

## TAMASHA AND ITS DISAPPEARING ASPECTS: FOLK ART FROM MAHARASHTRA

**Prasad Sunil Nikumbh**, Graphic Era Hill University, (Road Society Area, Clement Town, Dehradun, Uttarakhand 248002)

**Saroj K Sarkar**, Graphic Era Hill University, ((Road Society Area, Clement Town, Dehradun, Uttarakhand 248002)

**Dr. Satyam Prakash Srivastava** Assistant Professor, Graphic Era Deemed to be University, Dehradun, (U.K)

### Abstract

'Tamasha' is a folkart form of Maharashtra. The dance, drama, music, folk language, folklore, born folk language, performing folk art is also part of the Art. 'Tamasha' seems to have been born in East Peshwa. Since then, he seems to have found a place in the entertainment industry in Maharashtra. The spectacle of Holi and Rangpanchami, the royal court of the Peshwas, began to turn into folklore after the demise of the Peshwa. He is still seen entertaining countless people today. He seems to have gained popularity. Scholars considered such a show to be a widespread folk art form. Since ancient times, audiences have been entertained by a blend of folk art, music, theatre, dance, and comedy. Folk art was also utilised to deliver a message in a language that people in rural areas could easily and intimately understand. At the same period, folk art was created in order to raise public awareness. As a result of the technological revolution and the increasing diversity of entertainment options, demand for folk art and humour has dwindled. This graph has been declining in recent years. In the perceptions of the audience, the traditional tamasha folk art form has lost its position. This paper discuss the decline in traditional folk art demand as well as the artist' lifestyle.

**Keywords:** Maharashtra, tamasha, folk art, lavni, performance art.

### Objective: 1.

To explore the Traditional folk art Styles of Maharashtra. 2. To inspect the reason of Disappearing tamasha Art form and it's Survival Impact on Artists 3. Descriptive method and Secondary data were mostly being evaluated in the process of fact-finding. The theoretical approach and arguments, different factors have been used as a frame for generating results. The sources of Secondary data were collected from the Library references, Catalogue, Conference paper, published and unpublished data.

### 1. Introduction

India is known for its rich cultural heritage, diverse cuisine, language, traditions and historical heritage. Different art forms Literature also gives India a distinct identity in the world. There are also different styles of art and music. Which is referred to as folk art. Indian folk art is in demand in India and abroad due to its artistic depiction and display of rural talents. Different states in India have different dance traditions. Their dance style, costumes, etc. Also dance gestures, descriptive dance style is an important part of the exhibition. Bihu in Assam, Garba, Dandiya in Gujarat, Kathakali in Kerala, Odyssey in Odisha, etc. Dance is presented in these dance traditions as a heritage imposed down in families as the only source of amusement. Tamasha, one of the important folk art forms of Maharashtra, is famous all over the country.

Tamasha is divided into two categories in Maharashtra: dholaki fad and sangeet baari Tamasha. Dholaki Fadcha tamasha is a full-fledged performance art form that combines song, dance, and theatre. In Maharashtra, there are now just 18 to 20 entire tamasha groups as well as several border villages in Karnataka

and Gujarat, Almost every concerted mandal lasts around 210 days. The origins of traditional tamasha performers were from Maharashtra's Castes in the countryside, such as the Kolhati, Mahar, Mang, and Bhatu, which are considered castes with low social status in the caste structure in India society Therefore, ideological activists utilised tamasha to criticise the area's caste structure inside the late nineteenth century. During this time, Jyotirao Phule's Satyashodhak Samaj began performing Satyashodhaki jalsa, a hybrid of raised platform of tamasha and public theatrical that included the tamasha legacy into socio-political and revolutionary plays. (1)

### **The term tamasha, as well as theoretical analysis of it**

The state of Maharashtra has a strong history, with one of the oldest allusions in cave Gautami Balashri, the mother of Gautami Balashri, carved inscriptions at Nashik. Gautamiputras Satakarni, the 1st-century Satavahana emperor Gautamiputras Satakarni. He organised Utsava and Samaja, which are sorts of theatrical pleasure for his subjects, according to the inscription.

Folk art appears to have been created by society's artists and given to society by a group of artists. Tamasha appears to have been created and performed by the society's artists. The three principal elements that feature in the Tamasha are folk dance, music, and folk theatre. The Tamasha also demonstrates how folklore is used to communicate folk language. The Tamasha also demonstrates how people dress and what colours they wear. The Tamasha includes these people's traditional instruments. He appears to be well-known in society. Tamasha appears to have risen to prominence. Furthermore, these folk art displays appear to have existed before they were. (2)

### **Tamasha beginnings**

During the Maratha dynasty in the eighteenth century, Khandoba gained popularity among followers of Khandoba, the local god during the Peshwa period (late Peshwa), who incorporated aspects of earlier early performing arts such as Dasavatar, Gondhal, Kirtan, and Waghya-murali, all of which are reflections of Khandoba Bhakti Geet. Tamasha is a creative blend of a conventional a play, a musical, and a dance performance that is expressed through theatre. Tamasha is recognised for its ambiguous lyrics along with erotically expressions and concepts. The educated and cultured levels of Maharashtrian society looked down on Tamasha since it was performed as an earthy dance drama that often deteriorated to a crass level.

