

The Pala Performing- Art of India and Its Possibility of Impact on Higher Education: A Hopeful Approach

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ABSTRACT

Higher education is a rich, cultural and scientific asset which enables personal development and promotes economic, technological and social change. We have different types of higher education in India which includes central universities, private universities and state universities. It also includes distance, formal, general, professional, technical and value education.

Pala is a living performing art form of India which is found prevalent in Assam, West Bengal and Orissa. Our students can easily stimulate their emotion, passion, body and brain with the help of this Performing art. The art form consists of music, dance, song and dialogue and with the help of these students can expose their subject from their chosen field and can establish their thoughts. As we know that the society is the background of all our subjects, so in completion of their research based course, this Performing art can play a very pivotal role. By this way, their cognitive abilities will be increased and the mass people will understand the importance and significance of the higher education through performing art. And this will reflect how education is connected with culture.

Keywords: Performing Art, Pala, Music, Dance.

Objectives:

1. To know how the Pala performing art can influence the students of upper level students.
2. To know how performing art can be connected with Higher Education.
3. To know the importance of the Pala-Performing-art in the midst of Science and technology.

Methodology:

In our study, Descriptive method of analysis is employed where information gathered from students have been elaborated to focus the significance of the pala performing art in the midst of science and technology.

Introduction:

In Higher Education, technology facilitates active and experimental learning through interactive simulations, virtual labs, online discussion platform, multimedia content and real time collaboration tools. Technology brings the power to the students to access information and resources any time and anywhere. In a sense, we can say that Higher Education and Technology are the two sides of a coin. Now we will discuss how Pala performing- art plays a role in the mind of the students of Higher Education

in particular and in the total scenario as a whole.

Discussion and findings:

Originally the term Pálá-gán was very common in two districts of Assam namely Nagaon and Morigaon. But due to impact of the Ankiya-bháona, the second part of the term i.e., gán was replaced by the term bháoná. Consequently, the term Pálá-bháoná takes the place of Pálá-gán in Assam. The theme of Pálá-gán is always taken from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas. It begins with a prayer offered to Ganesa which is followed by the entrance of a woman character known as Viveka, who plays significant role from the beginning to the end. Dialogue of Pálá-gán is recited like a song to the accompaniment of various dance movements. It is musical in the sense that without the components like dance, song and musical instruments the performance of Pálá-gán cannot be held. It begins and ends with singing, dancing as well as beating of musical instruments like *Khola*, *Tala*, *Harmonium*, *Tabla*, *Flute*, *Thamok*, *Ektara* etc. The performance is held in open shape. The response of the audience to the performance of Pálá-gán is also important because Viveka builds a bridge of thought in between the audience and the particular story of a Pálá-gán. Consequently, both the performers and the audience have responsibility. The performers alert the audience regarding vice-virtue, good-evil, and justice-injustice. Reaction and support of the audience enriches acting and expression of the performers of Pálá-gán. In Higher Education, this art form can play a very pivotal role. Through this students can easily stimulate their emotion and passion and ventilate their thoughts to the audience. As we know Cultural Studies is a part of the Higher Education, this art form can be included in the syllabus and a proper step can be taken to preserve the art form. By this the students of higher education can have a source to reflect their thoughts or to establish their views based on research.

Pálá-gán is a mass media of instruction and morality. It instructs the audience in particular and the common people in general. The Viveka character of Pálá-gán always tries to make the audience alert about justice and injustice, vice and virtue and good and evil. Even the Viveka gives advices to the characters who fail to make decision and the audience, the mass people gets instruction indirectly.

Sometimes it is seen that in the midst of the main story to give relief to the audience. Some lower characters appear and they comment upon the contemporary situations of our society. The contemporary situation includes political, social and economic problems of our day-to-day life. For instance, they severely criticise Dowry system, child-labour, ill treatment of woman, Aids, Modern education system, Corruption of political leader and higher officials, Pollution, Soil-erosion, Flood, Migration, Rivalry, Clash, Global warming etc. In treating these subjects, they alert audience and create laughter. Such scene, although has no connection with the main story, but has significance, it reflects the problems of the society. In a sense, such scene of Pálá-gán plays the similar role of 'Batar Nat' which is also a mass media of instruction and morality.

As a media of instruction and morality, the role of Pálá-gán is significant and among other medias like Television, Radio, Newspaper, computer, Magazine, Journal, Internet, Theatre and play. Pálá-gán also occupies a significant place to alert the common people to ventilate their thoughts.

In rural areas, it has been playing a significant role as a media and if the media is properly utilised, it will open the eyes of the modern people as a media of instruction in understanding our problems of day-to-day life, which costs less and benefits a lot as the other medias of modern time.

Undoubtedly Pálá has significance as a mass-media of instruction and morality in modern age. And one can realise it if he goes through the scripts of Pálá-gán i.e., Pálá-bháoná like Harichandra-Uppakhyan,

Lakhindar-Beula, Sabitri-Saityavan, Nala- Damayanti etc.

Conclusion

Although Pálá-gán is considered as a religious media but the hidden truth comes to light while a comparative analysis is made in between Pálá-gán and the other mass medias that Pálá-gán is a strong and prominent mass-media of instruction and morality in modern time and it can easily be accepted as a media of strengthening the present scenario.

Consulted works/Informants

1. Informants from Assam and Orissa and unpublished pala scripts have been taken as a source of this paper.
2. A comparative study of the Pala-art-form of Assam and Orissa, PhD Thesis, Gauhati University,2009.