. He learned the art of tarer putul from his father Sudan Halder. They have a team of 8 members who are doing full time puppetry. They have their own stage set-up to sitting arrangements for the audience. They perform for 7 to 8 months in village areas. When they come back to their own village they get engaged with farming. The group has one main singer (Sur Master), musician, three puppet manipulator, one light executor and three assistants who manage the ticket counter and maintain the queue outside the tent before the show. They have given around 10,000 to 15,000 performances in West Bengal, Bihar and Odisha till date.

New Bishwabharati Putul Natya Samaj is run by Sri Chandan Roy. They performed for 6 to 7 months. They setup their own tents in a suitable place in a village area for 15 days to one month. Before they setup their tent for puppet show they visit the place to understand the situation of the particular place and once they setup their tent in a particular place they start to advertise their show by announcing through microphone and also through their show boards. The group consist of ten people and all are appointed in a salary basis. The group has one master who is the main singer, one musician, three puppet manipulator, one light executor, one cook and three assistant who manage the ticket counter and maintain the queue in the entrance of the tent before their show. The sitting arrangement is separately arranging for man and women. The tickets are priced at a lower cost so that the number of audiences may increase. They usually perform two shows a day in the evening, with a gap of half hours between the shows.

Vivekananda Putul Natya Sanstha

Shoboni PutulNach

Tarama Putul Nach

Star Putul Nach, Nadia

Sri Ma Putul Natya Samaj, Propiter Ranjan Rai, Muragacha colony, Nadia

Sri Durga Putul Nach, Sankari Mukherjee, P/O Bajarberia Mandirbazar, South 24 Pargana.

Silpi Tirtha Putul Nach, Propiter Dilip Rai, Kushaberia, Dhantola, Nadia.

New Shantimata Putul Nach

Maa Shitala Putul Nach
Maa Tara Putul Nach
Maa Narayani Tarer Putul
Laxmi Narayan Putul Nach
Kultoli Debendra Sorola Putul Nach Group
Ganapati Putul Nach
Binapani Putul Nach
Dikbijoyee Putul Nach
New Gandhesary Putul Nach
New Laxmi Narayan Putul Nach

Contemporary puppets of West Bengal:

In 1960, four puppeteers Shri Suresh Dutta, B. Sahai, R.N. Shukla Rahai and Durga Das Chatterjee from Kolkata in West Bengal studied for a year at the Moscow State Puppet Theatre under the directorship of famous Soviet and Russian puppeteer Sergei Obraztsov, Sergei Obraztsov State Academic Central Puppet Theatre in Moscow. These young puppeteers returned to Kolkata with new experience and energy and they founded their own puppet companies. Since then, puppetry has become more widespread in West Bengal. Art lovers became attracted to contemporary puppet shows and gradually people became involved in this field.

Contemporary Puppet Groups

Sl No	Group Name	Puppeteer	Address
1	Kalkata Puppet Theatre	Suresh Dutta	20, Bijon Setu, Kolkata-19
2	Peoples Puppet Theatre		80, Acharjya Jagadish Chandra Bose Road, Kolkata-70014
3	Talbetal Puppet Theatre	Subhashin Sen	Lokonath Apartment, 78, Bosepukur Purbapara, Kolkata-700107
4	Dolls Theatre	Sudip Gupta	74/B, Selimpur Road, Kolkata-700031

5	Jhargram Art Academy	Sanjib Mitra	North Hospital Road, Ghoradhara, Jhargram, West Medinipur-721507
6	Bardhaman Puppet theatre	Swapan Ray	Aparnaghat, Mayurmahal, Bardhaman
7	The Puppets	Srimoti Uma Goswami	6, Kiransankar Ray Road, Kolkata-1
8	Kathputli	Somnath Majumdar	Amrakunja, Bhastora 3/2, Netaji Subhash Chandra Basu Road, kodaliya, Botatola, Kolkata- 700146
9	Rashels Lital Theatre	Rashel Maykbin	Vill: Ramchandrapur, P.O: R.C Thakurani, Joka, South 24 Pargona, Pin-700104
10	Hand Syadographi	Amar Sen and Sbhyasi Sen	37, Abinash Shasmol Len, Beleghat, Kolkata-700010
11	The Puppetriyarsh	Parthapratim Paul	Bhatchala Colony, P.O: Shri Polli, Bardhaman
12	Simple Puppet Theatre	Swapna Sen	Nirmal Ayerang, M.G. Road (Ashabori), Vill: Ramchandrapur, P.O: R.C. Thakurani, South Pargona- 743512
13	Indian Puppet Theatre	Gita Banerjee	36/C, Baliganj Circular Road, Flate-1/2, Ditol, Kolkata-700019
14	Nalanda Puppet Theatre	Saybal Ghosh	8 C, Jonok Road, Kolkata
15	Banga Putul	Dr. Subha Joyardar	B 26/1, Netaji Nagar, P.O: Piyali Town, Baruipur, South 24 Pargona-743387
16	Putul Gosthi	Dr. Santranjan Paul	14/1, Nardan Avenit, Kolkata-37
17	Youth Puppet Theatre	Swapan Chakraborty	75/D, Dr. Suresh Sarkar Road, Kolkata-14
18	C.L.T	Surajit	Abon Mahal, Gariyahat Road (South), Kolkata-19
19	Dhumketu Puppet Theatre	Dilip Mandal	11/C, Radhanath Choudhury Len, P.O: Tryangra, Kolkata--15

20	Jonaki Puppet Theatre	Alok Dutta	8, S.R. Das, Kolkata-26
21	Dana Puppet Theatre	Lipika Sarkar	11 A, Harlal Das Street, P.O: Eantali, Kolkata-14
22	Sailpik	Partha Majumdar	1 No. Dighirpar (Khadir Pashe), Kyaning Town, South 24 Paagona
23	Hetal Puppet Theatre	Sumanta Chakraborty and Jogmohan Mandal	1 No. Dighirpar (Khadir Pashe), Kyaning Town, South 24 Paagona

About some contemporary puppeteer:

Suresh Dutta is an eminent puppeteer who established the Calcutta Puppet Theatre in 1972, which has trained more than one generation of puppeteers in the Russian epic style of Rod puppets. He was born in Faridpur (today Bangladesh), in 1934. He learnt puppetry, design, dance and theatre from an early age, and later studied with Sergei Obraztsav. His most widely performed productions include Aladdin, Ramayana and Sita. He has served as vice president of UNIMA India. In 1987 he received the Sangeet Natak Akademi award as well as in 2009 he was awarded the Padmashree by the President of India.

Sudip Gupta is a well-known puppeteer of West Bengal. He learns puppetry from Suresh Dutta in 1983 and work with him for 7 years then in 1990 he forms his own group “Dolls Theatre”. His first production Taming of the wild is currently performed on 1700 stages around the world. Sudip Gupta’s Dolls Puppet Theatre never uses dialogue. To make understand the story of puppet show he only uses classical music- both western and Hindustani. Sudip Gupta says, making the audience laugh and cry for his puppets; to have them dream a little; think a little and again their certain knowledge, have them believe the puppets to be alive that is magical. His puppet has some unique design, unique style like puppets have no eyes, nose and lips even though they successfully throw messages to the audience. This is the magic of their show, which make their show exceptional then others.

Conclusion:

Puppetry is one of the oldest folk drama of West Bengal. This chapter deals with the art of puppetry of West Bengal and every aspect of it. In this chapter 'puppetry of West Bengal' discussion have been done on different types of puppetry prevalent in West Bengal, technique of puppetry and puppeteer associated with this artform and its comparison with puppetry of North East.

In my research work I have found three types of traditional puppets prevalent in West Bengal. Most of the traditional string puppeteer of West Bengal still practicing the old form or techniques. They have strong emotion about their tradition. They have used traditional materials like solapith, cloth till date. They suffering a lot to get solapith as it is sessional, but still, they never experiment with other raw materials. Although one change is definitely come in all three forms of puppetry that is technical changes. But it is also right that if we provide more training to them then we may lose our tradition. Because this is a traditional art form and it is traditionally embedded in them.



Rod puppet making



Rod puppet making tools



Puppeteer colouring the puppet



The Puppeteer are dressing the puppet



Rod puppet manipulation



Rod puppet stage performance



The rest of Rod Puppets made by Kishori Mohan Karmakar



Puppeteer Tapash Karmakar at the time of colouring his puppet



Puppeteer Nirapad Mandal Basanta Kumar Ghorai with his Beni Putul Radha and Krishna



Beni Putul stage performance

॥ পুতুল নাট্য সংস্কার চার প্রজন্ম ॥

১ম



॥ কাপাল চন্দ্র মণ্ডল ॥

২য়



॥ হাডমনি মণ্ডল ॥

৩য়



॥ নিরাপদ মণ্ডল ॥

৪র্থ



॥ রাজশ্রী মণ্ডল , দেবশিষ মণ্ডল , স্বর্নশ্রী মণ্ডল ॥

Four Generation of a family of traditional rod puppeteer



Beni Puppeteer manipulate two puppets at a time



Beni puppet making



Beni puppeteer Ganesh Ghorai with his puppet



পুতুল খেলা: কৃষ্ণনগরে রাস্তার ধারে হাত পুতুল বা বেনি পুতুলের খেলা দেখাচ্ছেন গণেশ মোড়ুই। তাঁর বাড়ি পূর্ব মেদিনীপুরের পদ্মতামলি গ্রামে। এক সময় ওই গ্রামের ৭০-৮০ ঘর মানুষের জীবিকা ছিল পথে পথে ঘুরে ঘুরে এই ভাবেই হাত পুতুলের খেলা দেখানো। এখন সেই শিল্পীর সংখ্যা কমে এসেছে। তবে গণেশবাবু ৪৬ বছর ধরে পথে পথে এই পুতুল খেলা দেখিয়েই সংসার চালান। — নিজস্ব চিত্র।

Beni putul along the road



Anklet fixed on hands of the puppets



Mythological puppet play “Narakashur Badh”



