

Transformation of mythological characters: Observation in North Coastal Andhra Folk Performance Shiva Bhagavatham

*Dissertation submitted to Centre for Cultural Resources and Training
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
award of junior fellowship to outstanding
persons in the Field of culture (theatre)*

GOVINDA RAO SIVVALA

(File No. CCRT/JF-3/62/2015 (2013-2014))



CENTRE FOR CULTURAL RESOURCE AND TRAINING CENTRE (CCRT),

(UNDER THE AEGIS OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, GOVT. OF INDIA)

15-A, SECTOR-7, DWARKA,

NEW DELHI- 110075

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation titled **“Transformation of mythological characters: Observation in North Coastal Andhra Folk Performance Shiva Bhagavatham** submitted by me at the Centre for Cultural Resources and training, Under the aegis of Ministry of Culture, Govt. India, for the award of Junior Fellowship for **2013-2014** in the field of **Theatre**, sub-filed **theatre, File No. CCRT/JF-3/62/2015** to outstanding Persons in the field of Culture, is an original work and has not been submitted by me so far, in part or full for any other degree or diploma of this or any other university or institution.

Govinda Rao Sivvala

Contents

	<i>Page No.</i>
Acknowledgement	i
Chapter 1 Introduction	1- 10
Chapter 2 Textual analysis of the Performance: Shiva Bhagavatham	11 - 26
Chapter 3 Shiva Bhagavatham in performance	27 - 42
Chapter 4 Tracing the social milieu in mythological performance: Shiva Bhagavatham	43 - 54
Bibliography	55

Acknowledgement

After completing this dissertation I would like to be grateful to the Centre for Cultural Resources and training, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India for granting me Junior Research Fellowship, in theatre field. I would like to express my heartiest gratitude to the officers of the CCRT for their generous support in releasing fellowship in time. I would like to show gratitude to the various folk drama groups in North Coastal Andhra for their warm support during my fieldwork.

Chapter 1

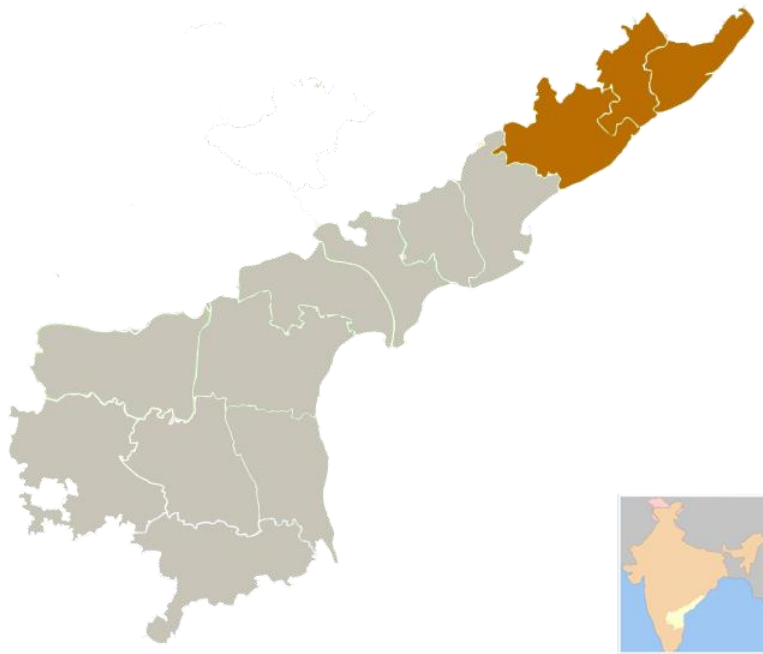
Transformation of mythological characters: Observation in North Coastal Andhra Folk Performance Shiva Bhagavatham

Introduction

This Research project will trace the transformation of mythological characters in the mythological folk performance Shiva Bhagavatham. And also this project will map out the social milieu in this mythological performance. India has got its identity for its oral and written literature. It can be observed in the remote villages and the tribal communities. This oral culture nowadays being transforming to the literature by writing in the available scripts. The oral literature can be observed in the plays, proverbs, stories, songs, idioms, and phonetics. The oral literature has different characteristics. These characteristics are developed by the society. The Andhra Pradesh state, geographically, have different dialects, especially in coastal regions. The people have enough knowledge to understand their culture to make themselves identity in the culture and its progress. They have a folk culture and have different folk forms. They still exist and they have been adopted according to the times. The folklore represents their lifestyle and culture. Most of these folktales drawn from the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana. They understand the roles from the Purana-s and represent them in the forms and correlated with them in the present society and create new characters, these roles from the Purana-s regenerated and they will be applauded by the audience. For Example, The coastal regional folk form Shiva Bhagavatham, the form itself creates the roles of Shiva and Parvathi like the characters of their neighborhood. In this form the characters have a strong relationship from one place to another and treat the text in a dialectal way and with respect to the god and goddess will be very informal. Ganga, a fisherwoman from Eluru nearest city Vijayawada, Parvathi will be from a tribal place nearby their village, they create the war between these co-wives and relate these wars from the villager's stories and the country people manners. The story describes in two folded way that one side they pray the gods and the other side the issues in between these characters co-relate with the current times. The language in the performance is a dialect and used to have a slang that makes the spectators understand their dialectal accent and also make satire to the other regional dialects. The subplot of the performance increases the performance presentation whereas the supportive characters sometimes sing, and gives their support of the music. Apart

from this, there are also other folk performances existed in this coastal community where some of them are exclusively performed for their community,

North Coastal Andhra: is a region is located in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India. It is also called *Uttarandhra* or *Kalingandhra*. This region was comprised of three Districts Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, and Visakhapatnam. This region was the portion of Madras State before 1953 Andhra state from 1953 to 1956. According to the 2011 census, the region total population is 93, 32,060. The region is bordered to a distance by Kandivalasagedda, Vamsadhara and Bahuda at certain expenses of their courses white a line of heights of the great Eastern Ghats run from North East.



North Coastal Andhra in Andhra Pradesh state map.

North Coastal Andhra has rich agricultural land, there are sixteen rivers, from small streams to big rivers drain in this region. The prosperity of North Coastal Andhra can be attributed to its rich agricultural land and an abundant water supply from Nagavali and Vamsadhara rivers. Rice grown in Paddy Fields is the main crop, along with cashew nuts and coconuts also being important. The fishing industry is also important role played in the region. Rice, Black gram, Green gram, Groundnut, Sugarcane, Sesame, Pearl millet, Mesta, finger millets, Horse gram are

the major crops of this region. Jute mills and cashew nut processing industries are very prominent in this region. Visakhapatnam is the biggest in the region. Many industries, like Visakha Steel Plant, Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Visakhapatnam Port, BHEL, Gangavaram Port, Naval Dockyard, Vishaka Dairy, etc. are located in Visakhapatnam.

The state of Andhra emerged to a political power during the reign of Kalinga Dynasty. Coastal Andhra was also ruled by the famous Chalukyas in between the period of the 7th Century and the 10th Century CE. This period was followed by the reign of many other dynasties such as the Cholas, the Kakatiyas as well as the Vijayanagara

The coastal line of this region is the second largest in India, extending 353 km. The Gajapati and Ganjam districts of Odisha were granted to the French East India Company around 1752. Later they were transferred by the French to the British.

Diversity

Currently, North Coastal Andhra comprises three districts. North Coastal Andhra is rich in cultural and linguistic identities throughout the region. Coastal Andhra congregation six dialects of Telugu: Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, Godavari, Krishna, Ongole, and Nellore. Parts of this region are ruled by different rulers, leading to diversity within the region. Coastal Andhra, in turn, can be divided into Northern Region (Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam districts), Central Region (East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna and Guntur districts) and Southern Region (Prakasam and Nellore districts). Methods of food preparations, level of spice and compositions vary from each sub region. Uttarandhra was the first place where all these literary genres emerge. Gurajada Apparao, Gidugu Ramamurthy, Srisri, Rachakonda Vishvanatha Sastri, Chaa. So, kalipatnam Ramarao, Bina Devi, Ganteda Gowru Naidu, etc. hundreds of well-known writers emerged from this region. Gidugu Ramamurthy and Gurajada started '*vyavaharika bhasa*', daily using people language in their writings against 'traditional gradikavadis' textual language, for reaching education to normal people. When the proletariat idea raises progressive writers simplified their language to reach larger readers. Jangula, Maladasarlu, gollalu, erukulu, chenchulu, Tribals Jamukula Patalu, bonelu Patalu many of these castes from generations they are the storytellers of the regional people.

Definition of Myth:

“A traditional story which embodies a belief regarding some fact or phenomenon of experience, and in which often the forces of nature and of the soul are personified, a sacred narrative regarding a god, a hero, the origin of the world or of a people, etc.”

“Myth was the product of man’s emotion and imagination, acted upon by his surroundings”

“A person or thing existing only in imagination, or whose actual existence is not verifiable”

Mythological Characters: characters in myth are fictional, imaginary, and larger than life-related to gods, a hero, and the origin of the world.

Definition of folk

According to Allen Dundes "What Is Folklore?" Dundes disputes the notion that

"Folk" should be automatically identified with peasant or rural groups, or with people from the past. He argues that contemporary urban people also have folklore and suggests that rather than dying out, folklore is constantly being created and recreated to suit new situations (Dundes, 1965: 2).

Dundes emphasizes that "folk" can refer to "any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is-it could be a common occupation, language, or religion-but what is important is that a group...have some traditions that it calls its own" (Dundes, 1965: 2).

Rather than proposing a definition of folklore, Dundes offers a list of various types of folklore to demonstrate the large range of the field of study. His list includes the expected subjects of folktales, legends, myths, ballads, festivals, folk dance, and song, but also offers examples of folklore that may not be as obvious, such as children's counting out rhymes, food recipes, house. What is performance mean? According to Erving Goffman

“A performance may be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way of the participants.

Taking a particular participant and his performance as a basic point of reference, we may refer to those who contributed to the other performances as the audience, observers, or co-participants. The pre-established pattern of action which is unfolding during a performance and which may be presented or played through occasions may be called a part of a routine. These situational terms can easily be related to conventional structural ones. When an individual or performer plays the same part to the same audience on different occasions, a social relationship is likely to arise. Defining social role as the enactment of rights and duties attached to given status, we can say that a social role will involve one or more parts and that each of these different parts may be presented by the performer on a series of occasions to the same kind of audience or to an audience of the same persons”.

Diana Taylor argues that 'performance function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated' (2: 2003).

According to these definitions, performance, myth, and folklore have created a deep consciousness of the human communities and transfer Knowledge from one generation to other.

Some observations of North Coastal Andhra folk forms and their mythical connection

1. Burra Katha

Burra Katha is a Telugu art form of storytelling. In the coastal Andhra region, Burra Katha is called as jangam Katha. In Telangana, it is also known as *tamboorakatha* or *saradakatha*. In Rayala Seema, it is known as Tandana Katha or *suddulu*.

Generally, this art is practiced by a team of two or three people from the same family of certain castes/tribes/communities like picchuguntla or jangalu. Burrakatha narrators are also known as Saradagallu. In this form of narration, the main storyteller tells the story while playing a tambura (a stringed instrument) and dancing wearing *andelu* (anklets). One or two associates assist the main narrator with small drums called *gummeta* or *budike*.