### **Tamasha Style and Attire**

Dholki bhaari and Sangeet baari, the older version of Tamasha that contains more dance and music than theatre, are the most popular classifications Tamasha had traditionally present by the members of the lower class people. with an viewers drawn from the same social strata. The Tamasha was avoided by the so-called educated and upper-class society since it was considered that seeing this form of art would harm their reputation will be tarnished, and they and their family will be tarnished. The supplementary utilised instruments in the Tamasha, such as the Dhol or Dolki, and the Tuntune, a traditional stringed musical instrument performed Were not even mentioned in the Tamasha utilised or allowed to be learned by the upper caste. Padhachi Lavani is a performance in front of a huge audience. Baithakichi Lavani, which is performed for a small chosen audience, is carried out by a lone woman who is seated. Lavani drama in the classic sense lasts all night, culminating in the burning of a replica of the Manmathas mount. This dancing form is performed by both men and women. Nats or Kinnars are the names given to these male dancers. The Tamasha is another dancing style related with Lavani. (3)



**Fig 1.** Lavani Dancers is a photograph by Kunal Vijayakar January 28th, 2013. Baithakichi Lavani.  
<https://dancingshoes2017.wordpress.com/2017/10/02/all-about-lavani-dance/>



**Fig 2.** Lavani Dancers is a photograph by Kunal Vijayakar January 28th, 2013, Padhachi Lavani.  
<https://fineartamerica.com/featured/lavani-dancers-kunal-vijayakar.html>

The dancers are usually traditional nine-yard saris were worn by the women, which were worn as daily wear by ladies throughout the state in those days. Just one difference variable was that saris were even more expensive. Bright colours and zari work were used to attract audiences and create the performers look beautiful. The dancers donned a kamarpatta (jewellery for women waist) with showy jewellery that included an ornate necklaces, big earrings, a bevy of multi-coloured glass bangles, and, lastly were worn on the feet. Several occasions, the lead dancer wore a her supporting dancers are a different colour than her. Emphasise and signal to the audience that she was the main attraction.

### Different roles of Characters and Visual Appearance

The traditional Tamasha style featured male dancers in the tamasha, he also played Nachaya character which was a female part in that act, as well as a side actor or actress for suggestive comments and thrilling movements. The role of a nachya is a specific and traditional character played by a eunuch who is projected as neither male nor female. It is difficult to play this character in the style and manner of a nachya, especially by a male actor, and it needs a deeper grasp of the character. Ganpat Patil, whose performance in a number of films has made history in the Marathi film business, was cast in this role with this understanding and expertise. At the age of 88, the actor passed away.



**Fig 3.** The character of Nachya by actor Ganpat Patil <http://www.screenindia.com/news/veteran-character-actor-ganpat-patil-is-no-more/291545>

Ganpatrao, who was born in 1920, had a difficult life because his father died while he was a toddler, and he and his mother then had to support a family of seven by selling garlands and breads. He was also attempting to land a role in a drama or film, and he was successful in landing a mob scene as a child in the film *Bal Dhruv*, as well as minor appearances in a few other films.

He was usually happy and in a jocular attitude on the sets, despite the effort and misery he had to through in real life. Ganpat was an expert in the particular style of dancing, and on the sets, he was quite free and frank in order to create a genial atmosphere, which was necessary for better results in acting and for perfect performance. Veteran actress Jayshree Gadkar, who was heroine in most of the rural themes and was the main dancer in tamasha scenes while Ganpat was nachya, has rightly revealed that Ganpat was quite expert in the particular style of dancing and was quite free and frank. All co-actors and actresses were able to perform well and exhibit the required moods in scenes because of his jocular and cheerful stance, according to veteran actress Shanta Tambe, who worked with him in most of the tamasha situations. Subhash Bhurake, director and vice-president of Akhil Bharatiya Chitrapat Mahamandal, had mentioned that Ganpat Patil and tamasha-based films have always been synonymous, and that his death is an irreparable loss to the genre.

Shahir, a poet-composer who perform the customary role of Sutradhar (compere), or Songadya, a jester who presented the entertainment. With the passage of time, women began to take part in Tamasha, which mostly comprised of song Vag Natya, a kind of Indian dance, was added to the company's thematic repertory or small sad and humorous skits, in the following years.