Puppet play on corona virus



Solapith are drying in the sun



After drying screaming with knife



Tied it together with the gum and jute thread and again keep to draying in the sun



After drying shape accordingly



String Puppet stage



String Puppet stage front view



Puppet manipulation



Puppeteer Ranjan Roy



Puppeteer Suresh Dutta



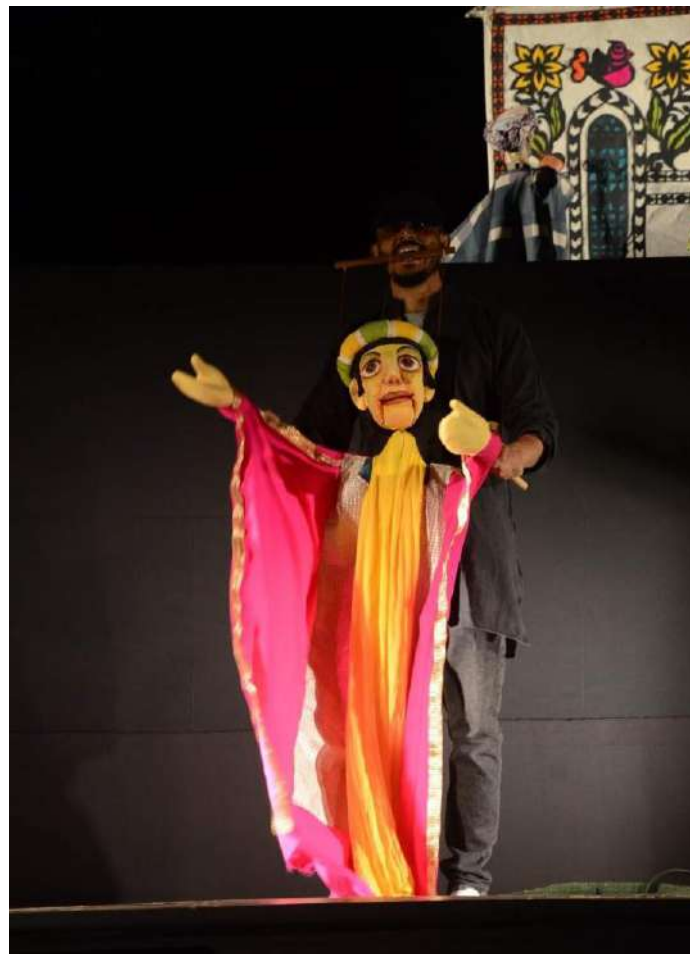
Researcher with Puppeteer Sudip Gupta



Puppet from the play Taming of the wild from Doll's Theatre



Puppeteer are waiting for their term in the backside stage



Puppeteer Atish Mukherjee during performance at Kohima, Photo SNA

CHAPTER V

PUPPETS OF ODISHA

INTRODUCTION

Odisha is an Indian state on the subcontinent's eastern part. It is surrounded by the Indian states of West Bengal to the northeast, Jharkhand to the north, Chhattisgarh to the west and northwest, Telengana to the southwest and Andhra Pradesh to the south. The modern state of Odisha was established on 1 April 1936, as a province in British India and consisted predominantly of Oriya speakers. Oriya is the official and most widely spoken language. Oriya belongs to the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European language family, and is closely related to Bengali and Assamese. Cuttack remained the capital of the state for over eight centuries until 13 April 1948 when Bhubaneswar was officially declared as the new state capital, a position it still holds. Bhubaneswar is the capital of Odisha.

The history of Odisha dates back to antiquity, its most famous old names being Kalinga, Utkal and Odra, when its boundary extended far beyond the present one. By the time of the Mahabharata Kalinga, Utkal and Odra has entered into Aryan polity as powerful kingdoms. Frequent reference is made to Kalinga in the Mahabharata and infrequent references to Odra and Utkal. By the time of Mahavir and Buddha, the Kalinga-Utkal region on the entire east coast of India acquired recognition and fame. The Hindu state of Odisha came under the Muslim rule in 1568 A.D when King Mukunda Deva lost to the Sultan of Bengal, Suleiman Karni. Subsequently, Odisha came under the Moghuls and the Marathas and finally in 1803 A.D. under the British. Odisha formed a part of greater Bengal but didn't lost its own separate cultural identity.

The state has a very opulent cultural heritage, one of the richest in India. The state is famous for classical dance form Odissi, Oriya Literature, music, structural art, sand art, puppetry etc. Vaishna themes in the Oriya language from the major traditional repertory of this east India state. Orissa is an only state where all four kinds of puppets exist. All the forms of puppetry are known as different names.

1. Gopalila (string puppetry);
2. Sakhi Kundhei (glove puppets);
3. Kathi Kundhei (rod puppets) and
4. Ravanachhaya (shadow puppetry).

Krishna's youth and the exploits of Rama- as related in the Srimadbhagwat, Gita Govinda, Puranas and Oriya Ramayana-are the themes for puppet dance and song. The locations for holding the shows are the village fairs and festivals. The memorised dialogues are recited or sung by the leader and repeated by the chorus in a stylised manner. The music is normally based on the traditional ragas or inspired by the folk tunes.

String puppet

The string puppet is known as Gopalila Kundhei. Gopa means cowherder, Lila means story, and it also denotes a rural theatre art form. The term 'Gopalila Kundhei' means "cowherder-play puppet". The performing artists of string puppet are "arhira gouraj" one of the backward communities of Chela community. They were nomadic, but now a days they are seeing no more presenting Gopalila Kundhei natak. Most of the puppeteers of marionette troupe are farmers who are used to presenting shows during off seasons of the cultivation. More than 80 years from now most of the professional string puppet troops are seen in Gangian and Dinkara district. A surface source that 6 and 7 decade of 20th century there emerged more than 80 string puppet troupes across the state and more than 20 of them are presently showing shows outside of the state of Odisha such as in West Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat and Rajasthan said Dr. Gaurang Charan Dash, the retired head of the Odia department in Cuttack's Ravenshaw College and an authority on shadow puppetry. Gopalila is a fast-vanishing tradition of string puppetry in Odisha, due to lack of patronage and the impact of mass media. Gopalila Kundhei was very much populate during medieval period. Most importantly the Bhakti movement provided a set of impetus to this art form. At that time mythological stories and songs were performed to the public through puppet shows. Words such as Puttuli, Puttura, Puttalika and Sarani synonymies of puppet are very profusely used since mediaeval period and also contemporary puppet play.

Theme of string puppet plays of Odisha:

Gopalila kundhei tells the story of young Krishna's pranks with the cow herders (gopa/ gopi) and his love for Radha. There is no written script at all. Themes are from the Srimadbhagwat and Oriya poetic songs, especially the Mathura Mangal by Bhakta Charan Das (1729-1813), the music is largely based on folk tunes of the region. Krishnalilla composed different Ragas and Raginis, the theme of the story was of love attraction, marriage, battle and forgiveness. It enacts themes from the Srimadbhagawat that relate to the lilas of Krishna in his childhood and youth. Lifting of the Govardhan hill, and encounters with the demoness Putana and his wicked uncle Kamsa and the wrestlers are some of the stories that are enacted and sung in verse, interspersed with improvised dialogues. At a times acrobatic are taken like fighting a man and tiger, fighting snake charming, juggling and do as based on socio political satire and humour. In the 70's when small enclose of the play houses look grebe with thinning audience the troupe thought an alternate to invite new audience. As a result, they have chosen the play theme of love, hatred, murder, violence and socio-political programs are seen in Jatra pendels.

Puppet making

Puppets of Gopalilla Kundei natak have different style big and small. The small one is about 6 inches to 1 fit to height big one is 2 fits. Puppets are carved in wood, after which appropriate headgear and jewellery, depending on the character type, are painted. The chest and arms are also painted, as if clothed, with textile motifs and designs. Some puppeteers costume their painted puppets in the traditional Jatra theatre style. The puppets in southern Orissa have legs, while those without legs are common all over the state. The puppets wear long skirts and a flowing oval cape on the back, which is pinned at the shoulders or on top of the head for women characters. String puppet has straight wooden arms are jointed at the shoulders and sometimes at the elbows as well. Three strings attached to the top of the head and the wrists are tied to a triangular wooden device for manipulation.

Dr. Gaurang charan Das said in Orissa string puppets are made from Gmelina wood. To make a perfect and complete shape of puppet 9 pieces of different sizes of woods are required:

One for head and trunk

Two for right hand

Two for left hand

Two for right leg and

Two for left leg.

All these 9 pieces are make separately and then joined with each other by nail which vacillated free movement of hand and legs. They take care to curve nose, eyes, lips, fingers, breast and chest. They neatly curve every outer part of the body including hair also looks puppet very lively.

Colouring is the second phase of the puppet making. The body is painted by various colours- yellow, black, red and white. Devine character like King, Devatas, Rishis use yellow colour. Blue and Grey for demon characters. Expression of the puppet must be express by colouring of the puppet eyes, moustache, eyebrows and nose. Facial expression is different according to character like big eyes of Ravan, very root facial expression of Dusasan etc.

Puppet's dress is an important part of the puppets of Orissa. Costumes are the symbol of cultural identity of a community and the artiste also see how aesthetically they are presented before audience. Dressing of the puppet is differed according to the dramatic character as story of the play demands. Puppets are dress sambalpuri cotton with textile motifs and designs of Orissa.

String puppet stage

The stage is 4x2x3 feet, facing east. Eight bamboo poles are posted on 4 sides of the stage. Traditionally, the Gopalilla performance is held against a backdrop of peacock feathers called Mayur Bata (7x3 feet). There are some spaces for the musician and narrator behind the stage. The show starts with the playing of Mridangam and blowing of Sankha in front of the stage to attract audience, followed by invocation of Durga, Jagannath and Sarala. The female narrator sits behind the stage to lend her voice to all

female characters, while the male narrator impersonates all male voices sitting in front of the stage.