There are differences between the Telangana, Andhra and Rayalaseema Burrakathas. Language is markedly different from each other. Telangana storytellers use *budige*, *tambura*,

while Rayala Seema and Andhra performers use *padige tambura* with a hood. Some artists use brass drums and others use earthen drums. Telangana performers consider their tambura as goddess Sarada and that why they are known as *Saradagallu*. Telangana narrators do the performance while sitting, whereas Andhra tells stories while standing. In Rayala Seema, the main narrator tells the story while holding a stick, while his associates play *tambura* and drums.

Origins of Burrakatha: Jangam folklore (*kulapuraanam*): One day four founding fathers of the jangam tribe went to the jungle to hunt for rats. While they were excavating for rats, the supreme God *Parameswara* and his wife goddess Parvathi saw them. Goddess Parvathi felt sorry for their low quality of life and requested the Supreme Lord to give them a better life. God explained to her that they won't be worthy to have a better life because of their bad nature. However, goddess Parvathi insisted. Then Lord Parameswara proposed that they test these four men and then decide their fate. Lord Parameswara turned as an old man and Goddess Parvathi turned as a beautiful young woman. They both together went to these tribal men and suggested a better way of life. The four men mocked and pushed the old man aside and attempted to rape the young woman. Goddess Parvathi got annoyed at their behavior and cursed them to become beggars and itinerants. Since then they became beggars and nomads and continued their uncivilized life and came to known as jangam (nomad, not stable, as opposed to stavara -stable) tribe/caste.

This is the caste myth Jangamas, an invented story. Here the mythical characters and human beings emerged together in a performative situation. People will search for their mythical origin.

This community took *Virashaivism* religion under the influence of Basava of Karnataka (12th century). For the livelihood, they continued begging and started *janjamkatha*, in which they narrated the stories of Lord Shiva. Thus, the meaning of jangama acquired the meaning of “the worshipper of Lord Shiva,” “one who wears linga” and so on.

When the Virashaivism lost its effect on the society, most of them gave up the principles of Virashaivism and started eating non-vegetarian food and drink alcohol. Contrary to the principles of Virashaivism, Jangalu is divided into various castes such as *Budige jangam*, *Beda jangam*, *Mala jangam*, *Madiga jangam*, *Ura jangam*, *Ganayata jangam*, *Shiva jangam*,

Itamukkala jangam, Piriki jangam and so on. However, *Jangamdevaras* still follow some principles of Virashaivism.

2. Tappeta Gullu:

Tappeta Gullu is a folk dance form along with narration that conglomerates devotion with entertainment. It is a dance form performed by Sheppard community in North Coastal Andhra. 'Tappeta Gullu' is restricted to Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, Srikakulam and East Godavari districts. The dance performed by 15 - 30 dancers robed in colorful clothing with a small drum regionally called '*Tappeta gundu*'. With the rhythmic beat of the drum, the performers sing and dance to enthrall the villagers. This dance form has become a popular ballad being performed at important cultural festivals in Andhra Pradesh. These Sheppard's have many cattle's, goats and sheep. When there is no proper rain these animals were going to die. That times all the people of the caste going to pray goddess Ganga. Ganga is the wife of Katama Raju, in her earlier incarnation she was goddess Parvathi. But after the prayers Yadavas, she incarnated as Ganga. *Golla* community believes that Ganga was their goddess. The devotees who prayed to Lord Shiva. He donated all his instruments to them. Finally, Yadavas came, only one instrument *Tappeta* remains with him, he gave it to them. How earnestly they will sing and perform the dance is almost a sacred ritual, here are some stanzas I mentioning which are written Telugu. Myth never belongs to the universal thing it always belongs to local and folk.

3. Gangireddulata (Bull adorned with bells performance):

Gangireddulata is an old folk art of Andhra Pradesh. 'Sehnai Appanna' is one of the symbols of Telugu culture. *Gangireddula* professional people two, three families' together travel in the villages accompanied four or five young oxen, and decorated them with colorful clothes. Their costumes and musical instruments are very interesting. They will sing and do some circus feet's with the oxen. It is a common site in every village. The Gangireddulata is perhaps one of the very few rural entertainments that have survived through times.

Gangireddu is a bull which is decorated with colorful clothes, it goes from one house to the other led by its master who plays the musical instrument 'sehnai' during Sankranti (Telugu Pongal). Bulls are trained to dance or perform acrobatics to entertain the mass. The training is given by 'Yadava' community they acquire bulls and train them. The *Gangireddu* earn money,

clothes, and grains in return to the performance, and are active during the Sankranti and Dusshera festivals.

The feats of the *Gangireddu* (bull) are really interesting. The *Gangireddu* can dance rhythmically, nod in acceptance, deny in negation, kneel down and prostrate, bow down and even stretch its tongue to show it can sing. It can put its four legs in a plate or exhibit more enterprising feats such as standing on its master's chest and bowing down in reverence when he sings in praise of a donor.

There is a myth existing with this art form connecting to their mythical origin,

Once upon a time there lived a great demon king Gajasura, for the Shiva's favor he did a great penance. Shiva himself came directly asked him what boon he wants. Gajasura asked him "Swami! Stay in my belly and I will worship you". Shiva has given his word and he stayed in his belly. Goddess Parvathi, Shiva's wife, she didn't see her husband from many days, she worried and lamented for him. After some time with her divine vision, she recognized that her husband was in Gajasura belly. She beseeched Lord Vishnu to release Shiva from the Gajasura belly. For that operation, Vishnu designed a Gangireddula [Bull adorned with bells] band. Nandikeswara decorated as Gangireddu, Brahma and another god's acted as musicians hold various instruments like *Dhol*, *Sehnai*, *Boora*, and *Sutti*. They entered the kingdom of Gajasura and started their performance art at streets. Their talent reached the king Gajasura and he invited them to his court. Lord Vishnu take this opportunity and he performed very well with his troupe. Gajasura very much pleased with their performance and he offered them whatever boon they wanted. Immediately Vishnu asked him 'this is the Nandi, the vehicle of Lord Shiva it is weeping for the loss of its Swami. Please accept his request and give Shiva to him'. After listening to these words Gajasura astonished for a moment he cleared his doubts in front of him standing personality is not a normal man he is Lord Vishnu, the demon destroyer. He saw his own death. Then he prayed to Lord Shiva and stand in front of Nandi. With the instigation of Vishnu, Nandi hit the Gajasura belly with its harsh horns. Then Shiva came from the Gajasura belly. Shiva moved to Gajasura sacrifice and he blessed him and he assured him, his head will be worshiped by the whole world, also he will wear his skin as a dress.

Shiva gave the oxen and musical instruments to the *Gangireddula* community and he told them to tour the world with it. From that time onwards *Gangireddula* community survives on this profession.

This mythical story and the *Gangireddula* profession reveal two things. One is an imaginary story another is life surviving with performs an art form. This myth knew all over India, but it seems, this kind of performance exists in this region only.

4. Buda Bukkalata:

This is another art form is exists in North Coastal Andhra. These performers perform stories with mythical themes and spread divinity and morality in people. That was their motto. The performers carry a small drum called *Buda-Budaka*. The "*Buda-Budaka*" is the sound, which emanates from this drum. They move from village to village and awake the people with a special prayer to the goddess "*Amba*" followed by a prayer to the village deities.

The small drum is made of "Sandra" wood covered on either side by deer or goat's skin, and a thick twined thread with iron beads fixed at the middle of the drum. As the drum is moved from left to right by hand these threads with beads strike the two ends and produce different sounds. They not only sing and beg for alms, they also foretell predictions that are considered beneficial to the villagers. They are seen in villages during the harvest festival of Sankranti. They are dressed in the white dhoti, a white shirt with a black coat, a red colored turban. While a prominent black mark adorns his forehead along with marks of sandalwood paste, large rings hang from his ears.

5. Jamukula Story:

Jamukula Katha is a folk art form still exists in northern Andhra. Their instrument is Jamuku. That's why people called Jamukula Katha. In this Jamukula story Veera (heroic), Karuna (pathetic), Shringar (Amorous) rasa-s will perform. A small cylindrical shape one side covered with an animal skin, at the middle of the skin made a hole, then take a nerve passed through the hole and knotted one side and another side small stick will be attached. On that stick, some tiny bill also attached. If you pull the nerve with help of stick you can hear a melodious sound, that's called "Jamuku".

How this instrument evolve? What is the myth behind it?

After killing the demon Suketha, goddess Yellamma Devi removed the skin on the backbone of Suketha, attached it to a little hollow box and his spine nerve as rope, his toe bone as a small stick, this way she created the *jamuku*. Folk people believe that this *jamuku* sound will secure from devils and ghosts. In this myth, Yellamma and Sukethudu are mythological characters. The instrument *Jamika* is a real object. With this instrument Jamukula cast, people sing many stories.

6. Shiva Bhagavatham:

This is a folk dance drama from North Coastal Andhra. Shiva Bhagavatham means a story of god Shiva. In coastal Andhra still, this drama exists. Many folk professional theatre groups perform in villages in different occasions. They will make money out of that. In a group seven, eight actors will be there. Along with one harmonist, two table musicians, five choruses with small cymbals accompanies.

The story theme is mythological. We all know god Shiva has two wife's one is Parvathi, another one is Ganga. Parvathi is the half part of Shiva's body and the Goddess Ganga is his head. These two co- wife's quarrel each other in the story. Folk performers make the quarrel is like every day as we see our neighbors fighting each other. Mythological characters transform into a local situation. There they draw more attention. Remaining Characters Narada, who will put disputes between people, and the sutradhara as well comedian, Chodigadu (buffoon), Erukala sani (fortune teller) also there. Shiva, Parvathi, Ganga behave like normal people. They spoke the local slang in the performance. These mythical characters merge with the local culture. It is possible only in folk theatre only.

Their costumes, makeup, ornaments were regular mythological way will follow. In this drama Songs, Dialogues and conversation between characters very interesting.

There is another list of folk forms of this region, which have a mythological connection and transformation into a local identity, ex. *Runja Vaayidhyam (Runja Instrument)*, *Thurpu Bhagavatham*, *Mukebarla Jangala Bitro Nitro*, *Asadula*. Every art form has its own origin and has their identity. Art forms really enrich the culture of the society

Chapter 2

Textual analysis of the performance

In this chapter, I will analyze, the Shiva Bhagavatham text which is written in Telugu and later I will focus the performance aspect of the Text and its innovative contexts. The North Andhra Coastal folk, listen interestingly to this performance from generations. This Shiva story was written by Pasagada Sanyasi in *dvipada* meter, it is one a local *desi*, literary genre. But this plays not very popular in mainstream Telugu literature. This text proliferated and disseminated through the folk performing groups. Shiva religious practice very predominant in the left-handed communities from the medieval periods of Telugu regions. The classical Telugu literature has two type of styles, one is *marga*, mean pan Indian style, and another is *desi* style means regional style. This *desi* genre, very much connection with Dravidian roots and also with performing culture. There is a cult called, Shiva, they try to create pure Telugu genre *dvipada*, which is against Sanskritized Telugu *champu* Kavya-s. This *dvipada* is like almost oral performance text and also these texts are used by left-hand caste performers. Left-hand caste performers of Uttarandhra developed with local flavor and local characterization. The characters divine nature behave quite come down to earth. They have delineated it in a native, daily speaking pattern that they are easily identifiable by the Community. The performers innovatively bring various modern elements that make the performance more interesting.

