

Sankaradeva's Sattriya Dance: An Analytical Study

Ranjan Dutta

Research Scholar, Department of Assamese, Cotton University, Guwahati (Assam)

Phone No.: 8638676425

Abstract: Sattriya Dance is a major Indian classical dance. The dance form was introduced in the 15th century AD by Saint Sankardeva to propagate Vishnavism. It derives its name from the Vaishnava monasteries known as *sattras*, where it was known as *sattras*, where it was nurtured and preserved for centuries. It is popularly known as "Sattriya Nritya" (Sattriya Dance)

Sankardeva systematized and sorted the dance forms using the ancient texts and also introduced drama through expressive dance as a form of religious art for ultimate devotion to Lord Krishna. Sattriya is largely the result of the indigenous and *sattrick* (classical) elements which influenced and impressed the saint to make this dance-art form.

Key Words: Sattriya Dance, Sankardeva, *Satra*, Classical Dance, etc.

1:00 Introduction:

Sattriya Dance is a major classical dance form in Assam and India. The Great Saint Sankardeva created a dance form, it is popularly known as 'Sattriya Nritya'.

The dance form was introduced in 15th century AD by Sankardeva to propagate Vaishnavism. It derives its name from the Vaishnavism monasteries known as *sattras*, where it was preserved and spread, it was recognized as a major classical dance form in 2000 by Sangeet Natak Academy". It is in the form of dance-drama performances which tell us different stories about people, especially legends and mythologies of Lord Krishna-centered Vaishnavi monasteries of Assam.

Known as '*Satra*' which was attributed by 15th century bhakti movement scholar Sankardev.

1.02 Scope of the paper:

The scope of Sattriya Dance is quite extensive. In a short period of time and a small paper, it is not possible to discuss the whole. That is why, basic of the Sattriya Dance, the origin and development of Sattriya dance, costume are discussed in brief.

1.03 Methodology:

Analytical method is used in preparing the paper.

1.04 Objective of the paper:

The main objective of the paper are

- (a) To analyze the origin and development of sattriya dance.
- (b) To give a basic analysis of sattriya dance.
- (c) To analyze how sattriya dance is classical dance form ,etc.

2.00 Sattriya Dance: An Analytical Study

The art of 'sattriya dance' grew as a part of Vaishnava Bhakti movement. Sattriya dance is a genre of dance that tells mythical and religious stories through had face expression.

According to the motions made in 'Charitaputhi' Srimata Sankardeva was inspired by the Mahari or Devodashi art form in Jagannath Temple during his long pilgrimage throughout Northern and Eastern India. Sankardeva systemize and sorted the dance as a form of religious art for ultimate devotion to Lord Krishna. Traditionally, Sattriya Dance was performed only by male monks (Bhokotas). In Sattras as a part of their daily rituals. Today in addition to this practice, this dance form is also performed on stage by men and women who are not monks of Sattras. In this satra only male monks are accepted and they live a simple life of a monk which consists of certain set of rules and regulations plus they were thought all type of performing arts such as Gayana'(singing), 'Bayana' (playing instruments) and 'Nartana'.

*The dance form was introduced by combining different from various theatre, local folk dance present in Assam, specially Ojapali and devadasi. The principles related to 'host mudras', foot walk, music etc are strictly. It combines both 'lasya' and 'trandava' elements and also emphasises and rhythmic syllabus and dance postures.*¹ It is generally performed by male monks. Now both male and female perform. Khol (drums), taals (cymbals) and Flute are major musical instruments used in this dance form.

The basic dance form steps and exercise of sattriya dance is called 'Mati Akhora'. These are the fundamental sets of moves the dancers learn during their training. Music and dance as a means worship Brahma. It is said where ever Sankardeva set his foot, there established a Satra. He composed the plays 'Ankiya naats' in addition to innumerable numbers of lyrics for propagating of Bhakti movements in the region. *In Sattras, it is essential to perform various songs and dances in combination with the music as a part of the fourteen numbers of daily rituals or 'prasanga' even today. The dance forms belongs to the odra-magodhi pravitti as specified in the 'Natya Shastra'.*² Like other classical dances, sattriya dance also has many foot position. The Natya sastra mentions the status of five types of foot position. The Sattriya dance numbers are Nadu- Bhongi, Chali Nach, Rajaghariya chali Nach, prabesh.

Nadu Bhongi:

Basic trait of sattriya dance starts with 'Mati-Akhora'. This is followed by the dance number *Nadu-bhongi*, 'Nad' means sound and 'Bhongi' means posture. Thus as the name implies, *Nadu-Bhongi* means dance posture on the sound of musical instruments.³

Chali Nach:

Chali is characterized by its grace, sophistication, delicate movements and elegance, on the other hand 'Jumura' is significant for its vigour, agility, masculinity.⁴ Repertoire of Chali with eight Ramdanis in addition to Geetor Nach and Mela Nach is characterized by graceful feminine movements.

Rajaghariya chali Nach is another form of Chali Nach. This form of Chali is composed keeping in mind, the dance at Royal Courts, as such the name implies.⁵

Sutradhari:

Sutradhari dance comes from Ankiya Naat. This unique part of Ankiya Naat with a vigorous dance form. On top of that, this dance form has many amounts of style such as the sutradhara (Narrator), character specific bhongi (style), prabesh (entry), Nritya and Jhumura

Jhumura Nach:

Jumura dance number forms a part of 'Jumura', which are short plays composed to be performed by Gopis imagining themselves to be Krishna. Jumura Nach has mostly masculine movements with Ramdani, Geetor Nach and Mela Nach components.

Gohai Pranesh:

Gohai Pranesh is also a form of Ankiya Naat. The entrance dance form accompanied by music is some in regards to the entrance of Lord Krishna and Ram. The Gohai Pranesh Nach based on Bajanar Nach of Lord Krishna and Ram are the same but Slokar Nach are different respectively.

2.01 Costumes:

The costume of sattriya dance is primarily of two types: the male costume consisting of the 'dhoti' and 'chadara' (pieces of cloth wrapped around body) and the paguri (turban) and the ghuri (Skirt), Chadara and Kanchi (waist cloth). *Traditionally the costume were made of white or golden colour with hints of red, blue and yellow intricate floral designs for specific dance number. The dress of Krishna Nritya and Nadu-bhongi Nritya is of yellow and blue accordance to the attire of Lord Krishna. Traditional Assamese jewellerys are used in Sattriya dance which are made of raw gold with special techniques.*⁶ Dancers wear Kopali on the forehead, Gaam Kharu and Muthi Kharu (bracelet and bangles), different types of necklaces and pieces like mata moni (for male dancers), Golpota, Bena.

3.00 Conclusion:

Sattriya Dance is the epitome of renovation of this glorious tradition. These artform have made an unique identity and prospect in the indigenous and global podium. It is the identity of Assamese culture, so one should help and support the artist to promote this dance form.

Foot Notes:

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2. Dutta, Birendranath. ed. *Journal of Srimanta Sankaradeva Research Institioution*. pz.130
3. Narayan Chandra Devaguswami. *Sattriya Sanskritir Swarnarrekha*. pz 667
4. Mahanta, Jagannath. *Sattriya Nritya Gita Baidyar Hatputhi*. 278
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6. Neog, Maheswar. Editor. *Sattriya Nritya Aru Sattriyar Nrityar Tal*. 56

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