String puppet manipulation

To manipulate puppets puppeteer used triangular shape device attached white string. Three string is tied in three corners of the device. Puppet can move any direction by thin three string. One manipulator handles all puppets with a helper. Mainly three strings are used to manipulate a puppet- two on both hands and one string on head but some puppet like dancer, the acrobats, snake charmers have 7 to 8 strings are use. Puppets are manipulating with the rhythms of music. Tabla, Dholak, Manjira Carionate, Flute, Segnai are the musical instrument use in puppet plays. Since their composed in ragas and raginis which chhanda style of singing mesmerise the whole audience. So, song is the strength of puppet plays. First, they perform Savitri Satyavan, containing 20-24 songs.

Glove puppet

The glove puppet is known as 'Sakhi Kundhei' or 'Sakhi Nata'. Here the word Sakhi means maidens, friend Kundhai means dolls and Nata is dance. Sakhi kundhei (friend doll) is a glove puppet tradition of the Ahir Kelas of Cuttack, Kendrapada and Dhenkanal districts given by performers who probably migrated from northern India to Bengal first and then to Orissa over a hundred years ago. They speak a mixture of Bengali and Oriya. The puppeteers do not own land and belong to poor agricultural labour, running small shops for livelihood.

Theme of glove puppet plays

There is no written script. The stories of Radha and Krishna are based on texts like Vastraharan, Radha Krishna Milan and Navkeli, a poem by Banmali Das (17th century) are enacted. There are usually only two puppets. The mandatory puppets are Radha and Krishna, but Lalita and Vishakha (sakhifriends of Radha) are sometimes added in the story. The quality of the performance is more lyrical than dramatic.

Glove puppet making

Head and torso are carved in wood and hollowed out to enable manipulation with the fingers. They have no legs, and the costume is in long robes as in jatra (folk theatre) style. Radha has bells under her skirt that jingle as she moves. The puppet for Radha is in yellow colour with sindur (red powder) on forehead and anklets round her waist called Chandra Badani (moon faced). The puppets, gaudily dressed, have Oriya features and definite expressions to depict emotions.

Glove puppet manipulation

Itinerant puppeteers sit on a mat with the audience around them. The puppeteers put the drum(dolak) on his knee and has the puppets play. The music draws heavily on folk melodies. The performance begins with Gangavandana. The puppeteer operating the puppet with right hand and playing the dhol with left hand, sings the lyrics. Puppets of Radha and Krishna are at times tied together so that the puppeteer can manipulate both with one hand.

Stage of glove puppet

There is no any stage for glove puppet performance. The itinerant puppeteers travel from village to village, performing wherever possible, sitting on a mat on the floor with the audience around them.

Rod puppet

Rod puppet of Orissa are called Kathi Kundhei. Here the word Kathi means a wooden rod. The dance of dolls manipulated by kathi, is a recent reconstruction of an older form.

Themes of rod puppet play

Stories are mainly from the Ramayana, Mahabharata or Puranas such as the confrontations of Durga and Mahishasur, the buffalo-demon, Rama and Ravana, Raja Harichandra, Birth story of Swami Jagannath, Krishna Sudama etc. The performance begins with an invocation (stuti) followed by the sutradhara introducing the episode to be

enacted, which goes to show the religious association of the puppetry. Most dialogues are rendered through music, which is a blend of folk and classical tune. The group addresses modern themes as well as performing the traditional repertoire based on the Ramayana and other mythic sources,

Rod puppet making process

Every puppeteer makes their own puppets with a lot of passion and dedication so the puppets everywhere have their own unique exquisiteness. Orissa's rod puppets also have a special kind of attractiveness. Puppets of Orissa can be adorned with angels descending from the sky. The puppet, are made of wood, is fastened to the rod. Puppets are 60 centimetres tall, carved, painted and costumed in jatra style are jointed at the shoulders. One rod is inserted from the head to torso to holds up the head. The head of the puppet is supported by the main rod and is joined at the neck and both hands are attached to the rods at the shoulder. The main rod is hidden by a robe or costume of the puppet. The action rods are connected to the hands of the puppets. Since their puppets reach a height of 4 feet, the weight of the wooden puppets also increases. As a result, there are various difficulties in handling the puppets, so they start using paper pulp later. Puppets made with the help of paper pulp facilitate the movement of the puppets to reduce their weight.

Rod puppet manipulation

Rod puppets are supported and manipulated from bellow using one or more rods of different sizes. The shoulder joints are connected with string from inside the torso of the puppet to two rings which are pulled for arm movements. Strings inside the torso are pulled to move the character's arms to show action. Puppets are manipulated from below with the help of chords. Beside the head movement, hands and often legs are moved. In the Lankapadi Jatra of Dasapalla, a huge wooden figure of Ravana with ten heads is placed on a wheel cart and kept before Rama to strike the arrow on the day of Ravana's death. In the death sequence, the main head of Ravana is twisted to a side by manipulating a rod that is fixed to the head. The effigy of Ravana is then dragged on the streets on the subsequent day of Rama's coronation. In Krishna Leela of Ganjam district,

the huge Kaliya serpent, made of cloth, comes out from the wooden-box kept on the stage. The serpent head is hooked and held by a rod and manipulated by a person. While dancing and swinging, the snake follows Krishna, hissing ferociously and bringing out an awe-inspiring illusion. 25 to 30 puppets are manipulated in a complete 3 hours play.

Stage of rod puppet

Puppeteers kneel down behind a screen, holding the puppets above him for the performance. Musicians play drums, cymbals and reed instruments while a multi-person group manipulates. A 6-foot space in front of the main stage of the rod puppet is set aside for the instrumentalist and vocalist. The use of many musical instruments in Orissa's rod puppet show is a notable feature. At least 8 artists collaborate on musical instruments. All musical accompanists are sit in front of the stage. The stage is made of bamboo, wood and cloth. It is covered 3 feet above from the ground so that the puppeteer is not visible to the audience. There are two wings in two sides of the stage for puppets entry and exit. Settings are not used on the stage but uses different curtains depending on the scene. For example, when showing Ravana, one can see the use of the curtain of Ravana's palace at the back, sky curtains are used on the stage to represent the outdoor scene.

Rod puppeteers and puppet groups

There once was one group in the Keonjhar district, whose director Rama Chandra Kuanar manipulated the puppets alone and used his own voice for different characters by playing instrument. Now his brother Maguni Charan Kuar (b.1937) runs the group and does the same thing. In 2004 Maguni Charan Kuar was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and is currently the best-known exponent of Kathi Kundheina. He starts to do puppet at the age of 22 years. He learned this form of traditional puppetry from the Jhara community in his village in Keonjhar district, from Makrodhoja Behera. Orissa and has improvised within the genre over many years with his company, Utkala Biswakarma Kalakunja. He notes: "Sadly, the art form again awaits passionate puppeteers who could save it in the age of television and cinema. They got honorarium of 25,000/- to 30,000/- for a three-hour show. In a year they got minimum 40 and maximum 50 shows. But this much money is not sufficient for them because 15 number of artists

are associated with them in addition raw materials cost are a lot. His children and grandchildren have been helping him in puppet shows. But he also lamented that his son did not show much interest in promoting this art. At present, the committee does not want puppet shows and his son does not come forward to request for the shows rather they are more interested in running their own business. But he is hopeful that his son and all the disciples in the group will survive, even if they make new additions according to the needs of the situation, without letting the puppetry die. He goes to say that it was different in the past but now it is difficult to provide a single person in a time of rising prices, in such a time it is very difficult to run a group by giving daily wages of Rs 1000/- to 10 to 12 artists.

Shadow puppet

The shadow puppet theatre of Odisha is readily offered for naming the form as Ravana chhaya. It is title thus because, Rama is a god, as in Sanskrit so in Oriya the word for God is devata, which is derived from the root 'div' meaning 'to shine'. Devata is, therefore, a being that is luminous. A luminous body does not cast its own shadow but when it is present the shadows of other opaque objects are cast. Rama is no minor god but the incarnation of God and therefore, compounding chhaya with Rama to name the form would be philosophically incongruous. The plausibility of this explanation is strengthened by the fact that the puppeteers, at time, refer to this form as 'Rama Nataka'- the drama on Rama-but when the word chhaya is compounded it is always Ravana-chhaya.

However, plausibility of the explanation is questioned by the fact that the puppet representing Rama does cast a shadow on the screen in the actuality and the puppet figure is designed in on special way. On the other hand, the Ravana figure looks towering in comparison with that of Rama. Of course, Ravana has been so characterized in Ramayana as to inspire the imagination of the original puppet designer for a highly stylistic treatment. Nevertheless, Rama should not look insignificant in comparison with Ravana unless there is some special motive for it.

The shadow puppet plays depicting stories from the Ramayana. Ravan Chhaya, the shadow puppet theatre was popular all across Dhenkanal and Angul district of Odisha in the mid-19th century.

Script of shadow puppet

Ravanchhaya draws exclusively upon the Rama-legend. There is no written play. It is entirely contained in the oral tradition. The shadow puppet plays depicting stories mainly from the Ramayana. The main singer or interpreter is called Gayak and they follow Bichitra Ramayana, written in Oriya by Biswanath Khuntia in the early 18th century. Impromptu prose-dialogue plays an important role in the presentational style. The barber puppet, called Bhandari, appears first with his grandson. The singer cum interpreter speaks the improvised dialogue, originally believed to be 200 years old. Traditionally they used Oriya language for performance.

Presently as the demand of the time they translate their script in Hindi as well as English language. Earlier they performed Ravanchhaya in locally celebrated festivals. Now they get invitation not only from nationally but also from foreign countries. They perform in Singapore, South Korea, France, Thailand, Malaysia. In the foreign countries they performed in English language for the better understand of the audience. Besides the Bichitra Ramayan, the group has now adopted new themes like Pranayaballari, Durjan Sange Kalebasa, Kanchi Abhiyan, Karna Badha, Gandhiji's Satyagraha, Gandhiji's Non-cooperation movement, Gandhiji's Civil disobedience movement, Menace of wine addiction etc.