The play starts with, Dharma Raja asks to Gangeya (the Grandfather of Kurus), since Ganga is a celestial goddess, then, how she born in a community called jalari kulam, fisherman caste? Gangeya narrates the whole play. The text reveals with the introduction of the poet and whom patron he developed his literary carrier.

The king of the kings, born from the portion of Narayana

Sultan says get a great fame

Various country kings

Praised him with honors

He is a friend to the moon and stars

Shine under the king Vijaya Rama Gajapathi

I am the part of this king who shines like a moon¹

This is the poet's actual information_ he was raised from the Vijayanagara king Sri Vijaya Rama Gajapati who was the feudatory the Sultan of the 18th century. These historical facts are the part of the initial introduction (*prastavana*) of the literary tradition.

Goddess Ganga was an immortal and impure being

The world sacred mother

This goddess, why she born in a fisherman caste?

At the end of the Kalpantha²

Sees the suppression of fourteen worlds

Ganga overflows,

Feels no one comes across to her path

She flows throughout the worlds

She feels no one compete her in the earth

She reaches as long as the sky

¹ All translations are mine.

² Kalpanatham: the end of the mythological age, Kalpa mean a cycle of 432 million years equivalent to the one of Brahma.

She grew in pride; feels she was great

Ganga sprang up in drizzling

Like a rain comes with showers

She drains many ways in the Rajathardi

‘It is so strange! Feels lord Shiva

O, Ganga! Don’t feel arrogant

In a frenzy mood, you touch the sky,

This is your stupidity

I will suppress your pride

You must take birth in a human yoni

And lives with the human race in the earth

Dwell in the filthy smell

Do born in a fisherman caste!

Do bear as fisherwomen!

Ganga trembles with the shiver

She shivers and laments

Nitalakha! Shankara!

Is this right for you?

You ask me to born in a low caste

Without any cause,
You cursed me born in a lower birth
How is your tongue twisted, says born in the human yoni
Convulsively she laments

With joy, you touch the sky
Women must not have this kind of self-esteem
In an angry situation, I gave this curse
O, Woman! Don't feel bad about it
I will marry you!
I will guard you as equal to Gowri
Please believe me, says Naga kandhara³

The lord Shiva gave assurance for her safety. With this curse Ganga born in the Helapuram (folk performers renamed it as Yeluru, is one of the towns in Andhra, famous for fish). In the earth, her parents are Shanku Devayya and Chakramamba. When she has grown up as a young maid, poet exquisitely described her beauty;

She is a flower of Manmadha⁴,
She may not be the flower of Manmadha, she is a golden garland
She may not be a golden garland, she is a camphor

³ Naga kandhara: another name for Shiva, meaning is that who wear snake as a chain.

⁴ Manmadha: Hindu love god, his arrows are flowers.

She may not be a camphor, she is a graceful maid.

The desi poet's imagination is equal to the so-called classical poets. The story continuous; One-day Naradha muni saw her while he was traveling in the shy paths. He took an impersonation of a *Yerukatha* (a fortune teller) and approached her and prayed;

O, mother! Jagadamba! O Ganga goddess!

This is a wealthy hand, this is a prestigious hand

This is a hand of off-spring.

He praises her well-off

You born here due to a curse

Your husband must be a *maga velpu* (man-god)

Sharvani shall be your co-wife.

I will go and tell your matter to Lord Shiva

Really, Shiva will come to see you.

Narada foster hopes in her mind and he went to the Shiva's abode. Shiva listened to the whole story of Ganga from Narada. He set out his journey to visit Helapuram (Yeluru) under the disguise of a *jangama*.

He recognizes, 'sandalwood wood smell comes in the fisherman street', he plays bells, blows conch, and come to the house of Shanku Devayya. He begs alms in front of the house. Ganga gets down from her golden cradle, walk like a *Hamsa* (swan), and her hand bangles make jingle sounds, she offered *biksha* (food) to him. But he denied it and left from that place. After that, he went to the Shiva temple and disappeared. While seeing all this, Ganga bewildered, and developed doubts in her mind;

Really this jangama is a *nilavarnudu* (blue color bodied man)

This snake bracelet man really comes to see me!

How I live separately without this man

She cries with tears. She has left food. Then after, her mother approached her;

Are you scared of my friend? My beloved!

Women I was here, that unworthy *jangama*

Why you go to him offer alms?

This jangama must have witches

He leaves a ghost on you

Are you searching for him?

Why there is a need of secrets between mother and daughter

It may be right or wrong,

You must share with your mother

Says our laws;

The child must hide behind mother

Like a fruit hide under a leaf

Under the protection of a mother

If the daughter do any mistakes

Will it need to reach people?

Chakamma cajoles her and asks softly. Ganga feel some time fumble and finally, take courage and says;

You are the person; may I say right or wrong

He (Lord Shiva) have affection on me, and that's why he comes to see me

Comes and ask alms, but he didn't express his love

He went in a ruined temple; Lord Shiva stay's there

Then Chakamma rebukes her;

You are a child, don't know anything

While seeing unworthy jangama, you might get affection

Why this stooping which could not fill a stomach

With a great man in our caste

We thought, fix your marriage with him.

Ganga:

Mother! You give me to the Ambikesa

If you don't submit to Ambikesa

Why say another word_ I will die.

She has expressed her decision. Since Chakamma knows her daughter's mind that won't change, then she gives her explanations, I spoke as a rule of our country. Then, you can ask your father, he has that authority. She transfers her responsibility to Shanku Devayya. Shanku Devayya went to the Shiva's abode and ordered him; 'don't come again to ask alms to our street. Again express hi doubt';

If this jangama is a really the god, Shiva

He must appear

If it is not possible to appear, he must send suitable people

Can't he asks via them, gives me this girl?

If he stays in a ruined temple like an alien

How would I know he is a real god?

Sanku Devayya spokes doubtfully. Ganga not able to give any reply to her father.

Ganga meditate on the Neela Kanta's name

If it is proved, why you need to hide

As world admit you must try to marry me

If you don't come in your real persona

My father cannot believe you

If you not able to appear

Send appropriate people

O, God! Solve this marriage matter.

Ganga has prayed Shiva. Hereafter, Shiva calls pious saints Sanaka, sananadha, and Vasista. They have had settled this marriage agreement. Immediately he married Ganga and take her to the Mount Kailash. Narada already told this marriage matter secretly to the goddess Parvathi, the wife of Lord Shiva. Shiva hides Ganga in his hair and reached Kailash. Parvathi approached Shiva and asks him that did he really married Ganga? Shiva wants to escape from this situation and he says; ' why you are talking like this, I don't know anything'. But Gowri

didn't let him. She remembers him all the old faults which he has done earlier. Shiva promises her that he doesn't know anything. This promising song is very interesting.

Shiva: Gowri I can't make you believe;

I will do a vow on you

Parvathi: Doing vow is not a big task for you, Shiva

Who is the big deceiver Sarvesa?

Shiva: I will hold the snake in my hand;

Than believe my words, Gowri!

Parvathi: Snakes are your hand bracelets

That will not be a big task for you, the destroyer of Madana

Shiva: Why rendered a thousand speeches; I will drink poison

Peacefully believe my words, Gowri!

Parvathi: You swallowed *kalakutam*⁵

Poison is not a big task for you, Virupaksha

Shiva: Then, I will hold fire

Now you believe me Gowri

Parvathi: Everyone knows, god of fire is your eye

What is a big task for you, Purahara

Shiva: I will stand under the deep water

^{5 5} Kalakutam: the poison which is born from Samudra madhanam by gods and demons in Hindhu myth.

Believe me my words, Gowri

Parvathi: You holds whole Ganga on your head;

Standing in water is not a big task for you, Shiva

Gowri did not believe Shiva's oaths. You are the god of the world, why you are lying? She asks him. After they started playing a dice game on a colored cloth. There Gowri loses the game. When Gowri defeated, Ganga peeped from the Shiva's hair and laughed. When the Gowri saw the Ganga, both of the co-wives fight and argues each other like normal human beings. This part is the most important scene in the play. Drama conflict revealed higher here.

Parvathi:

Who are you nagging women?

Sitting on the Shiva's head, are you blind?

Ganga:

O sister! I am not blind

I am the Ganga from the sky

Parvathi:

If you are Ganga, must dwell in the sky

Is it a proper thing that to climb on husband's head?

Ganga:

I obey my husband's order

That's why I stay; where he kept me

Parvathi:

Then don't talk anymore

Stay in one corner

Ganga:

If husband's affection is on us

We don't have any problem with staying in a corner

Parvathi:

You hypnotize Shiva with your medicine

Shiva Who is not stepping out of the threshold

Ganga:

Many captive medicines are there in the hills

That is the birthplace for you, Gowramma.....

Parvathi:

O fisherwomen you don't have any shame and respect

O tribal women you don't have any clan and moral.....

This way fight increased in them. It was a long poem, it will really amuse the folk. Human emotions are imposed into divine characters.

Parvathi really gets angry on Shiva; 'why he needs to lie with me'. She becomes furious. She asked him 'did the captivated medicine of Ganga, stick into your mind'. Shiva tries to entreat her. Ganga seeing this scene, she says that 'you are so submissive person to your wife, I don't know your fear nature part '. She displeased with Shiva's behavior and she left her mother's home. Ganga dried up all water bodies due to angry on Parvathi. Parvathi faces troubles not having any water either for a drink or for a bath. Parvathi, then calls her son Lord Ganesh and send him to find the water;

Gowri call her son immediately

Come Vinayaka, Rajasekhara!

I am not able to find a single drop of water

Please find the water sources

Vinayaka went that side to find a tank

Ganga hide that tank

Vinayaka went this side to find a tank

Ganga hide this tank

Even a single drop water is not seen in the *Chilaka Samudram*

Even a quarter height water is not seen in the *Pala samudrum*

Where ever he goes no water

There is no bath from last five days

There is no worship for Shiva since last six days

Gowri want to take revenge on Ganga, she prepared;

She brings Ten thousand milk *kavillu*⁶

She brings ten thousand ghee *kavillu*

She had the bath with milk

She has worshipped Shiva with ghee

Ants and mosquitos bite her

To solve this problem she sends her son to old Ganga (*Gowthami*). She prayed to Shiva for protection;

⁶ *Kavillu*: yoke or pole, with a sling attached to each end placed upon the shoulder for carrying load

Shiva sharanumam pahi Shiva sharanu Shiva sharanu

Then Shiva say;

Shiva is the creator who gives birth and death

Gowri is the maker of the religious worship performs

Never argue with the Ganga

This not good; say to Gowri

If Ganga consent is there water will come

All rivers become treasures

Bath and worship will do with water.

Parvathi suppressed her pride and went Ganga home with Lord Ganesh. Ganga is the correct co-wife for Parvathi;

While she seeing Gowri arriving at her home

She brings wet fishes and makes pandals

She brings dry leaves and made garlands.

Take big fishes and put them in the threshold

Brought the water where frog dies; did kallapu⁷

She made arrangements like this and welcomed her. After listening why she comes here and she replies, 'I couldn't find any water sources'. Parvathi offers devotions to the Ganga, she offered her son, saris, and blouses. Ganga doesn't move with these offers. She replies to her, 'your sons also my son and I have enough saris and blouses. Then Parvathi offers, finally, gives Shiva to her. Immediately, Ganga says;

Sister! Don't break this promise

⁷ Kallapu: cow dung and water mixed together and sprinkled in front of a house to settle the dust.