### Tamasha Artists' Way of Life

The artists that performed in Tamasha were usually from the nearby villages and relied on the Tamasha for employment because they were from the underprivileged portions of society and lacked a solid educational foundation. Furthermore, because there were fewer options for boys to find excellent professions in the hamlet, the chances for girls to make money were slim. As a result, the girls enthusiastically accepted the offer of a part-time work in order to improve their family's income. Originally, The performers were all of relatives and relatively few paid outside entertainers, however as time passed and women artists became older, the

necessity to employ grew. As technology spread throughout the country, Tamasha's audience gradually shifted to more engaging options such as cinema, television, and the internet. As a result, the Tamasha Phads were unable to subsist on their own and passed over the baton to the event organisers to hold on to them going, they were financially dependent on a large number of families.

Tamasha's team went to several communities in search of those who possessed some previous connection with Tamasha and were willing to join because the compensation was pitiful, tentative annual amount for accommodation and meal. Due to the rainy season, there was no possibility of any spectacle, therefore those who worked with Tamasha phads only worked for eight months out of the year. Tamasha artists, like all other artists, have a limited career span and must earn as much as possible must be capable of survive themselves whenever they retire and are unable to find job. Their obsession with the theatre and on rare occasions, their loyalty to the theatre, prevents for them was marrying at the pinnacle of their careers and their involvement with Tamasha group and their absence from their native place, the females do not marry until they are very old. Furthermore, the Tamasha stigma makes it difficult for them to find a respected household.

### **Tamasha Artist situation**

Tamasha's answers have been influenced by technology, shifting audience preferences, and shrinking performance spaces. The Troupe's proprietors are conflicted, and the Tamasha phads are concerned that due to reduced demand, they may have to close their doors. The public's tastes have evolved, and they now expect the dancers to perform to the latest Hindi tunes rather than the Tamasha's original music. The crowd used to respect the dancers by not touching them and only giving them meaningful looks, but now they expect much more. The Tamasha has evolved as well, from tiny ensembles travelling on bullock carts with approximately 10 men and women to elaborate troupes organised by production firms after more than half a century. There was little chance of a show due to the annual rainfall. (4)

The majority of the Performer have broken away from the previous phads and founded new ones, however these organisations are ineffective and financially bankrupt. After paying for all forms of expenses and making payments to artists, as well as maintaining lighting, sound systems, and transportation vehicles, the owners are left with very little profits. The artists are either twiddling their thumbs at home or accepting small offers to amuse tourists at festivals or weddings, resulting in a lack of cash.

The many of the youth have abandoned their mother phads in search of better opportunities. It is really difficult for them to find excellent work. There was no one to back them up when it came to introducing the entertainment sector. They must accept the daily remuneration handed to them without any requests or objections. They are occasionally required to perform for senior artists, which exposes the females to even more humiliation. Typically, they work as supporting performer in the bottom lines or in minor roles within local films. Senior performers who retire in other dance genres frequently pass on the art to pupils via classes or home learning, however due to the low demand for Tamasha, Tamasha artists must forego this opportunity.

The senior artists have slipped into obscurity and continue to bear the weight of their connection with Tamasha, as well as the stigma that comes with it. Women who used to be clad in Paithanis and had hundreds of men vying for their attention are now dressed in dirty houses and wearing the bare minimum of clothing and no cosmetics. The government is working with resurrect the tamasha groups, but it is not possible to do therefor since the financial support for each stage show is rarely recouped, and phad founders would rather invest in another type of entertainment to recoup their losses and stay to survive. (5)

## **2. Conclusion**

India is a varied nation music and folk art that exists in almost everyone's heart, particularly those who live in rural areas because their roots are intertwined with the art. However, with today's youth's tastes leaning toward western and current music, as well as filmy tunes, local melody and forms of expression are in high demand is vanishing. The situation is similar for many of our indigenous art forms that are gradually vanishing into the past; it is the responsibility of every Indian to preserve our folk art from extinction. As a citizen, it is essential



to contribute to the preservation of folk art and folk artists. Because philosophy is the manifestation of our folk art and culture, and this is our identity.

### Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. (Dr.) S K Sarkar, Department of Visual Art, Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

### References

- [1] Agarwal, P. (2021, January 10). wishberry. Retrieved from <https://www.wishberry.in/https://www.wishberry.in/blog/tamasha-folk-theatre-the-dying-folk-art-form-ofmaharashtra/#/article>
- [2] Rele, D. K. (2020, December 15). oneindiaonepeople. Retrieved from oneindiaonepeople Patriotism Redefined: <http://oneindiaonepeople.com/not-just-tamasha/>
- [3] Utsavpedia. (2015, July 28). Utsavpedia . Retrieved from Utsavpedia: <https://www.utsavpedia.com/cultural-connections/indian-performing-arts/lavani-maharashtrian-dance-performance/>
- [4] Kurtkoti, S. G. (2017, December 7). Tamasha: transformed but still travelling. Retrieved from People's Archive of Rural India: <https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/tamasha-transformed-but-still-travelling/>
- [5] Paik, S. (2017, September 24). 'Tamasgir' Mangala Bansode and the 'Tamasha' of Her Life. Retrieved from CULTURE SOCIETY THE ARTS: <https://thewire.in/culture/mangala-bansode-tamasha-maharashtra>