Shadow puppet making

They make puppet by different animal ladder like deer and stag skin. Ritually they believe that because Ram is come from Raghubans family so puppet of Ram is made by deer skin, Ravan is belong to Ashur family so the puppet of Ravan is made from stag skin and also the demon Ravana has ten heads and is larger than the rest of the puppets. But practically we find that the character of Ravan must be a strong puppet because some fighting actions done by Ravan puppet. The deer skin is weak or soft if puppeteers make

puppet of Ravan by deer skin then it has chances of tearing. Puppeteer can make four to five puppets out of a deerskin.

Earlier they make shadow puppet in a very simplest way. Puppets are 4 inches to 2 feet high, 1 foot in breadth and are approximately 3mm thick. Puppet designs are very primitive. Even hair is not removed properly and small perforations are done to show the outlines of figures, costumes and jewellery. No colour is used and puppets cast a black and white shadow. Puppets have no joints and one split bamboo-stick runs down the centre of the puppet, held by the puppeteers. The puppets which earlier made by the puppeteers had very simplest way but at present they make puppets more attractively like drawing of costume, jewellery and also body fold in very prominently.

Manipulation process

Puppeteers sit and manipulate with one man supplying puppets to the manipulators. One can manipulate two puppets at a time with both hands and two manipulators can manipulate simultaneously. Puppets of Odisha have very simple movement. The manipulation is very limited with only up and down movements and side to side swinging. Each puppet is fixed with a thin rod of bamboo for manipulation from behind the white curtain. The light is provided by an electric bulb inside the stage. The puppeteers make the puppets look big by holding them far from the screen to create an illusion of magnificence. Sometimes, they use a set like Sita sitting in Ashoka Vatika Garden or in the chariot.

The highly stylized puppet figures have no jointed limbs. A sort of vertical jiggling of the puppets from side to side and towards or away from the screen characterizes the manipulation. At times the puppets are revolved round on their axis as they are faded in or out. There is no dramatic gesticulation by the puppets since they have no jointed limbs. The art of manipulation lies in creating a suggestive pose by the puppet expressive of the character and its relationship to similarly posed characters and settings. The settings are created by bringing onto the screen pieces representing houses, trees, chariots, mountain etc. thus the performance acquires the quality of an animated illustration of a musically narrated theme.

Apparently, the technique of manipulation in Ravana-chhaya shadow play looks very simply but there are subtleties which may escape the notice of a casual onlooker of

the back-stage manipulation. Puppets have to be stylized, more or less. In their movements they should not exactly imitate human beings so that they retain their own fascinating 'identity'. Of all puppets, shadow-puppets are the most stylized, but in some of the forms of shadow play like that of Andhra or Karnataka., the puppets having many joints, are more articulate. The manipulation of these puppets requires as much dexterity as sensitivity. In the case of Ravana-chhaya, where the puppets have no joined limbs, the art of their manipulation requires much more sensitivity than dexterity. To suggest that a puppet is walking or fighting when it has no jointed legs or hands, indeed calls for great sensitivity since too much jiggling is likely to make the movement ludicrous yet too little may make it dull. Ravana-chhaya puppeteers with only jiggling, tilting, fading the puppets in and out, suggest all possible movements and dramatic action. They have absolutely no scope for gimmickry. Those who only want gimmicks from the puppets may, therefore, feel bored with a Ravana-chhaya show. To appreciate the lyricist of the Ravana-chhaya shadows, their solid graphic quality, high degree of stylization and subtle suggestiveness, one has to have the right sensitivity as well as sensibility.

At times Ravana-chhaya shadow show acquire a poetic quality-akin to 'modern poetry'. For instance, when Hanuman gets ready to cross the sea to Lanka, the smaller figure is substituted by the larger one suggesting that he has expanded himself physically. When he takes the leap, the puppet figure that remained almost pressed to the screen, is moved to a distance from it, throwing diffused but highly fascinating shadow that flash out of the screen like an extremely agile monsoon cloud. One could go on picking out such prize moments from the show, for instance Hanuman uprooting the trees madhuban. Indrajit despatching his deadly nagapasha across the sky, the magnificent Ravana fighting with Rama and the fascinating shadow-arrows flashing across the screen like dark-lighting and so on.

Puppets are made especially depending on the movement of the puppets. A scene in the Ramayana drama is shown as follows-Ravan falls down after Rama throwing an arrow to the Ravan's navel. Ravan's left leg is left up when he falls to the ground. To showing this scene puppeteer make the Ravan's left leg to left up and the stick which is use to hold the character Ravana is curvedly tied from the left shoulder to right leg of the character to manipulate the puppet easily.

Stage of shadow puppet

The stage is erected in a field or on the mid street. The dimensions are 8+5 feet. A fine white dhoti is used as a screen with straw mats that conceal the bottom, to hide the manipulator. The size of the screen is generally 8+4 feet and it is kept vertical. An earthen lamp is kept on the wooden stand, 3feet from the screen and puja is offered to Rama before lighting the lamp. Musicians squat on the right side of the stage.

Shadow puppeteers and groups

Ravan Chhaya, the shadow puppet theatre was popular all across Dhenkanal and Angul district of Orissa in the mid-19th century. But at present the art form is survives only in one village i.e Odash in the district of Angul. The tradition is being maintained by the Ravan Chhaya Natya Sansada Odash which is a registered cultural society and it has devoted itself for the preservation and promotion of the rare act of the Orissa. The team was started in 1982 by the Guru Kathinandan Dash, recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi award in 1978, He was from a traditional family of Bhats, a community engaged in traditional arts that performed Shadow theatre on Ramayana themes.

After him his student Kolhacharan Sahu continues the tradition. In 1998 he also has received Sangeet Natak Akademi award. Since 1986 he was the president, director and guru of Ravan Chhaya Sansad. Presently, Khageshwar Pradhan is the group leader with eight persons including four musicians. Khageshwar Pradhan learn puppetry from President award winner artist Kalhacharan Sahu. They are belonging to one family. They continue this art form from more than “” years ago. They have more than 1700 to 1800 puppets with them. For the puppet play ‘Sampurna Ramayan, they used 150 puppets with different action. Every member of the group has knowledge of puppet making, puppet manipulation, singing, playing musical instruments.

Dr. Gourange Charan Dash, the retired head of the Odia department in Cuttack’s Ravenshaw College and an authority on shadow puppetry. Dash set up a puppetry museum called ‘Kandhei Ghara’ in serene, paddy -field-chequered Kutarimunda village I Odisha’s Angul district. Dash’s Kandhei Ghara will display puppets from across the country, host performances, seminars and workshops for national and international researchers, and also have a library. He did his Ph.D. on puppetry. His wife Sabitri Dash,

retired teacher of Odia language and literature, is actively engaged with her husband in the promotion and performance of puppetry. Together they run the Srirama Institute of Shadow theatre in Kutarimunda, which aim to preserve, modernise and facilitate research on puppet.

Conclusion

Looking at the costume, listening of the chhanda style of singing one can feel the identity of the Gopalilla Kundhei natak. These puppet plays present culture and heritage of Odisha. Puppeteers are dwindling in number but they still have the power to hold people in thrall, not just in the village but also in the cities. This must be one of the reasons why the government has been using the art form to popularise its flagship programmes such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, and to spread awareness on HIV-AIDS, human trafficking, malaria and deforestation. Such modules are plugged as part of efforts to revive puppetry.



Krushna Dass, Puppeteer, Gopalila Kundhei



Puppeteer Abhay Singh manipulating puppets



Gopalila Kundhei



Character Radha of Gopalila Kundhei



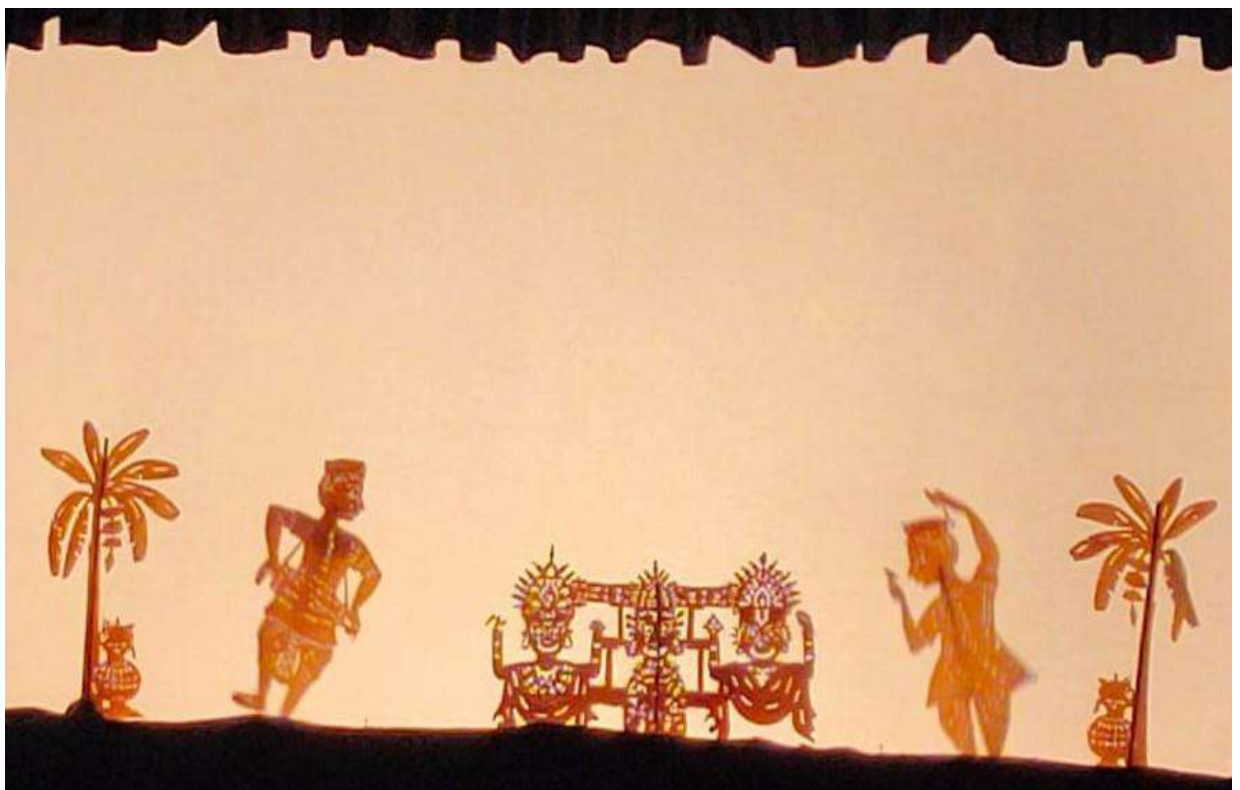
Kathi Kundhei



Puppeteer Maguni Charan Kuanr



A photo of a scene from the play Sampoorna Ramayan



Praying Lord Balabhadra, Subhadra & Jagannath before starting main show



Gandhiji Working at his spinning wheel



Ram, Sita & Laxman (old design)