Parvathi agreed to keep her words. But Ganga express doubts, ‘who is the witness for this oath’. Then Parvathi says;

Earth and sky, these two are the witness

Maddulu and *marellu*⁸, these two are the witness

Entire sect of gods are the witness for this act.

While Parvathi says this, Ganga felt happy and she overflows, filled all rivers and flows as usually. Parvathi takes bath and worshiped Shiva. Parvathi pride has been suppressed. With Ganga and Parvathi, Shiva lives happily on the Mount Kailash.

Divinity to humanity and humanity to divinity:

The poet concludes the play with a happy ending. This is the story of the gods, but their divinity comes near to the humanity. It offers a solution to some problems. Pride is a not a worthy thing. The traditional Indian customs identified this, one of the ‘*arishadvargas*’, mean six great sins, *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, and *matscharya*. If a man has to secure divinity, he has to overcome these sins. The poet tries to proof this divinity through gods with their human tendency. First Shiva suppresses Ganga’s pride, when she overflows, exceeding her limits, and secondly, he suppressed Parvathi’s pride, one has to recognize and respects other people identity and rights. One may do the wrong thing in critical circumstances, but people in the higher position, have to forgive them that was the proof of their greatness. Adjust and tolerance can make life happy this is the moral of the play. This the divinity in humanity.

Structure of the play:

Structure of the play follows the conventional Indian classical Sanskrit dramatic style, i.e. *ithivrutam* (plot), this is the body of the story, how the story distributed into different sandhi-s, means segments. Bharatha Muni divided the plot into five sandhi’s, juncture where *ardhaprakriti*-s and *karyavasta*-s interject each other, there evolves a sandhi, which leads the dramatic action. There are five sandhi’s are there, they are; Mukha sandhi, pratimukha sandhi, garbha sandhi, vimasha sandhi and nirvahava sandhi.

^{8 8} Maddulu and marellu: local tree names

If we divide this Shiva Bhagavatam into five sandhi's, they will be like this;

There are a nandi and prastavana; in naandi poet tells about his own information. Where the story has begun, who tells to whom, this information will tell in the inception, in the prastavana, mean prologue. Ganga overflow after kalpantha and Shiva curses her to be born in a yoni, human birth. After that Shiva promises her to marry. This was the prastavana.

1. **Mukha sandhi** (initial action): If we come to the story, the initial action was when Ganga grows young, Narada see her and tells her that she was born to marry Shiva. When she saw Shiva she fell into the love. This is called Mukha sandhi.
2. **Prathi Mukha sandhi** (growth of action): When both Shiva and Ganga fell into affection for each other. Her parents come between them to stop their marriage. Shanku Devayya doubts about Shiva's originality. Then after Shiva send muni's to settle matter. He marries Ganga and went to Kailash. This was the growth of action.
3. **Garbha sandhi** (crisis): the crisis of the play was when Parvathi suspects Shiva, on bringing Ganga as her co-wife. When they play dice, Parvathi defeats and the Ganga character revealed there. Both co-waives fight each other. Three of them separated from each other. This was the crisis.
4. **Vimarsa sandhi** (falling of the action): When the desire become fulfilled, there arrives an obstruction. Shiva and Ganga marriage was not successes due to Parvathi's pride. She came as an obstacle. Ganga took back all her water sources. Gowri struggled for not having any water sources to do daily sacraments. She has prayed to Shiva. This is the new obstacle in the play called vimarsa sandhi.
5. **Nirvahana sandhi** (conclusion): when the story reached to the fruitful, satisfied to the protagonist's desire, it is called the conclusion. When Shiva order to Parvathi, to go and pray Ganga for water, she suppresses her pride and went to the Ganga place. Ganga satisfied with the Parvathi offers to give Shiva. Three of them live happily. This is called nirvahana sandhi.

All five sandhi's structure was followed by the folk poet, this was a really interesting thing. It is a well-structured play. The emotions are played in an order to reach the audience the state of aesthetic experience, *rasa siddi*. This, in a way is meaningfully shows in a standard plot structure owing to the fact that the playwright should possess an objective to take his audience along with him to a higher plain and leave them there so as to make them participants of the theatrical plain.

Spatial locality and experience of the place in a myth:

This is a mythological play in folklore and also as a desi literary genre. It evolved in a certain ecological, regional condition. It was different from the mainstream Indian traditional system which our general elite feel about our culture. How the individual takes the regional form of art is different from other regional individuals. A culture is a meeting place where individuals meet. They share their common cultures among fellow region people. In this nexus, this play mainly references to the cultural system and customs of the northern Andhra which is an economically backward region recognized by the state. Marginalized cultural forms reveal the traits of the certain local customs and practices. In this performance, space plays very importantly, because of the duality of the space, one is the actual place of the gods, is negotiated with the poet and audience feels in their mind, this transition makes the difference and dynamic in terms of spatial locations. The spatial locations have a connection with the place experiences by the audience whom they are connected with the daily life events. How one feels sensually to their land and localities through culture. The character of Shiva was not a divine being, he comes to a mundane neighbor of a local community. Ganga and Gowri are local women who quarrel and nagging in their daily life. Poetry was not a highly literary style, it was reduced to a daily life. Here the poetry can take a social ethnography to find local traits and customs. In this way the text also important.

In the next chapter, I will reveal performance text and how the performance constructed according to local tastes and how it is different from the other performances. And I also introduce local performance groups who are performing this play for decades. How the song, speech, recitation, body movements and scenic elements are designed in this Shiva Bhagavatam, I will deal with them in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Shiva Bhagavatham in performance

Performance analysis

When I was a child, in my village at the time of some village deity festival or in some festive occasions like *Vinayaka Chavithi* (birth celebration of Lord Ganesh) or Durga Puja, in that time there comes a troupe in an auto. At the back side of the auto, they visibly hang the Shiva Trishul that gives great pleasure to children like us. It indicates they are going to perform tonight, that feeling was a still reside in my memory. In that night, many of children passionately peep into their green rooms to see how they will do make-up and what type of costumes they wear? Everything was a surprise for us. How Shiva wears his snake on his neck, how goddess Parvathi keep her headgear on her head and how the Narada Muni hangs Tambura on his shoulders and how the comedian put his small mustaches on his upper lip, these all things make excites us. After their performances, every child tries to imitate them when they are playing with their friends. That was the memory of Shiva Bhagavatham. Still these performances stages in our Uttarandhra (North Coastal Andhra) region, not frequently like earlier, now it is a rare occasion.

Shiva Bhagavatham means a Bhagavatham on Lord Shiva. The word 'Bhagavatham' mean a story about the god. The performers of these stories called '*bhagavathulu*'. The word performance mean, as Victor Turner, 'to furnish forth', 'to complete'', to carry out thoroughly'' (from Ritual to theatre, 13). Richard Bauman says, 'locates the meaning of performance in the actual execution of an action as opposed to its potential. Richard Schechner says, 'it is a restored behavior'. Further, he argues, 'Performances are actions and object of the performance studies is 'behavior' (Schechner 2002:1). Performance: 'any action that is framed, presented, highlighted or displayed'. These wide ranges of definitions, performance is drawn

from ritual to theatre, to sports, to daily events. Here if we look the performance of Shiva Bhagavatham, from the traditional parameters, actually influenced by Indian performing aesthetics. Indian performing traditions are evolved from religious purpose, more to say, bhakti. Nemichandra Jain, in his popular book, Indian Theatre (2012), argues ‘‘the bhakti movement was so inclusive and sweeping, and so widely connected with deep and fundamental concerns of the Indian social life...’’ Bhakti is one of the ways from the four ways to reach the god. Our traditional preachers say there are nine ways in the bhakti to reach the god; these are *sravanam* (listening to god stories), *keerathanam* (praise, sing), *smaranam* (chanting god name), *padasevanam* (serve at the god feet), *archanam* (puja), *vandanam* (salute), *daasyam* (surrender to him), *sakyam* (make friendship with him) and *Atma nivedanam* (self-submission). These all have connected to performance, as Victor Turner says, ‘to carry out thoroughly’, a devote offer something, his self, he presents something. He performs to some unseen audience, the gods. That’s, why Shakespeare says, ‘all the world is a stage and all men and women mere players’. In Indian philosophy says, ‘we are the puppets of god and he plays according to his will’. Here two things, humans are players and god is a spectator. Again here, god is also a master craft men. *Bhaghavathulu* enacts the stories of the god in their performances by reciting, dance, sing, and music. They enact stories not only for their moksha, they perform for the fellow humans to educate and entertain. They create ecstasy in them and gave pleasure to them. ‘*anando Brahma*’, mean be happy, way to Brahma’ is the Indian saying. Bharatha Muni extensively has written about performing elements in his fifth Veda, Natya Sastra, how a performance text is to construct, what type of theatre structures were there, how many acting styles are there, which type gestures are there, how the ecstasy reached to *samajika* (audience);

Rasa -bhava –abhinayopetho-

Dharma -vritti -pravritti -siddhi -swara -thada athodyam-

Ganam -Rangascha sangraha (Natya Sastra)

here Bharatha Muni talk about nine performing elements; rasa-s [nine- *Sringar* (erotic), *Hasya* (comic), *Karuna* (pathetic), *Raudra* (ferocious), *Veera* (heroic), *Bhayanaka* (terrible), *bibhatsa* (odious), *Adbhutha* (marvellous) and *Santha* (peaceful)], feelings (*Bhavas- vibhava, anubhava*

and vyabichari), acting styles (verbal, gestural, costumes and make up and internal emotions), performing style(lok dharmi, Natya dharmi), vritti-s (*arabhati, Bharathi, Kaisiki and satyathi*), pravrutti-s (which is related to regions), final attainment (*siddi*), vocal, musical instruments, song and theatre architectures. Classical Indian theatre followed the Natya Sastra tradition and some the poets have considered what Bharatha Muni gave the characteristics of performing the practice. Other regional performing traditions which are come under folk, desi, oral forms and locally prevailed texts also followed the Natya Sastra rules. But these are not recognized by the literary masters. These art forms are meant for uneducated village folk. ‘People art forms’, popular mass culture orally transcribed to the generations by the professional, dependent caste performers like marginalized castes, Jangalu, dasarlu, yadhavuvulu and etc.

Andhra Pradesh has an extensive performing traditions. Many art forms regionally developed but they have a national character, ex. Kuchipudi, which is introduced by the Siddhendra Yogi. *Kuchipudi bhagavathulu* performing for centuries. Their popular performances, Bhama kalapam, Golla Kalapam and etc. with their influence many marginalized caste performers started various Bhagavathas in Andhra, like Yanadi Bhagavatham, chenchu Bhagavatham, Thurpu Bhagavatham etc.

Shiva religion spread in Andhra Pradesh by preacher Basaveswara. Well known poets from the medieval period, like Palkuriki Somana, Panditharadhya spread this religion through literature. According to this religion,

From the divine god Brahma to *pipilika* (ant), these all living-beings are animals; life is a cord to them. For these entire animals, master Shiva breaks the cord and give moksha to them’.