Ram, Sita & Laxman (new design)



A scene of Ashoka Vatika Garden



Ten headed Ravana puppet



Wartime scene from puppet show Sampurna Ramayan



Group members of Ravan Chhaya Natya Sadan



Researcher with shadow puppeteer of Odisha

CHAPTER VI

PUPPETS OF UTTAR PRADESH

INTRODUCTION:

Uttar Pradesh is a state in northern India. It was created on 1st April 1937 as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh during British rule, and was renamed Uttar Pradesh in 1950. The state is divided into 18 divisions and 75 districts with the capital being Lucknow. The state is bordered by Rajasthan to the west, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi to the northwest, Uttarakhand and an international border with Nepal to the north, Bihar to the east, Madhya Pradesh to the South and touches the state of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh to the southeast.

Studies on puppetry in Uttar Pradesh have shown that the tradition of puppetry has been going on in Uttar Pradesh since the 17th century. The tradition of glove puppet can be seen in Uttar Pradesh. The glove puppet of Uttar Pradesh is popularly known as Gulabo-Sitabo. The glove puppet tradition was prevalent in Lucknow and adjoining areas of Uttar Pradesh. In the city of Lucknow, especially in the poor quarters of Hasanganj, the glove puppet has been popular once upon a time. The glove puppeteers were also seen at Kanpur, Rai Bareilly, Sitapur, Hardoi and Faizabad. The Gulabo-Sitabo which was earlier got special honour in the royal court of the Maharaja, is almost extinct now because of lack of patronage and the advent of cinema.

Gulabo Sitabo dating back to post – independence India

In early 1950s, puppetry was one of the dominant sources of entertainment in the newly-independent country. Be it at county fairs crowded by inquisitive children and their parents or at street sides on a lazy afternoon. At that time, a nomadic family from Naraharpur village in UP's Pratapgarh district was well-known in the hand puppetry scene of North India. This family is often credited for its contribution to Concept Puppetry – where social messages were neatly woven into the puppetry performance.

At present also some puppet artists have not been allowed to fade away the existence of this art form, only because of their love with puppets or in search of two-piece bread for their families, they still practicing Gulabo-Sitabo. In addition to Gulabo Sitabo contemporary puppet groups are also seen in Lucknow.

Themes of Gulabo Sitabo

The theme of glove puppet was on two women characters: Gulabo and Sitabo who married to the same man. While Gulabo is the dominating one, Sitabo is the poor, ignored wife lamenting her fate. There is no tale or a story line and the performance comprise of caustic and humorous dialogues, fights and songs of the two rivals. The narrative, recited in a singsong voice, was about the quarrel between Sitabo, the helpless wife and Gulabo, the beautifully costumed mistress of the same man- around petty social happenings. The songs were interspersed with bawdy jokes and caustic humour, often reflecting the local incidents. All the puppeteers have fallen on bad days and, except for one or two very old man, no other performer is to be seen. Puppeteer Raees Ahmed walks from one place to another, narrating stories through these two characters, sometimes sister-in-law and sometimes a man's wife and mistress.

Making process:

The puppets are about 60 cm high. The heads were earlier crafted in wood and so were the hands, which were hollowed out of manipulation. The wood was painted. For the last hundred years or so, wood has been replaced by papier mache.

The puppets are made of papier-mache with tinsel jewellery. A substance made of paper pulp mixed with glue and other materials and is moulded when moist. Faces are drawn on these, they have moveable hands. The puppets are dressed and jewelled in the traditional manner of the region in a long skirt, blouse and a light wrap.

Stage of Gulabo Sitabo:

An older glove puppet tradition, named Gulabo-Sitabo was a simple show performed in the open, in the towns of Lucknow and neighbouring areas of Uttar Pradesh. There is no permanent stage for puppet show. The puppeteer only makes a

sound that the Gulabo-Sitabo is played, then the children of the whole colony, the elders and the women are gathered together to enjoy puppet show. The puppeteers, sitting in an open space, used resplendent dolls and mounted shows around the theme of Gulabo and Sitabo.

Manipulation techniques:

The group comprises two to three persons, while one manipulating the puppet and the others providing accompaniment on dholak (drum) and manjira (small size clash cymbal). The puppeteer slips a hand into the puppet operating the head with the forefinger and the hands of the puppet with his thumb and middle finger. The puppeteer speaks the dialogues and sings songs for the two characters as also carries on a banter with the puppets. The puppets have bells around their wrists, which are effectively used. Puppeteer put the puppets into their hand, Gulabo on right hand, Sitabo on left hand and manipulate accordingly. During the song, puppets are clapped. Clapped by wooden hands of puppet makes a very attractive rhythm which bound the audience to dance.

About puppeteers of Gulabo Sitabo:

Puppeteer Raees Ahmed is one of the performers of Gulabo and Sitabo. Ahmed, a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Old Lucknow, hails from a family of puppeteers. He has been doing puppetry for over years. He said in an interview in his father's days, puppeteers were invited to affluent households and were paid well for the Gulabo-Sitabo show. From its originated puppeteers used to be invited to palaces to entertain the royals. They used to be respected in those times, they were valued. People didn't forget puppetry despite other means of entertainment but, since the advent of television and mobile phones, people started losing interest. Their family used to work for six months and earn enough to relax during the monsoon season. They used to earn some 500-600 rupees a day. Sometimes they earn 1000-1500 rupees a day. But since the lockdown began puppeteers have been struggling to earn a rupee, said Ahmed. The lockdown turned everything upside down. Others have started taking up other work, but Ahmed hasn't, yet. "I still go to known places and perform a show or two, but I hardly make any money. Now, if I don't do some other work, my kids will starve," Ahmed said.

In the 1960s, Ram Niranjana Lal Srivastava, a member of the family who worked in the Agricultural Institute of Allahabad (present Prayagraj). Created the two puppet characters – Gulabo and Sitabo, destined to be each other's sworn enemies. They fight over the same invisible man, Sitabo's husband and Gulabo's lover, and their arguments mostly deal with matters of the household, while ribald jokes are infused in between to amuse the audience. However, the creator, Ram Niranjana chose to incorporate occasional jibes at social evils of the times like child marriage, female infanticide or dowry system.

Soon, Ram Niranjana began touring the country with his family, putting up his Gulabo-Sitabo shows everywhere. Word about the story soon spread. On a cold winter morning over chai, or maybe on a sultry summer afternoon, crowds would jostle to get a glimpse of Gulabo and Sitabo being at each other's throats. The main storyline remained the same, but different sub-plots were added often by the creator to keep the audience entertained throughout. The precisely engineered characters and sharp dialogues with a tinge of humour are often attributed to the success of Gulabo-Sitabo.

In 1956, when the Literacy House was established in Lucknow to promote adult and non-formal education, it soon became a hotspot for rendering education through various forms and forums, including puppetry. Bill and Cora Baird, a famous puppeteer duo from USA, helped create the Educational Puppetry Department at Literacy House – to uphold the objectives of Sakshar Bharat programme through such informal means. Ram Niranjana was a part of the early team at the Department, where his puppetry was used for raising social awareness.

Contemporary puppets:

Contemporary puppets are also practice in Uttar Pradesh. The Literacy House of Lucknow, which works for rural people and conducts courses, has been teaching puppetry and arranging shows. Mayur Puppet Theatre is a reputed modern group in Lucknow under Milan Yadav and Pradeep Nath. Milan has directed 12 puppet plays and performed at many places in India. Having received his training under Meher R. Contractor and Suresh Dutta, he has been working with his group over a decade. Pradeep, an actor and also a student of Suresh Dutta, has directed 7 puppet plays. He writes scripts

for puppet shows in TV and has been associated with the group all along. Awaz, an NGO group under Adiyog and Alka Prabhakar, is also working with puppets.

About contemporary puppeteers of Uttar Pradesh

Deepa Mitra was born in 1964. She started giving puppet demonstrations for the Information Department of Uttar Pradesh from 1994; meanwhile she got formal training from Dadi Pudumjee, Suresh Dutta, Puran Bhat and Sudip Gupta in various workshops organized by the Govt. of U.P. She has also learnt the traditional glove puppet form of “Gulabo-Sitabo” from Milan Yadav.

In the year 2004, she founded the Deepa Puppet Sansthan in Lucknow with the objective of reviving the art of puppetry. Keeping this objective in mind, the institution has prepared many instructive and entertaining puppet plays in the past fifteen years, and has performed at State level to national level. The organization has been getting continuous support from Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi and the Ministry of Human Development, Government of India.

She has produced many puppets plays and performed them nationwide. Under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, she produces a special puppet play based on Swachchhata for Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi in 2014. Her another production is Anokha Buddhiman. Anokha Buddhiman is a folk tale. In this world we see a lot of things and we cannot understand what to do with them? How to use them? And how much these things will be useful for us? This is the reason of the play which teaches us that there is nothing which is useless. We have to use our mind to use these things in a way so that these things can be utilised in a better way which can help us. All these things are explained through the puppet play Anokha Buddhiman.

Deepa is a full-time puppet artist. Her puppet group is consisting of 9 members. Milan Yadav, Deepa Mitra, Virendra Kumar Tiwari, Virendra Mohan Mishra, Tanmay Mitra, Sumit Srivastava are the puppet manipulator. Amit Mukherjee, Sandhya Mukherjee help her in music. Milan Yadav, Deepa Mitra, Kavita Mitra helps in puppet making.

Conclusion

Traditional glove puppets of Uttar Pradesh seem to be most neglected. The puppeteers, who used to earn their livelihood from these shows, have not been getting any patronage today. Many of the puppeteers supplement their income with other forms of occupation. The puppeteers are not willing to teach their art to their children for the fear that they would not be able to make a living out of it. Thus, the traditional art is moving towards oblivion. But here I am feeling glad to write about the Shoojit Sircar's movie 'Gulabo Sitabo'. In the age of computer games, social media and digital entertainment, Gulabo Sitabo were on their way to extinction but then again, the movie has revived interest in the folk art of glove puppets in general, and Gulabo Sitabo in particular. Let us hope that the movie resurrects and revives the dying glove puppet from such that interest in Gulabo Sitabo the puppets last much beyond the interest in Gulabo Sitabo the movie. We are positive that after watching this movie in big screen people will again admire the art form. In fact, the surviving members of Ram Niranjan Lal Srivastava's family, who still pursue puppetry as their sole profession, were reportedly elated to hear the two familiar names resurface in the popular media again. They, along with many practising puppeteers of the country, hope that the film will pique the audience's interest in this beautiful art and save it from fading into oblivion.



puppets are dressed and jewelled in the traditional manner of the region



Gulabo Sitabo performed in open



Gulabo on right hand and Sitabo on left hand of the puppeteer



During Puppet Manipulation



Puppeteer Raees Ahmed



Puppet play 'Rangeela' of Mayur puppet Theatre



Puppet play Anokha Buddhiman of Deepa Puppet Sansthan



Contemporary Puppet Theatre, Uttar Pradesh



A photo of puppet play Anokha Budhiman

CHAPTER VII

PUPPETS OF JHARKHAND

INTRODUCTION:

Jharkhand is a state in eastern India. The state shares its border with the states of Bihar to the north, Uttar Pradesh to the northwest, Chhattisgarh to the west, Odisha to the south and West Bengal to the east. The state was formed in 15 November 2000, from the territory that had previously been part of Bihar. It is the 15th largest state by area, and the 14th largest by population. Hindi is the official language of the state. The city of Ranchi is its capital and Dumka its sub capital. The tribes of Jharkhand consist of 32 tribes inhabiting the Jharkhand state in India. Within these 32 tribes, puppetry is practiced among the Santhal tribes. They are mainly settled agriculturist.

Chadar Badar puppet of Jharkhand

Jharkhand has some special forms of arts that require attention, one of these is Chadar Badar. Chadar Badar is a kind of puppet dance performed by the people of Jharkhand's tribal community. Apart from Jharkhand, Chadar Bedar is also popular among the Santhal community in West Bengal, Bihar and Odisha.

From time immemorial to the pre-independent era in India, Chadar Badani enjoyed its own value in Santhal villages. Chadar Badani was used by the freedom fighters to reach out to people to induce patriotism and for entertainment as well. Small wooden puppets, both male and female are made for show. Puppet are doing various activities, as per the need of the story and put it on a base for the show.

Chadar Badar is performed with the assistance of wooden puppets hung inside a wooden box, open on three or four sides with curtains. The performer narrates stories by words and verse from ancient Santhal culture using the puppets, accompanied by tribal musical instruments. The painted puppets are 5 to 9 inches tall and has movable limbs, manipulated by the performer, using strings attached to them.

Rod puppet

In Chhotanagpur region of Jharkhand, there is a rod puppet generally practised by the tribes. They are generally performed in Maghmela (winter fairs) and Chhaumela (spring fairs). The shows are ticketed. There is an interesting fair at Murmu during a full-moon night in the month of Ashwin (September-October) where 5-6 puppet groups come to perform. Puppeteers live in villages like Murukhunti, Bandhgaon, Shilda, Gumla, Nagpheni and Lohardaga.

They show the dances of Chhotanagpur from Tankachuya, Shadiwa, Penghati and Bhedar areas. 2-4 puppets are used in a single dance, dressed like Hindu kings and queens. Songs are sung in the tribal languages.

Puppets are made of cloth and are a foot high. Faces have a layer of clay and clothes, duly coloured.

The stage is 5 feet from the ground and 7x7 feet in length and breadth. Fine clothes cover three sides, with the front side covered up to 5 feet. Kerosene lamps are used. Musicians sit outside the stage and use shehnai, robka (like nagara), dhol and manjira.

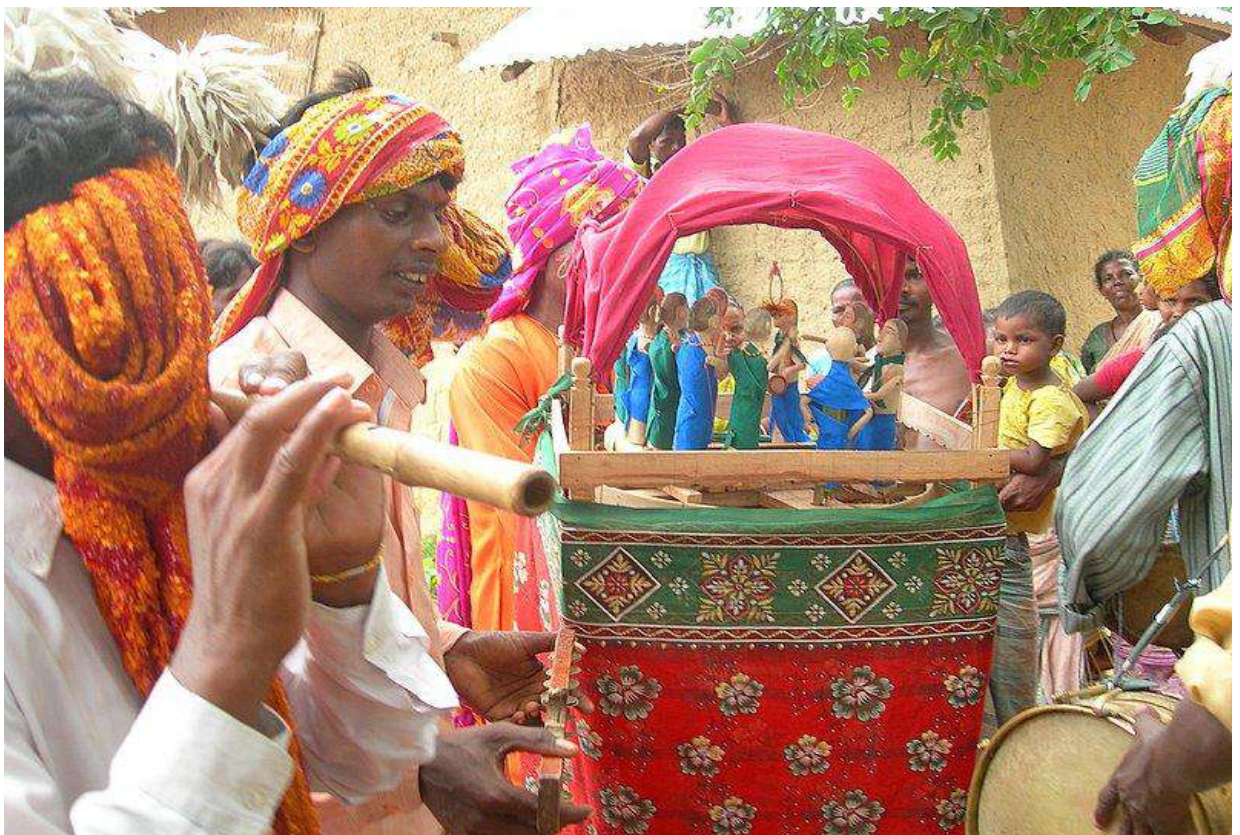
It is manipulated from below by chord. The show lasts for 15-20 minutes. Musicians play folk tunes and puppets dance with the tune.

Conclusion:

In Jharkhand, the tribal art of rod puppets has never been much in evidence and is seen only in remote areas during the fairs. Due to the lack of relation between puppetry and educated youth, the puppetry of Jharkhand is only practice in rural areas.



Chadar Badar puppets



Chadar Badar puppet and puppeteers



During Chadar Badar performances

CHAPTER VIII

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PUPPETRY OF NORTHEASTERN REGION WITH SELECTED STATES OF INDIA

India endowed with various folk performing arts. Puppetry is one of the important folks performing art of India. Although puppetry is practice in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. From these states I have select only 7 states namely Assam, Jharkhand, Manipur, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal as my convenience of journey and communication.

A comparative study of the puppetry of Northeastern region:

Northeastern India is the easternmost region of India it comprises present Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura are the seven states in the north-eastern part of India. Historically and geographically, these seven states have connection or similarities, but also culturally, the similarities of these seven states cannot be denied. Pre historical and historical period of this region was known as Pragjyotish Rajya. In the post-independence period of India, due to political, economic and other reasons, especially due to the issue of ethnic identity, the whole Assam was divided into seven states. Although Assam is divided into seven parts due to political reasons, the traditional society and culture of these seven states are bound together by the bond of mutual affection.

Like the other folk performing arts puppets of North-East region have great similarities.

All these traditional puppeteers live in rural areas and agriculture is one of their main sources of livelihood. Agriculture and traditional artisans are gaining ground in their economy.

Traditional string puppet plays of North-East are a combination of song, dance and drama. In traditional puppet plays the dialogue is less important, the dialogue is given in

verse rhythm. The lyrics are more important than the dialogue as they lead to the end or conclusion of the play.

Oral tradition is prevalent in puppet plays. Puppet plays are based on the story from Ramayana, Mahabharata or Parana's. Puppet plays try to evoke coarse humour by adding various satirical situations related to real life as well as the main events.