The Vedic tradition doesn’t give access non-Brahmins to puja Lord Vishnu. Shiva religion gives access to all marginalized castes and women. This attracts marginalized castes in Shiva religion. Religious poets start writing in people’s language. They followed the normal people aesthetics. They spread the religion with the performing traditions. Many artisan communities spread the Shiva ideology. Shiva poets gave importance to ‘janu Telugu’, literal meaning is easily and beautiful known style of Telugu. Their popular meter is, dvipada, they see it as equal to Vedas. Folklore scholar B. Rama Raju mentioned about many Shiva geyas; Daksha Yagna, Parvathi Kalyam, Ganga-Gowri Samvadam, Chiruthonda namdi Katha, komarelli Mallana Katha, etc.

The performance text; *Hari hari padalu*

Shiva devotee's one of the dearest stories is *Ganga Vivaham* (marriage of the goddess Ganga). For folk performers, the poet Pasagada Sanyasi wrote this text in a meter called, *harihari padam*;

Harihari Narayana Adi Narayana, karuninchi mammelu kamala lochanuda

B. Ramaraju says these *padalu* goes between meter '*seesa*' and '*dviradagathi ragada*'. This has another name called; *jampe*. This *padalu* popularized in only Uttarandhra region. Telugu theatre scholar M. Radhakrishna Murty says, these are only restricted to this region, because it's regional linguistic character.

Shiva Bhagavatham in performance

Many troupes in Uttarandhra (north Coastal Andhra), perform this drama. Here I am restricted to analyze one group, Sharada Natya Kala Mandali from Srikakulam district. In the actual text there are many characters, already I mention in the second chapter. But the performers reduced their cast due to an economic problem. The main characters of this performances are Shiva, Parvathi, Narada Muni, Ganga and one servant as well work as a vidhushaka (comedian). Another set of backstage _ one harmonist, one mridangam player, and four or five chorus accompanies. These choruses play an important role in the performance. They play the cymbals and as well as they sing along with the main performers.

As in all traditional performances, the play starts with Lord Ganesh benedictions, performers seeking blessings from him. This part all will be done behind the curtain. Actually, the performance takes place in a street in the village. Host villagers arrange the stage in a temporary tent with benches. This stage is not like a proscenium stage. It has very limited space. Within this place, actors will perform. Musicians also sit opposite the performers and chorus stand near back curtain by playing cymbals. Even some of the audience sit on the edges of the stage. Only backside small curtain will be there, remaining three sides, leave for audience view. Village audience will not view the performance has a regular town audience. They may saw the performance many times. Some of the audience see only some of the interesting part of the performance. They come at the time of the performance. Some of the audience only listen to the

audio of the performance. They visualize according to their imagination. Folk performances actually rely on the listening capabilities of the audience, not fully on visuals. Because they were proliferated in local languages. Mainly they are narrative and signing forms. In the prayer song they refer all castes of the villages;

O, Ganesh! An embodiment of Shiva, You are the son of the Shiva

When Brahmins worship you, they call you as Lord Brahma

When Kshatriya's worship you, they call you as Lord Rama

When Vaisyas worship you, they call you as Lord Vishnu

When Sudras worship you, they call you as the Sun.

Next, they sing another prayer song on the local deities. Goddess-like Rayagada Maggi Gowri, Palakonda Kotadurga and etc. This prayer song is sung by all the performers together. After this prayer curtain will be removed. In the introduction scene, Parvathi will enter with her servant. This Parvathi role performed by the male. He wears colorful shining sari and blouse. Face makeup with thick pancakes, mascara on eyes, and lipstick on lips, a big nose ring and it was attached to ears. It gives splendor look. On the forehead, many cosmetic marks are colorfully painted. The performer wears a headgear and tinsel ornaments on neck and earrings. Long hair braid wears on the head. These ornaments give a rich look. In the introduction scene, there is servant character to the goddess Parvathi. Actually, he works as suthradhara in the entire performance. Sometimes he plays as women servant to Parvathi and male servant to the Shiva. And he plays jokes, introduce the characters and connects the story. In many of performances, his gender is neutral. This gives funny to the village audience. One of the chorus and make conversation with him. And also he brings the divine characters into human beings and normal people. In this performance, he wears woman costumes.

Parvathi asks her to accompany, 'is there all castes (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra) of peoples has come'. She replies Paravathi, 'all have come' and she says, as in Natya Sastra said, '*sahridaya*' well-natured audience come, they are learned and well known in bhava, raga, thala

(feeling, mode of music and rhythm). She asks Parvathi to who are you and why you come here. Parvathi introduces herself. This style has been drawn from Kuchipudi and Thurpu Bhagavatham tradition. Actually, these performance elements are drawn from the different art forms like Thurpu Bhagavatham, Jamukula pata, Tappeta gullu and some other local art forms. Thurpu Bhagavatham is well known in Uttarandhra (Northern Andhra). Northern Andhra region is also called as '*thurpu*', which mean east. This performance is performed only in Northern Andhra. This form used local language, dialect, and local style. The text was written in poetry, prose, *dharuvu*, and *dvipada*.

Kuchipudi story is narrated and sung by vocal performers and it is enacted by the dancers. But in this Thurpu Bhagavatam performers, they sing, act along with dance.

Parvathi:

People call me Devi, Parvathi Devi

I am the wife of the Lord Shiva

I am a woman of marigold garland.

Thai - thai tha- dhitthom-thai tha-dhitthom.

In the traditional performance main story enacted in singing, speech is improvised by the performers. In Shiva Bhagavatham speech is rendered in a different mode, not in a realistic manner. It has a different rhythm. Every sentence is sung repeatedly and chorus also sings along with performer. This repetitive make the story understandable to the audience. Along with the song, actors create dance movements and gestures with the help of musical instruments. At the end of the song they sing this musical phase; *Thai - thai tha- dhitthom-thai tha-dhitthom*, as a *muktayipmu*, which mean, a finishing stroke of the drum is uttered in vocally. Dance is not in some particular style. As traditional Indian drama styles, they use more voice, singing patterns, some rhythmic movements. Here acting is important. Changing steps, little round movements, hand gestures are important. It's a kind of total body acting in a stylistic manner.

Next vidhushaka describes about Parvathi's beauty with one of the chorus. With different metaphors, he defines her beauty. This kind of long poetic speeches are there in the original text. But it is in poetry. Here he gives in speech mode. These kinds of non-stop speech patterns drawn from the art form called '*pagati vesham*' which mean, the performances done in the daytime. These art forms only perform in daytimes at the center of the villages. It doesn't have any particular stories. They took some interesting and peculiar characters from the society and imitate them as it is. They criticize these people and creates fun in the audience. Popular *pagati veshams* like, *Pittala Dora* (police), *karuvaji* and *Somayaji* (young wife and old husband), *Golla Boyeedu* (Shepard), *mandala vadi vesham* (native medicine seller) and so on. With their wit and continuous speech modes so interest in the audience. Here this *vidushaka* speech also like that manner. Once she talks about Parvathi, then he starts to talk to himself. Why she didn't get married, how many marriages offers come to her, what type of love stories she has with villagers, she describes with chorus man. Generally, spontaneously she brings local persons in this conversation. She uses sometimes obscene and adultery language. This makes local audience interest in the performance. And also these conversations make the main story happens in a daily life situation.

After his speech, Narada Muni enters into the stage with singing, like in verse drama. He wears saffron waist dhoti, and a cloth on his neck, a Tambura hanging from his shoulder and two *cidathalu* (a type of cymbal, small metal rings attached to a wood piece) in his hand. He sings and plays with this cymbals;

O, God! People not able to recognize your miracles

Is it possible for me to sing about you?

When they are in rich, no one thinks about you

When taking out their riches, that is also your miracle

He introduced himself to the vidushaka, why he came and who is he. He says, his main aim is '*kalaha bhojanam*', meaning one who loves to quarrel. He set a quarrel between two people that is his food. Through this quarrel, he wants to make *loka-Kalyanam*, the mean welfare of the

world. He sings verses in Telugu drama style. Telugu drama literature was drawn from the medieval Telugu literature. With the help of the harmonium Telugu prose drama popularized in colonial India and after. Using different 'raga-s', elaborate the dramatic text meaningfully, creates an empathy in the audience. This is a way of Natya dharmi. Narada Muni says, he came to the celebration of the marriage of Ganga and Shiva. He also sing's a marriage song of the film. He imitates that song;

Please come, we see the marriage of Ganga and Shiva.

He talks to vidhushaka, why he comes here. He is seeking blessings from goddess Parvathi. He sings a song on her; *Jai Uma Shankari Gowri jai Uma sankari*. This song was a *Bhajan* song. Devotes of the villagers sing songs about God with devotion inauspicious days at *Ramamandiram* (a temple of Rama). In this Bhajans, they use mridangam, harmonium, and cymbals. One person will sing and remain persons will give chorus to him. Shiva Bhagavatham performers draw elements from different styles to attract a larger audience. After praising the manifestation of Parvathi, he tells the marriage issue of Ganga and Shiva and he also gives the advice of don't open the Kailash doors when Shiva comes. This way he set up the quarrel between Shiva and Parvathi.

In this drama singing is the main element. Speeches are the addition to the drama. Singing belongs to Natya dharmi. According to Natya Sastra when can dance, music appears in drama?

when characters, utterances, and feelings are shown as overreaching the normal, when the mode of acting breaks out into graceful dance-like movement; when speech is intoned in a song-like manner, when language adopts poetic graces and when a man does not appear himself; when the natural condition of man in sorrow or in joy is expressed through the use of music and heightened acting.... (Natya Sastra. 13-74).

After listening to the marriage of Shiva and Ganga, Parvathi was in upset, get angry and feel sad about Shiva's deed, she thought, 'why he deceived her'. She cries like normal human beings. At the same time, vidhushaka also lament about her story. In this scene, she tries to create fun. She talks about her daughter problems in a comic manner. Parvathi talks about her dream. Vidhushaka also talks about her dream. Here Parvathi dream;

O, friend! I dream, I dream

O cheliya o maguva o lalana

How can I describe the events happen in the dream?

I feel shy to tell the theme of this dream

In the Jangam impersonation, Shiva went into the fishermen streets

Where he saw Ganga in a cradle and fell into the love

He married her and brought her to the Kailash.

This is a beautiful song on a dream. Folk has different opinions on dreams. They believe it will happen in their real life also. She asks her what to do. Vidhushaka gives advise her to call Lord Shiva with *dhyanam* (meditation).

O, Shiva! I believed you, but where you have gone

You leave me here you have gone somewhere

Is it right for you bring Ganga to here?

Parvathi sings this song with a nice *alaapa*, the audience feels Parvathi pain.

Shiva shambo, Shiva shambo, Shankara amibika hridayesa.

Parvathi prays Shiva and local deities. After she closed the doors of Kailash. Here music instruments and cymbals play in a fast rhythm. Parvathi sings in *Jamukula pata* styles. This is a popular song in Uttarandhra. This is the additional song for the audience. It is a common practice that performers sing other songs of the story. It gives the audience pleasure. This song is a conversation between a fisherman and ammoru (goddess Durga). This goddess wants to go to other banks. She came to the river bank and asks a fisherman to carry her in the boat to the other bank. Fisherman sees her beauty and fell in love with her. He thought she is a normal person and

ask her to marry him. Goddess refuses him. But he didn't leave her. He enforced her to marry him. Finally, she reveals her original manifestation. The fisherman realizes and fell on her feet asks excuses. She assured his excuses. This song is popular because how people try to harass women. The woman is depicted here as a goddess to save themselves from the men.

After that, Shiva enters with a song of Bhajan. Here he sings a song on him. Actually, he comes with introducing himself. Vidhushaka ask him 'why he come'. He asks vidhushaka, 'all types of caste people have come. He replies to him that 'all castes people have come'. Shiva's face makes up in blue color, long hair tied at the center of the head. He wears tiger skin, snake in his neck and in his hand there is a Trishul. He enters the stage with a force.

Here come back lord Shiva to Kailash

With his Trishul and snakes.

He will dance along with the song and little bit of Shiva *thandava* movements with Trishul. Then he sees the Kailash, empty. No one is there. Then he gets angry and calls his servant vidhushaka. He asks him 'Kailash always filled with pearls, gems, and peoples. But no one will there. What happens'. Servant replies to him, 'all have gone to see a movie'. This type of comic replies is common in this performance. The performers and audience will respect Shiva's character and at a time they see him as a common man. Parvathi comes and sings a song;

Don't call me, I won't listen to your words

Don't make me cheap among the people

Didn't you go to the city Yeluru?

Didn't you bring to fisherwoman Ganga?

Shiva:

Devi! Who told this? Why you closed all the doors, our Kailash bloom with *vajra vaidurya gomedika pusyaragalu*. Why this now it look bare?

Parvathi:

Where did you go?

Shiva:

I didn't go anywhere.

Parvathi:

Where ever go we went together, but now you leave me here. And make me fun among people...

This conversation will go like this. It is always in common people language and common people thoughts. Shiva lies like a deceived husband. Parvathi pestered him continuously as a nagging woman. Both together argue with each other. When one makes an argument in song mode, another listens to it. When the rhythm and tempo of the increased both of them dance together. The popular scholar on music, Ranade argues,

Body movement is noticeable/ major displacement of bodily parts which shifts them away from their respective normal positions; hand-movement is a noticeable displacement of hands from their positions; subtle positional changes of bodily parts, except for the main, are gestures

These movements are created through the music. Audiovisuals create imagery rhythms in the performers.

Shiva:

Devi! I brought marigold garland to you wear it.

Parvathi:

You can give better than garland to Ganga.

Shiva:

Devi! I brought jasmine garland to you, wear it

Parvathi:

You can give that garland to Ganga.

This quarrel will go between them in singing style. In every song, they change the pattern of singing. Between they talk to each other. Sometimes chorus makes comments on Shiva. They use many proverbs, in their dialogues. The conflict of this performance is between goddess Parvathi and Shiva. She asks Shiva to agree that he married Ganga. But he doesn't agree he married her. He wants to hide this marriage matter. Parvathi uses Proverbs like, 'tongue will know all tastes, but not the cooking spoon', 'if it is visible from the field, why need to climb the bank'. This kind of speech makes known the story to everyone. Because song will go in haste along with musical instruments. Sometimes words in the song are not audible. Song main role is it gives feelings to the audience. One emotion will continue for a long time in the song. It is also a pleasure to listen to the musical compositions. Songs tunes inherently come from the local traditions, generation by generation. Simple dance movements and splendor costumes, and makeup give the pleasure of larger than characters. People identified themselves in god's characters. The folk audience will not fond of the story, conflicts and twists are belong to modern theatre and cinema forms. They will like the sonorous cadence of the music and emotions through singing. And they also like the poetic repeat of the words and proverbs. That's why these performers bring many popular songs while they are performing.

Shiva tries to make believe Parvathi, by oaths. But she doesn't agree with him. There, he makes different oaths, like he will hold the snakes, drink poison, stand in the water, holds flames. She takes it easy these promises. Because Shiva was well known for these things. Snakes are his ornaments, he kept poison in his neck, and he keeps Ganga on his head. This long singing conversation was very interesting. Poets wit and performers talent make the audience believe in these things. Men's adultery relations are common in the society. Many wives faced with this problem. Women identified with Parvathi characters. Women always doubt their husbands. Parvathi asks him why he has jasmines on his head. He gives the reply of while Ravana

abducting Sita in the skyway, there Sita's jasmine falls on him. This conversation comes twice in; one through song another by dialogue.

Parvathi:

My beloved Shiva

Your body smells fish smell

Shiva:

When Lord Madhava embodies the Fish incarnation

I went into the sea to see him that why it smells.

Shiva tries to lie always and Parvathi never believed his promises. Parvathi laments for the Shiva's behavior. Shiva stands on his lie and never agrees his faults. Finally, she gives salutes to him. Shiva asks her, Why you believe people's malicious reports. Then after, they ready to play the dice game. Here Shiva behavior and character created like a deceived husband. Then the Ganga enters. It is the main character. This role is played by the woman. This is the tradition, that women play Ganga role. In traditional Indian theatre women playing women, roles are very rare. Female impersonations are very popular in Telugu verse drama from the colonial period. Here these performers bring women actress, for the more commercial purpose. Village audience is very keen interest to see women are as performers. The performing groups also will increase their performance fee by showing women actresses. Another art form Burra Katha involved women as the narrators. This was the popular phenomena in the 1990's Telugu Burra Katha's scenario. Also, it is appreciated that women come to take a role in these type art forms. It shows that, the socio and cultural changes in the society. Men see women as a commodity and as well as they accepted women on the stage, as a prestige thing and social status. Popular Burra Katha women performers in Uttarandhra is Garividi Laxmi, Jayamma, and Dampudu Laxmi. They are performed widely and appreciated. The main problem in their performance is obscene language and double meaning dialogues. This is also one of the common things in folk performances. Because village people will not hide their desires, not like the town middle class people. Except that they are well known for their art. This may be the reason woman actress take the role in Shiva Bhagavatham. She entered with a song '*jolali*' song of the making children sleep. She

wears dress colorful and a headgear. She also asked Vidhushka to all castes people have come. And she explains who she, why she comes here is.

Ganga:

I am Devi, people called me Ganga

I am born at the feet of the Lord Vishnu

I grow up like a parrot at Yeluru town

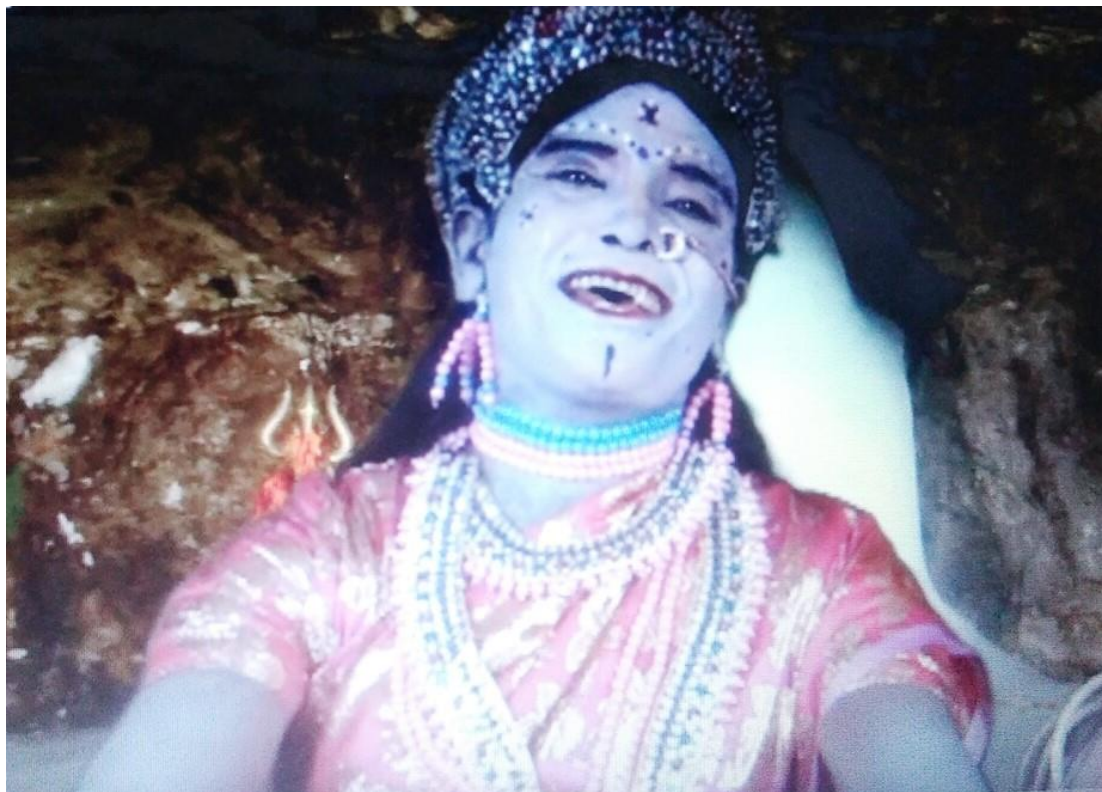
My husband is a nice man, he was called as Shiva.

Then after her introduction, again Shiva and Parvathi come and they play dice game. In this play, when Parvathi loses, Ganga laughs from behind Lord Shiva. Parvathi listens her laugh. Ganga comes out. Then Parvathi feels very bad, Shiva betray becomes true. Then she leaves Shiva aside and started arguing with Ganga. The conversation between Parvathi and Ganga, poetically written beautifully by poet and also the players create a wonderful conflict. It is a nice entertainment for the audience. They always see co-wives fighting in the villages. Parvathi and Ganga fight like normal women, they bring their castes, hierarchies, family members, what not, and everything come in their speeches. When they together dance, it looks like cockfights in the Andhra villages. They dance opposite each other and sometimes take rounds. Between they use foul language and nice metaphors, which delineates the folk mode of the speeches. Finally, Ganga says to Shiva, she will this place, because of the arrogant behavior of the Parvathi. Then After Shiva tries to console Parvathi. But Parvathi will not listen to his words. She goes to her mother home, with the feeling of sadness. Shiva also feels bad, he realized his mistake. His beloved Parvathi left him and also young wife Ganga also left with the behavior of the Parvathi. Ganga comes to him and asks him, why he married her when you already have a wife. She feels angry with him. She sings a song from Telangana's devotion song. Shiva was crushed between them. She says, 'life sharing with co-wife is a difficult thing for any woman. Shiva says that 'he gives her promise in previous life, that's why he married her. But she won't listen to his words. She left her mother home. Seeing this co- wives fight Shiva leaves the Kai. This conflict shows,

marring two women is a problematic thing for a man. Shiva sings a film song of wishing their wellness.

In the final scene, Parvathi wants to worship Shiva. She went to take a bath. But she founds no water. She calls her son Vinayaka. This character is played by one of the choruses. Both of them went to the Fishermen Street where Ganga lives. Ganga wants to take her revenge on Parvathi. She shows her reserved manner to Parvathi. But Parvathi expressed her atonement. Ganga also welcomed her because of Parvathi's propitiation. Both of them express willing to serve Shiva. Shiva takes his two wives on both hands with a happy moment. Finally performance transport the spectator to the state of equilibrium after passing through many ups and downs of life and various states of the relationship between the individual and the collective.

At the final, *Bharatha Vakyam* done with a *Mangalam song*, means, sung on auspicious occasion at the end of the performance.



Parvathi character from Shiva Bhagavatham, Sharadha Natya Kala Mandali.



Shiva Character from Shiva Bhagavatham Performance, Sharada Natya Kala Mandali.



Shiva and Parvathi character from Shiva Bhavatham, Sharada Natya Kala Mandali.