There are also similarities in making of string puppets of Assam, Tripura and Manipur. Puppets are made of lightwoods of local trees. Puppeteers are used mother tongue as their medium of performance. Paying homage to God before starting of the show is one common feature of traditional string puppeteer of North East region.

The costume of string puppets of Manipur is like human performers of Rasleela. In Assam also during performance of stories from Purana and Epics puppets are decorated like live characters of Bhaona and Jatra and in Tripura also string puppets are wearing costume like Jatra.

As I have found the similarities of the social life, way of living of all the artists involved in puppetry of the North-East region, also similarities in terms of puppet making process, selection of themes, and manner of presentation. In the similar way, I have also found the similarities between the problems they are currently facing.

Most of the puppeteer in the North-east are uneducated villagers, therefore, they lack the ability to adapt to the current environment. But it must also be acknowledged that they are very good in puppet making nevertheless the strategy is far behind in terms of presentation. It is true that globalization brings lots of threat behind this folk-art form at the same time it brings lots of opportunities for redesigning and moving forward. In this case we can cite the example of contemporary puppet groups of North-East. Contemporary puppet groups have undertaken a lot of experimental work in this field and has achieved remarkable success. Tripura Puppet Theatre of Tripura and Surojit Academy of Assam have tried to commercialize the puppetry. The artiste associate with contemporary puppets are urban educated youths. They have trained in various fields like fine arts, drama etc. Along with the puppets, they are also doing private jobs. Every day all the artists meet for 2 hours in the evening and work for puppetry. Every artisan earns at least 30,000 in a year from puppet shows, says puppeteer Prabhinanshu Das. He also said the more time you can give, the more you will be able to do experiment and will be

able to make more income. It is good to hear that Tripura Puppet Theatre also performed in the Germany in 2012.

At the same time, it is said by the string puppeteers of North-East ‘puppetry lost its earlier glory, as it was an indescribable component of Rassa, Durga puja, Kali puja and other festivals’. The main reason behind it the current busy life schedule of the people. Nowadays audience want the most entertainment and education in the shortest possible time. Wide acceptability with glorious trend of puppetry will be possible, if puppeteers keep to pay attention on present choice and need of society. Puppetry requires reform with modern taste and habits of the community.

Northeastern puppetry with puppetry of Rajasthan:

After understanding the puppetry of North-East and Rajasthan I have noticed that traditional string puppets are found in the North-East and Rajasthan, although the puppet making process, manipulation technique, costume, theme and in the various field the puppet of Rajasthan has been contrasted with the puppet of the North-East and also have some similarities. Traditional string puppet of Rajasthan and North-East are made of lightwoods. They do not have legs, long garments used to hide puppet’s lower part. Puppeteer of both Rajasthan and North East region using folk song of their respective place. As puppeteer of Assam and Tripura, Rajasthanis puppeteers also use high pitch voice produce by speaking through a bamboo made instrument. It is called “Boli” in Rajasthan, “Penpa” in Assam and Tripura.

In Rajasthan, the epics are not used and even Gods are absent. Emphasis is put on the treatment and not on themes. These differences are mainly related to the art and culture, history and environment prevalent in their respective regions.

When I began my work on puppetry of Rajasthan, my goal was to find out the present status of the puppeteer of Rajasthan and their urge to compete and survive in the competitive world. For not having more studies in this field, I did not have adequate literature for the same. Since puppetry is a performing art, so this study was never possible with the help of secondary source of data, I came to Rajasthan in November 2019 looking for a proper primary investigation. At Rajasthan I have visited Arna Jharna: The Thar Desert Museum was the brainchild of late Komal Kothari, one of the first

Indian folklorists and executed. In association with Kuldeep Kothari, son of Padma Shri Komal Kothari I had the privilege of seeing the puppets with self-eyes and understanding the puppet. I was thoroughly immersed after watching their rich puppetry culture and I have nothing left to understand whenever we talk about puppetry of India why Rajasthani puppet comes to our mind. A careful study of the Rajasthani puppets has led us to very important fact that Rajasthani puppetry has very few scripts and dialogues. The narrator only talks about the play before the show starts. Then the rhythm of dholak, Rajasthani's folk songs, while and puppets movement tries to extinguish the puppet play. The movement of the puppets is so technically made that, despite the fixed expression of puppets, even small sequences of the play are easily understood by the audience.

Everywhere has their own unique characteristics, be it the puppet history, themes, making process, manipulation techniques or the belief associated with the puppet, if I am going to compare puppetry of North East with puppetry of Rajasthan. In this case, the first thing that I have realized, puppet dance in Rajasthan is associated only with the Bhatt community. From the beginning of the puppet of Rajasthan to the present day, the Bhatt community has been passing on this from one generation to another and the Bhatt community is still associated with this art. But in the North East puppetry is not limited to a single community, though Manipur's puppet is limited between just one family.

Lack of proper training is a major problem behind the puppeteer of North East. While I observed puppetry of Rajasthan, I have found that puppeteer's gets training and guidance, it may be from any organization, scholars or expert puppeteers. In Jodhpur scholar Komal Kothari had helped and encouraged the complete revival of the tradition. Ajoy Paul, the discipline of Devilal Samar, had a group Community Puppet Theatre at Udaipur. Besides performing in different places, Paul used to organize many workshops on puppetry and write extensively on the art form. There are other puppet groups in villages like Tilonia, under NGOs, who work both with traditional and social themes. For the development of the puppetry of North East Sangeet Natak Academi, New Delhi, had organized string puppet making workshop for traditional puppeteers of Assam under expert puppeteer Shri Kapil Dev from 8/12/2019 to 22/12/2019 at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra museum. That was undoubtedly a very commendable step but as a coordinator of that workshop I have realized that, because puppetry is a performing art so

it is extremely important to give more attention on its performance. So, some training or guidance is needed to adapt to today's fast-paced society.

Lack of platform is a major problem behind the puppeteer of North East. By a little effort of SNA, NEZCC, CCRT puppeteers has had little benefit, though such an effort is not enough to save this art form. This is because this type of stage is available only once or twice a year and in that proportion the cost of caring for the puppet is quite high. In the past, puppetry played an important role in meeting entertainment needs of the society; which were an indispensable component of fairs and festivals. But, in the era of globalization, the rise of media and technology has begun to tarnish the image of puppetry. As a result, there was a lack of stage for puppet show. Which was an integral part of our social events until the 90s of the 20th centuries. But the role of Rajasthan in this regard should be commended. Puppetry is practiced and market has also been opened in museums in different parts of Rajasthan to promote and preserve the art of puppetry in Rajasthan so that tourists can enjoy the puppetry and gain knowledge about the art culture and history of Rajasthan viz. Bharatiya Lok Kala Mandal, Desert Cultural Centre, Arna Jharna: The Thar Desert Museum of Rajasthan. And on the other hand, this is a huge effort to commercialize the industry, which is also helping the economy of Rajasthan. I believe that if this kind of effort is undertaken in the North-East, then it will not only flourish our rich traditional art, it will also contribute financially the poor artisans of puppetry and the economy of the region at large.

The puppetry of North-East is dying a slow death and we need to preserve it, not only because of its cultural value but also because of the great degree of skill and knowledge it encompasses. If puppeteers of North-East preserve and practice their original tradition along with creative and innovative zeal in making puppet then the traditional puppeteer can compete in the present competitive world and our future generation will embrace this traditional art form. However, some enthusiastic people of new generation are trying to revive this art form. These contemporary puppet troupes are trying to add new taste to puppetry by introducing new themes, new techniques to grab attention of audience.

Northeastern puppetry with puppetry of West Bengal:

Puppets of West Bengal and puppets of northeastern region have great similarity. Use of mythological theme is a common feature of traditional puppets of West Bengal with northeastern region puppets. String puppets of West Bengal are made of soft and lightwoods like puppets of northeastern region. Costume of the puppets is similar to that of the Jatra which is the folk theatre of the West Bengal. Similarly, puppets of Assam used costume of the Bhaona, the folk drama. Likewise, puppets of Manipur use costume of Rasleela. The master puppeteer of all traditional puppet group throw dialogue very skilfully according to the situation without having any text.

Apart from Manipur the social status of the traditional puppeteers, the timing of the puppet shows of West Bengal and Assam and Tripura also have great similarities. The traditional puppeteers are illiterate, landless farmers or labors who are live in villages. There Putul Nach season begins in the autumn, around September, around Durga Puja the beginning of harvest season, when the travelling troupe head out to interior rural regions, and ends before the Monsoon sets in, and the beginning of the planting season, around June.

Like the puppeteer of Northeastern region Many traditional puppeteers of West Bengal, who with their simple themes, basic props and traditional music, found themselves unable to compete with increasingly popular forms of modern entertainment, gave up their tradition and moved to other occupations. The advent of modern entertainment has killed the demand for this kind of traditional entertainment. Today, the puppeteers barely manage to sustain themselves and their children are not interested in learning the art. Yet, the keepers of this heritage refuse to give up hope.

Northeastern puppetry with puppetry of Odisha:

Puppetry of Odisha and North-East India have great similarities. In fact, it is said by the puppeteers of Assam that Sankardeva borrowed the tradition of puppet from Odisha and introduced it in Assam. Puppets of Odisha are made of soft and lightwoods like puppets of Northeast. Like the puppet of Assam and Nagaland, string puppet of Odisha also have no legs and long skirts are used. Costume of puppets are also similar to

that of the Jatra which is the folk theatre of the region. Music also draws from folk music of the region as like as puppetry of North east India.

Northeastern puppetry with puppetry of Uttar Pradesh:

Only the similarity is notice in raw materials that use to making puppets, there are no other similarities between the puppetry of Uttar Pradesh and northeastern region. The glove puppet which has been practicing in Uttar Pradesh is not seen in any traditional puppetry group North-East. Some glove puppet shows are seen in contemporary puppet troupe of Assam 'Surojit Academy' and 'Tripura Puppet Theatre' of Tripura but their contemporary glove puppet have many differences with Golabo-Sitabo of Uttar Pradesh, in terms of puppet making, manipulation style, themes, way of presentation etc. Gulabo-Sitabo Have some unique features which is not alike with contemporary glove puppet.