Chapter 4

Tracing the social milieu in mythological performance: Shiva Bhagavatham

“If you take myth and folklore, and these things that speak in symbols, they can be interpreted in so many ways that although the actual image is clear enough, the interpretation is infinitely blurred, a sort of enormous rainbow of every possible color you could imagine.” — Diana

Wynne Jones

It is an agreed fact that the poets write literature and dramas on mythological themes to deal with human psychology and unnoticed behaviors. These behaviors, in arts, they appear in forms and routes. Whatever characters, situations poets create, but they express the social conditions and moral values. The classical Indian texts, Mahabharata, Ramayana and various Puranas deal abundant range of social life in their written periods. Still, they have a great influence on Indian masses. This literature, varies according to the regional conditions and social practices. Every region, the locale has its own thought process and art forms. The mythic behaviors, they never lost their appearance in the society. They come again and again.

Shiva Bhagavatham is about the ‘Leela’ of Lord Shiva. ‘Leela’ means, according to ‘dictionary, sport, play, amusement, deed, action’. The *Itivritta* (plot) deals with the story of Shiva, who married two women Ganga and Gowri. The story deals with the consequences of the polygamy. How these effects the family life of the women and men. One way, the poet deals with a common human beings theme. Another way, he says, it is a Leela. In the play, Gowri questions Shiva, why brought other women? He replies to her, ‘it is the fate, he can’t escape’. For him, it is a Leela. How the people in the democratic state take this kind of just where the constitution gives equal rights to everyone and punishment for who do not follows the constitutional rules and regulations. Why this performance become very popular in this region? What makes interest audience draw them to view such a performance?

1. Performances are actions and object of the performance studies is 'behavior' (Richard Schechner 2002:1)
2. Performance means, any action that is framed, presented, highlighted or displayed.
3. Rituals are used to manage potential conflicts regarding status, power, space, and sex. Performing rituals helps people get through difficult periods of transition. Ritual is also a way for people to connect to a collective, even mythic past, to build social solidarity, to form a community.
4. The performative occurs in places and situations not traditionally marked as 'performing arts', from dressing up and drag to certain kind of writing and speaking. Accepting performative as a category of theory makes it increasingly difficult to sustain a distinction between appearance and reality, facts and make belief, surfaces, and depths.

Polygamy very common in Indian mythological themes. And it was a social practice in India, before 1956, it was prohibited in Hindu marriage act, 1955. In mythology we know many stories move around the polygamy issues. Almost every god maintain more wives. According to myths, Lord Krishna, have sixteen thousand wives. Krishna and his wives face many problems from co-wives. Many dramas, kavya-s written on this subject, ex. Bhamakalapam, Parijathapaharanam, etc. the Lord Vishnu, Lord Venkateswara, have two wives. Reversely, in Mahabharata, there is a polyandry, Draupadi, marries fives husbands. In Ramayana, Rama's father, Dasaratha, suffers from his four wives. In the history, every king maintains many wives and courtesans are an addition. To maintain two or more wives is a social status to a man in earlier societies. It was also an economic problem. The Telugu poet Srinatha in the 15th century, criticizes Lord Shiva being a poor fellow who resides in the graveyard, the poet asks, is he needed two wives?

A rich god like Krishna can marry

Thousands of women.

For a beggar like you, even two is too many.

Shiva, let me have Ganga.

Parvathi is enough for you (Rao and Shulman 1998: 114).

Here poets words, let me have Ganga mean, water. When the poet roaming in the Palnadu region in Andhra. He feels thirsty, he wrote a padyam on Shiva the god who is not providing water.

When reforms staged in colonial India, many inhuman practices are prohibited. Through theatre performances many actors and playwrights disseminated reform concepts on social evils, like child marriages, not allowing widows marry, sati practice, prostitution, dowry system, untouchability etc. popular plays, Kanyasulkam (Gurajada Apparao), Chintamani (Kallakuri Narayana Rao), deals these social evils. After establishing Praja Natya Mandali in 1943[Andhra Branch of Indian People Theatre Association], they focus on eradicating the social inequalities and they dreamed classless society in Andhra region. Many plays written on these issues. Praja Natya Mandali uses popular art form like Burra Katha, Oggu Katha, Veedi Bhagavatham. In these plays, playwrights portrayed patriotism, self-respect, and self-rule against the British government. They successfully unite Telugu people under one nation_ Bharatha Desam. Later communist movements, like Telangana Armed Struggle (1946_51), Srikakulam Armed Struggle (1968-71), Maoist Movement in Andhra (1980-2010), and recent Telangana statehood movement (1996-2014), all use folk art forms to propagate their ideology. Jana Natya Mandali (1972) draw the songs from folk art to bring class-conscious among masses.

However, Shiva Bhagavatham is not propagating the social reforms in such a conscious way, but it exposes the problem of polygamy in an aesthetic way. How women are bearing the burden of husband's deceit in a domestic life. How women suffer more than a man in the polygamy that was the main theme. The performance not focuses on Shiva, it gives emphasis to Gowri. The poet delineates Parvati as a common woman, not the powerful goddess who have enormous strength like her other incarnations, Durga, Kali etc. The poets took women stand. Because our society is patriarchy society. Male domination is predominant everywhere. Performing arts, mainly folk forms in rural India, focuses on women issues. Perhaps, they did not bring forth women's consciousness towards emancipation. But they expose men behaviors towards women. How men behave ingest towards their beloved ones. Here, Parvati, she was the one who suffers from the deceive Shiva. And more is that she has to share life with another woman. Which is

more lament issue for a woman? Parvati posing questions to Lord Shiva, ‘why did you do injustice to me? When Shiva comes back to Kailash abode, he saw the surroundings. Everywhere there exists unprecedented silence. There is no lights lit, there is no offering for the gods. No servants on duty. It is like a common situation in our daily life, everyone experience and sees in the families when a husband and wife quarrels. Women try to leave maintenance of the house. This is a kind of women protests on their husbands. Parvati closes the gates of Kailash. Shiva asks her to open the door. But she denies it. She insists on him, don’t call me Gowri, you are a cheater. A Woman feels cheaper in front of people than her husband’s actual cheat. Gowri says,

Don’t call me, you are a deceiver

Don’t make me cheap in front of people, my lord.

While you traveling on the earth you married a fisherwoman Ganga

Don’t call me, you are a deceiver.

She asks him ‘where did you go, leaves me alone in the house. He replies to her, ‘I didn’t go anywhere’. She argues with him ‘we are always together, androgynous, but leave me alone and you have gone somewhere. Here the poet emphasis, wife and husband are not individual beings, they both together in one form, the ideal one; androgynous. This androgynous image seems to suggest this kind of unity need between husband and wife. The classical Sanskrit Kavya emphasis an aesthetic flavor called *dhwani*, which means the suggestive quality of the poetic language (Anandavardana qt in (Devy 2010:31). We see this kind of saying in the society that, often elders bless the new married couple; be together like Shiva- Parvathi. Here, this seems to go against to this ideal one. He replies her like a cheater, a common husband who did an illegal affair with other, he gives wrong explanations. Shiva says, ‘I went to save the good people and to punish the bad ones, except that I didn’t do any wrong’. But she doesn’t believe his words. She asks again, it is right for you?

Shiva tries to hide his fault like a common man. To divert her attention from the subject, he says, “I have brought jasmines for you, tie them on your braid’. But she does not fall into his trap, she mocks him, ‘why you are showing sudden affections on me, this is unusual’. Moreover, she argues, “did you really brought them for me or else another woman? The women in common life

are always skeptical about her husband's behavior, mainly when they went into the outside world. They don't know what they are doing outside. They imagine stories around their husbands illegal connects with other women. This is a common psychology of wives. Their lives always intertwine with their husbands. They can bear anything but they can't bare their husband's illegal affairs. Parvati, replies to Shiva,

If you brought jasmine garland, better to give it your new beloved Ganga.

I don't want your jasmines

If you brought Marigold garland, better to offer it your younger darling Ganga

Shiva tries to bluff her by saying I am the god of thirty-three crores of living beings. He tries to dominate her. But, Parvathi, catch his facial expressions. One can manage their faults with words, but cannot hide their expressions. Parvathi exposes Shiva's guilt;

My lord your gleaming face become dispirited, what is the reason, tell me.

But Shiva replies her that his face never be dispirited and he says, he doesn't know anything. He asks her, 'believe my words'. Parvati, replies him;

Snakes know snakes ways

Water know water courses, my lord

Tell me one thing, did you went Yeluru and bring Ganga, is this right or wrong?

I didn't go Yeluru town, didn't bring Ganga

Shiva will not agree that he had married Ganga. Moreover, he says, you alleged on me many faults, I am an old man, who gives me a young woman to marry? Parvathi tries to prove that he married Ganga. She sees turmeric marks on his clothes and body. She sees these as marriage custom marks. But Shiva gives explains to this, 'while hugging our beloved son, I got this marks'. Again Parvathi brings another proof that he marries Ganga. She alleged, 'your body

smells fishy'. Shiva gives an explanation that, 'I went under the sea to see the Lord Vishnu's Fish incarnation' that's what I got this smell'. This conflict goes on like a quarrel between village husband and wife. Shiva takes oaths on different subjects. This social aspects of gods can be viewed in native poet's work. They will not follow the mainstream literature. They always engaged in with people's life. Their god's customs also look like a common man and day to day customs.

In the polygamy, custom women suffer a lot than man. One way they become cheap in the society in society, among women particularly. Another important thing is there exist stirred quarrel between co-wives. Here woman becomes an enemy to another woman. When Ganga enters into the stage, the quarrel shift from between Parvathi and Shiva to between Parvathi and Ganga. They abuse each other in the name of caste, birth, and hierarchy. They both forget that this problem emerged because of Shiva's fault. Caste becomes the prime object to insult one person that is one of the social practice in our society. The caste hierarchy portrayed such a way that the people's status confines with caste. In the performance, Parvathi feels higher than Ganga. She calls Ganga, 'you born in a *nicha kulam*, a mean caste. Socially, the fisherman caste is one of the backward castes in Andhra Pradesh. The Indian constitute recognized them as backward castes. This community was having the largest population after *Kapu* (one of the backward caste) in North Coastal Andhra. Because of this region located on the Coast of Bay of Bengal. Various sub-castes comes under this community, i.e, Vadabaliya, Jalari, Agnikulakshathriya, Besta, Gengavar, Gangaputra, Gundla, Neyyala, Pattapu, Vannekapu, Vannereddy, pallikapu, pallireddy, and Palli. All these castes worship Ganga as their Goddess.

Many art forms emerged from this caste. *Jalari Nritya* (Fisherman dance) on of the popular local dance form people perform in this region Uttarandhra has three fifty-three kilometers longer coastal line. 'Jalari nritya' [fisher man dance] and jalari Bhagavatham [fisherman drama] are very popular in the regional culture. In Jalari Nritya, they enact the life struggle of the fishermen in the sea. How early morning they went for fishing in the ships, how they use oars, what kind of problems they face while fishing, how they struggle against with storms and how they overcome these conflicts is the theme of this dance. And finally, they end with the celebration of the joy of basket full of fish. Dancers wear a cone type hat on their head, wear a waist cloth and remain body will be in bare. They use sometimes real fishing nets and basket to

keep fish. But most of the time they do mime the object, like how they sail, how use oar, how they catch fish, in storms how they get fear, struggle, how they eat food or how they smoke bidi while fishing. Singers play back the songs, musicians play the Dappu, Tabla or mridangam, which is the main instrument. Because dancers follow this rhythm, without this, dance won't be possible. Like all classical dance choreographies. This jalari nritya was popularized by the Sampath Kumar, a noted 'Andhra Jalari', as Kurma Rao argues that, in his performances, he uses projection and recorded music, for the showing sea and through lights he creates lightning's and thunders' (2005:286). This look he created some kind of individual modern art on fishermen life, not as a folk form from rising from the community.