The great similarities are only notice in contemporary puppet troupes of Uttar Pradesh and North-East. Some innovative ideas are seen in their shows. They work on folk stories of their own state, themes which generate awareness among the masses, life of legends etc. These contemporary themes help them to get more admiration among the masses.

Northeastern puppetry with puppetry of Jharkhand

There are no major similarities are seen between the puppetry of North-East and puppetry of Jharkhand. Only Santhal community of Jharkhand practices puppetry Chador Bador and some tribal people are practicing rod puppetry, which is not found in North-East.

Above discussion indicates that although there are regional differences in puppets of above selected states of India, still their basic characters are same. The exact birthplace of puppetry is still in dark. However, it can assume that puppetry spread into different corner of the country with untiring efforts of puppeteers. Puppeteers being itinerant performers, the art of puppetry follows a migratory course. Migration have also occurred when the patronage has been extended to puppeteers by king. With so many regional traditions prevalent in the country migration of puppeteers from one region to other is an interesting subject of study in itself. Migration is so integral and common to puppetry that

few forms can be said to be totally indigenous. Due to the improvisatory character of puppet stage with easily portable or locally borrowed material, it is easy for the puppet groups, to travel from one place to another to give performances. The performers lead a nomadic life. Thus, it is seen that although there are regional differences in styles of performances, the major aspects of puppetry of different parts of India have great similarities.

Continuity and change:

With the passage of time, puppetry has changed a lot. As a medium of communication, different vital issues are depicted in puppetry. Puppetry reflects the contemporary time. Vital issues like dowry, female infanticide, illiteracy, status of women, health and hygiene etc. These issues are used as theme of puppetry to create awareness among common mass. Puppeteers has been paving the way for solving various social problem by its tragic and comic themes. Government publicity unit of different states releases fund for this type of campaigning. Earlier traditional puppeteers showcase only mythological themes but at present for the sake of continuity of puppetry, they have introduced new secular themes in their puppet troupes. To compete with modern mediums of entertainment, improvisations are made by the puppeteer.

Experiments on puppetry in India is going on and introducing of new themes have given a new zest to it. India's expert puppeteers Suresh Dutta, Dadi Pudumjee, Puran Bhatt, Anupama Hoskere, Sudip Gupta, Anurupa Roy, Pabhitanshu Das etc. are experimenting with themes as well as introducing digital lighting, combining human actors to puppet stage has transformed puppetry form folk to modern form of performing art.

There are some changes are coming in the art form but what should I have really miss during my field visit is lack of a puppetry training centre. There are lots of formal puppetry training centres in foreign countries. As a result, youths learn puppet. The centre not only facilitates youth to learn puppetry but also paves the way for them to engage in various promotional, awareness raising programmes through puppet. Now a days puppetry is not only limited into rural areas its scope is expanding day by day. Puppetry is used as an educational aid in schools, SCRT(Assam) has use puppetry in science and maths learning, used in awareness programmes, use as a craft item, some

artists have been able to attract the attention of the world by performing biographies of great personalities, Puppeteer Ranjana Pandey, committed to working with physically, mentally and economically handicapped children and their parents through the use of puppets.. Most of these artists have taken formal puppetry education from abroad and have dedicated themselves to puppetry. Academy awardee puppeteer Dadi Pudumjee studies under Michael Meschke of Sweden, Padma Shri Suresh Dutta from Kolkata studies for a year at the Moscow state Puppet Theatre under Sergei Obraztsov. There are a number of artists who work with these trained artists for some years and learned about new techniques of puppetry.

During my field visit I have met some artists who want to learn new techniques of puppetry but cannot get chance, they are left behind due to lack of facilities. In this case Sangeet Natak Academy is conducting 15-20 days workshops though it is not enough. I feel that there should be at least one year of training. So that everything associated with puppetry will be learned completely basically puppet script writing, puppet making techniques, manipulation, stage crafting etc. The puppetry art form can be revived only if the technical aspects are emphasized in line with the present social system.

CONCLUSION

Puppetry is one of the oldest folk drama of India. This study deals with the art of puppetry and puppeteers. In this research work 'A Comparative Study of the Puppeteer of Selected states of India', discussion have been done on various issues related to puppetry of India, especially the problems facing by the art of puppetry. In the Introduction part of this research work, aims and objectives, methods of study and source of data have discussed in detailed. From the extensive field visit I have come to know that as a folk performing art, puppetry has unique presentation style. All the works related to puppet is not easy task, it may be puppet making or manipulation. One puppeteer requires special qualities like peasants, sense of humour, observation qualities, concentration etc. The present condition of puppetry of north east is not satisfactory with comparisons to other states of India.

The name of the first chapter of this thesis is 'Origin and Development of Puppetry'. The first chapter is devoted to the origin and development of puppetry in ancient Indian culture as well as the origins and development of puppetry in other parts of the world. Certain legend or janashruti or kimvadanti are prevailed about the origin of puppetry. It also discussed the definitions of puppetry developed by expert puppeteer from different countries. A conceptual idea of puppet tradition with its types prevalent in different corner of the world has been discussed. It is seen that; puppet performance of different countries has some common features. Scholars opined that puppetry migrated from India to other South Asian countries. The similarities distinct in manner of presentation and themes of puppetry indicates that India is the birth place of puppetry and later migrated to those countries. Chapters of the Ramayana are widely used by puppeteers of Indonesia, Thailand, Malayasia and Combodia and so on. Puppetry is also popular performing art in European and Western countries.

The name of second chapter is 'Puppets of North-eastern Region'. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part discusses about the puppets of

Assam. A theoretical approach on history and present status of puppetry tradition of Assam is discuss with description of making process of traditional string puppet. The effect of climate change also seen in puppet making raw materials. Earlier natural colours are used to decorate the puppets. Colour is use in puppet according to the character. Different colours are used to represent the different characteristics of the puppet. Brief discussion on folk music, selection of themes, stage making process has been discussed in this part of the chapter.

The second part of this chapter, discuss about the puppets of Tripura. Historical background of puppets and how puppeteer came from East Pakistan after partition and settled in Tripura. Discuss about the puppets, puppeteer and puppet group of Tripura. The economic condition of puppeteer is not sound though they practicing puppets also doing some small business. Brief discussion about the contemporary puppeteer, their plays, their experimental work to popularised the puppetry tradition of Tripura and promote folk culture of Tripura in contemporary way.

The third part of second chapter deals with the ‘Puppets of Manipur’. The history of puppet of Manipur and their unique style of puppet. By seeing their puppet one can easily identify from which place it come from. Discuss about the theme of puppet, puppet making process, manipulation technique, stage and music. They give importance in showcasing Vaishnava theme, only used the theme related to Radha Krishna.

The third chapter is ‘Puppets of Rajasthan’. This chapter is associated with the history to present status of puppetry tradition of Rajasthan is made. Puppetry tradition in royal court as well as outside of royal court has been discussed with description of puppet making process, music used in puppetry and different categories of songs. Brief discussion on folk instruments, technique of dialogue writing for puppetry, qualities of puppeteer has been discussed in this chapter. In this chapter an attempt has been made to discussed the stage of puppetry and

techniques of puppet manipulation. The success of a puppet show depends on puppeteer's ability of smooth manipulation of puppet.

Showing respect to annadata (food provider) and worship to God, is a tradition of India. Puppeteer assumes puppet as their God and it provide them livelihood. So, by following some rituals associated with puppetry the tradition of honour is in place. Here in this chapter, discussion have made on some traditional rituals associated with puppetry.

In forth chapter 'Puppets of West Bengal' is discussed. This chapter is divided into four parts according to the types of puppets prevalent in different corner of West Bengal. Discussion is made on each and every aspect of string puppet in first part, rod puppet in second part and glove puppet in third part. Their making techniques, manipulation techniques, script writing, stage, way of presentation and puppet groups. Social back ground and education qualification of puppeteer also have been discussed. Lack of qualification is a hindrance in the popularization of puppet tradition. A brief discussion about the contemporary puppet and puppeteer, their experimental and innovative works is made in the fourth part of the chapter.

The name of fifth chapter is 'Puppets of Odisha'. This chapter discussed about the different types of puppets prevalent in Odisha, different name of puppet and their meaning has mentioned. Odisha is an only state where the all 4 types of puppets is practice. Discussion is made from the traditional puppet to modified form.

Sixth chapter is discussed about the 'Puppets of Uttar Pradesh'. Its history and its many ups and downs from post independent India. With the changing interest of audience's puppetry of Uttar Pradesh faces many challenges. A brief discussion about the contemporary puppet and puppeteer associated with contemporary puppet and their new techniques to revive the art form is also discuss in this chapter.

'Puppets of Jharkhand' is briefly discussed in the chapter 7.

The name of eighth chapter is 'A comparative study of North-eastern puppetry with selected states of India'. A comparative study of puppets of north-eastern region and puppets of different corners of India is trying to bring into light. India is called the birth place of puppetry. But it is not known, from when and how puppetry make its place in almost every part of the country. There are lots of similarities regarding the features of puppetry and due to regional difference, there are some dissimilarities in making process, presentation techniques of puppetry. Causes of declining of puppetry and remedies of revive the age-old art form are tried to describe. Puppetry has a glorious past in the history of Indian culture. Once upon a time puppetry was an indispensable part of social life of India. Despite the contribution towards society, puppetry has lost its previous glory. However, some enthusiastic people of new generation are trying to revive this art form. As equal to contemporary puppet troupes some traditional troupes also trying to add new taste to puppetry by introducing new themes, improvise old techniques to grab attention of audience.

From my field visit and interaction with puppeteer and the people who are associated with puppetry, I realized that lack of money is one of the serious problems for them. To compete in this competitive world and for the survival of puppeteers, economic support is essential, which encourage them to the upliftment of this age-old tradition. If the local government patronize the bearer of this folk art, then they will able to boldly face the threats coming from the new medium of entertainments.

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