For this reason, we can say, Shiva Bhagavatham more popular in North Coastal Andhra. We know that folk-forms always attached with regional geography. Local communities patronized the local art-forms. Nowadays, these Fisherman communities try for the status of ST (Scheduled Caste). Because they feel that if they continue with BC caste, they are losing all constitutional rights which they actually need to get. We know that the government gives backward status, one of the reason is that the communities practices re-marriages. The upper castes denying women to remarry after their husbands expire. In the play, Parvathi, says to Ganga that 'you are a mean caste, that's why you come as a second wife to a man, and that is the reason you did this kind of act.

Another interesting thing is that Ganga calls Parvathi as a Konda jathi, Hill-based race. We can say that it is basically a tribe. Parvathi born to the gods Himavantha and Mena. Himavantha mean personification of a hill. Parvathi was a daughter of the Himavantha. This is the cause she was called as a tribe. Tribes predominantly located in North Coastal Andhra. Because of North Andhra is spread throughout Mahendragiri Hills. The Districts, Vishakhapatnam 14%, and East Godavari 6%, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam 4% of Tribal population occupied in the entire tribal population of new Andhra Pradesh state. These tribes are the most backward community in the whole state. Because of illiteracy, economic backwardness and unaware of social consciousness still many communities practices traditional customs like Child marriages, polygamy, etc. the women in the Shiva Bhagavatham, represents to the two backward castes. Parvathi insults Ganga saying that,

O Fisherwoman! You don't have any shame,

You are wandering in the villages, says 'fish, fish' as a street vendor.

Ganga gives counter,

O tribal woman! You also don't have any respect

You wander in the villages, calling 'medicine, medicine' as a street seller.

One cannot decide the greatness of the person by her/his caste. This was the argument rises, Ganga, in this play. Ganga says, 'venom emerges out of the milky sea (pala Samudra), what is the worth point to mention one person's caste. Both of these women try to keep their self-caste respects.

After, the long war of insults by these women, they feel that they both unjustified by the acts of Lord Shiva. Ganga questions the Shiva why you brought me you if you have already a wife. They both leaves for their motherhouses. Motherhouse was of the shelter to the married women who are not treated fairly at their husband's home. This social custom portrayed in the mythological drama.

After Parvathi, Ganga left to their parent's houses Shiva felt dejected. He says, how difficult is marrying two women. I made misstate. This kind of trouble human must not face. This is a kind of message the performance gives. But most of the time the folk performance end happily.

Obscenity in folk drama

In rural areas sexual relations between men and women, quite open to everyone. Rural folk they don't hide these relations as urban area people do. A kind morality exists between these relations. Earlier art forms express these type of relationships. Rural folk uses obscene language in everyday language also. They see it as a part of their life. The educated class will surprise this type of language.

After 1980's, folk forms in North Coastal Andhra, there seems to be commoditized. Earlier art – forms are performed by only caste-based vocational performers. When art becomes a market subject with Cinema, Television mediums, every enthusiastic artist see it is a type profession and uses it for fame. Cinema medium commoditized women as sexual objects. They fostered sex, abuse, double meaning dialogues to draw an audience to the cinema halls. They successfully

mobilized audience towards cinema halls. People see it more attracting media than earlier folk art. While seeing this, folk artists also incorporate cinema masala elements to the drawn audience to their performances. They brought women to the stage. Earlier in folk art, women participation is very less. All female characters are played by men only. Those periods women impersonations are popular. When women were incorporated into the folk performances, it becomes an attractive element to the village men. The troupe who incorporate women they have demand in the market. Seeing this every possible group bring women into performances. The popular women performers in the region are Garividi Laxmi, Jayamma, Dampudu Laxmi etc. these women were playing a key role in the Burra Katha performances. They sing well-known folk songs, bawdy songs, double meaning cinema songs and dialogues which gives double meanings. The main story of these performances_ Bobbili story, Balanagamma, Harischandra etc. they keep small storyline, rest of the performance they play rude jokes, mocks the social problems and sing songs. This type of performances really makes audience interest.

With all these influences Shiva Bhagavatham performers also use the women artists, double meaning dialogues, and folk songs to make audience interest. One of the stock characters is 'gay/transgender'. This role played by a man. Actually, he works as a narrator of the story. He bridges the connections between characters. Apart from that, he cracks jokes on characters and the audience. Between intervals of the performance, he chits chat with one of the choruses. There he generally exposes his sexual affairs with the village men. He took their actual names and professions. This makes audiences involvement in the story. Some of the double meaning dialogues give fun to the audience. The actual play itself portrays the problems of sexual relations in polygamy custom. It deals vipralamba Srinagar through the character Parvathi. She feels distanciated from her beloved Shiva. Two women fight each other for a man. This gives more fun to the audience.

Some other groups perform Shiva Bhagavatham in Burra Katha form. They use obscene language with mythological characters. They change the contexts and mix performer and character. The comedian (*Hasyagadu*) crack jokes on woman performer while narrating the Parvathi role. Vulgar gestures and sensuous dance was another way to shows they obscenity. In some areas, in the name of folk performances, on the festive occasions, they brought prostitute/artists and they do dance almost naked. All elder men of the village enjoy it. We can

see many videos on YouTube about these type of performance phenomena. This influence comes from modern culture and pornography. However, at least some of the folk forms become alive with kind of phenomena.

Observing social milieu in mythological performance through proverbs, beliefs, and language

In the play Shiva Bhagavatham we can observe many folk beliefs, proverbs.

Beliefs

Folk people believe many things, these come in the plays also. In one scene Parvathi says, ‘I dream, Shiva comes along with Ganga to Kailash. But I closed all doors. Shiva calls me to open the door. But I didn’t open the door.’ this was her dream. Even she did the same thing after that. Village women tell their dreams to the other women. They believe, early morning dreams will be true.

Another folk belief is that women attract men with some medicine. They give this medicine to men along with food. If the person eats this he cannot come back from her attraction. In this performance, Parvathi accuses Ganga that she give some medicine (valapu mandulu) to Shiva who is very innocent and attracted him. Folk people believe promises if any person promises on a valuable thing, they believe him that he says the truth. Shiva makes many promises to make believe Parvathi that he did not do any wrongs. But Parvathi rejects his promises because the objects which he promised on they were not worth mention.

Proverbs

Proverbs play an important role in performances to attract an audience. They clear the characters thought process. Folk poets and performers use local proverbs and idioms. It can be understood in the other regions. But its colloquial meanings gives more near to the life. Some of the proverbs is observed in Shiva Bhagavatham.

1. Why we need a mirror to see a bracelet which is tied in the hand.
2. If an object appears from the downside why we need to climb the bank.

3. Late-born horns are sharper than earlier born ears.
4. Eaters will know the taste, carriers know the weight.
5. The Naga snakes will know the musical tunes, not the inferior snakes who resides in the grass.
6. The tongue will know the taste, not the spoon.
7. Wives know their husband's behaviors
8. Men words are like a bundle of hailstones.
9. While teacher's wife climb the building, worker's wife cling the ring of hay (kuduru)
10. When a strange husband sends a letter, it entangled in the bean plant.
11. Eating breakfast very early, but brushing in front of the husband to show innocence.
12. The person who comes middle, the will leave in the middle.
13. Why we need proof if the matter is true.
14. Don't believe that white mean milk, black means water.

Shiva Bhagavatham in contemporary revolutionary movement

The revolutionary poet, singer Vangapandu (b.1943) uses the Shiva Bhagavatham performance and created a dance drama called 'Dankel Bhagavatham' for a classless society. Vangapandu wrote this drama in Shiva Bhagavatham drama style, which is a popular folk drama in Uttarandhra region. God Shiva and goddess Parvathi were created as a normal human being. When they are traveling in the skyways through Visakha, Parvathi has been seduced to the beauty of Visakha. She feels that Visakha is greater than the Kailash. Here Vangapandu refers Kailash is a kind of traditional system. In his Vangapandu's dankel Bhagavatham, he shows, women want to live in the cities, men follow them as they want to satisfy the women. After liberalization, the global market expanded. Goods and materials available to all sections of the peoples, with the reasonable prices. People forcefully attracted to these facilities. In this part, women become more consumers to these facilities. In cities, women household hard work is

reduced with the gas stoves, cookers, mixtures, fans and many household appliances. And also they have entertainment from home with television and radio. Parvathi, a character from the dance drama Bhagavatham, she saw the beautiful city Visakhapatnam buildings, vehicles, cinema halls, beaches and hotels and she expressed her passion to want to live in this city. Her husband warned her, 'these are all only superficial things, the ground reality is different. But she didn't listen to his words. They started living in the city. Shiva joined as a laborer in a shipyard. Later Shiva turned into a revolutionist for the gaining of their labor rights. To explain the capitalist's exploitation and to reach the masses, he brings the divine characters. People easily recognize these characters, because this dance drama is well known to this region. The drama 'Shiva Bhagavatham' is about the marriage of god Shiva and Ganga. But folk performance localizes the story and mainly they use regional slang.

By observing all these elements, a mythological folk drama has deep connections with the local culture. Regional art portrays the regional geography. Folk art is a more useful element than the well so-called classical art forms to find the social life. The mythological characters Shiva, Parvathi, and Ganga are nearer to the local people. They can be seen in our daily life. Gods apply their Leela to the common people through poets and performers. This oral memory transfer from one generation to another. If it was not transferred genuinely, the community lost their community identity. That's why folk art plays a major role in keeping community identity.

Bibliography

1. Apparao, Ponangi Sri Rama. *Special aspects of Nāṭya śāstra*. National School of Drama, 2001.
2. Dundes, Alan. *Interpreting folklore*. Indiana University Press, 1980.
3. Sanyasi. Pasagada. *Ganga vivaham*. (N.d)
4. *Ganga-Gowri samvadham*, unknown poet.
5. Goffman, Erving. "The Presentation of Self in." *Butler, Bodies that Matter* (1959).
6. Jaina, Nemicandra. *Indian Theatre: Tradition, Continuity and Change*. National School of Drama, 2012.
- 7 Adishesuvu, Hari. *Janapada geya vanmaya parichayam* (N.d)
8. Velcheru Narayana Rao, and David Shulman. *Classical Telugu poetry: an anthology*. Vol. 13. University of California Press, 2002.
9. Natya Sastra. Bharatha muni. translated by P.S.R. Appa Rao
10. Taylor, Diana. *The archive and the repertoire: Performing cultural memory in the Americas*. Duke University Press, 2003.
11. Turner, Victor Witter, and Richard Schechner. "The anthropology of performance." (1988).
12. Prasada Rao Vangapandu. *Dankela Bhagotham*. Andhra Pradesh Praja Kala Mandali.
13. *Shiva Bhagavatham* Performances. Saradha Natya Mandali, Srikakulam. Sri Matha Music House 27. See. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-b8rQs3AqCA&t=10498s>
14. Murthy Radha Krishna Mikkilineni. Andhra Nataka Ranga Charithra.

