



USE OF MODERN STAGE TECHNIQUE IN THE PLAYS OF MOBILE THEATRE OF ASSAM: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Introduction:

Drama is a form of literary art projected through acting. Assamese drama as literature has a long history. In Assamese literature the beginning of plays through the 'Ankiya' drama popularised by the great Sage Srimanta Sankardeva. This trend of assamese 'Ankiya' play from took a giant leap in the hands of Madhabdeva and other great sages who followed the footsteps of Sankardeva and continued till the arrival of the Britishers. After the arrival of the Britishers Assamese drama took a new attire. In 1857 Gunaviram Baruah's maiden modern play Ramnavami created a fresh wave of drama in Assamese language which later on influenced dramatists and writers like Hemchandra Baruah, Rudraram Bordoloi, Ramakanta Choudhury, Laxminath Bezbaruah, Padmanath Gohain Baruah, Benudhar Rajkhowa, Durgaprasad Majinder Baruah, Chandradhar Baruah, Durgeswar Sarma, Jyotiprasad Agarwala, Atul Chandra Hazarika and others.

Similarly mobile theatre has contributed a lot to the spread and development of modern Assamese drama. Assamese mobile theatre is professional theatre. Its an exceptional theatre and as a audio-visual medium it is very popular. In Assam the first mobile theatre group was formed by Achyut Lahakar in 1963 at Pathshala

town. Later on throughout Assam many mobile theater groups came into existence and all these groups performed plays consisting of different themes and nature by different dramatists in every year of play acting. These plays are integrally related to acting. Crossing the history of at least 100 years these mobile theatre groups took a new path and have given a glimpse of originality by using modern dramaturgy and setting. In this reading an attempt has been made to show how mobile theatre uses new techniques.

Objectives: The aims of this reading are-

1. To identify the techniques used in mobile theatre platform.
2. To offer a critical analysis of these techniques.
3. To arrive at a judgement regarding how far these techniques have influenced mobiletheatre.

Methodology:

This reading is analytical. In places descriptive narration has been offered. Research books, articles and critical pieces related to mobile theatre have been collected fromsecondary data sources.

Discussion:

There is provision for proscenium stage and auditorium for the performance of mobile theatre inspired by western dramaturgy. The following are modern techniques used in mobile theatre.

1. Stage attire
2. Light
3. Background
4. Band
5. Cyclorama
6. Background voice

Designing the stage is the most important aspect for performing a play. In the early days of Assam's mobile theatre a group entitled Nataraj theatre performed in stage. But the play groups faced many difficulties for the performance of modern in only one stage. That is why in order to jettison the problems related to mobile theatre Nataraj group later on created sliding stage. In this sort of dramaturgy the stage was prepared with mobile wheel. After the end of a particular dramatic scene the mobile theatre is pushed to the margin and another platform is created instantly which is fully attired. Even in the context of running mobile theatre because of certain difficulties in 1966-67 the mobile theatre took the shape of theatre scope. Three or four such identical stages were set up to act in this particular way. In the later period by integrating a new technique in the stage setting Nataraj Theatre turned to Nataraj cine in 1968. In cine theatre the scenes which could not be shown in stage were converted to film like scenes through the use of movie camera. In this purpose a projector standing in front of stage was used. In 1970-71 a tradition of three dimensional and parallel stage craft was used 'Mancharupa' theatre belonging to Pathshala used two stages in place of three stages. Recently all the mobile theatres are using dual stages and their length is 35''x20''. Two prop-screens are used in case of mobile theatre. In front of

this dual stage only one certain is used but in case of band party, the workers of light, sound creator and background artists are separated from the spectators by a black piece of cloth which is used as a hiding mechanism and the colour of that cloth is black.

A modern technique used in mobile theatre is the use of light. In mobile stage dramaturgy light plays a major role. During the infant days of mobile theatre either generator or electric light was used in order to illuminate the stage through till 1974 the stage was kept illuminated through flood light. In times of need the colour was changed by the use of colourful glass.

In 1974 'Rupkunwar' theatre managed the use and illumination of light in a pre-planned way. Recently through gadgets in mobile theatre; it has not merely assumed the task of light management but also showing of extraordinary scenes through the use of magical light. The expression of character and environment are controlled through the use of light. Similarly through the use of strobe light or ultra violet light running motor car, rail, helicopter take on, helicopter accident smoke, sea, ships sailing through seas, flood, splintering of fire and such likewise devices are satisfactorily shown in contemporary mobile theatre.

Another technique used in mobile theatre is background music. In Assam's mobile theatre, background music is used in the need of the plot. The singer used band and threw his/her song from the background to keep parity with the drama. Through the use of modern technology songs are recorded in standard studios by popular singers and it is a recent trend. Recently it has become a trend to make available the songs along with video recording during the beginning of theatre year through social media. As a result of that some of the songs of some of the plays reach the zenith of success. Since the inception of

Assamese mobile theatre through the use of Bargit, Vatima, Kirtan, folksongs, related to the philosophy of body have strengthened the plot of plays.

Another device used in mobile theatre is sound system. In the auditorium of mobile theatre standard sound system is used and that is why the dialogues of the characters are early heard by people sitting even in the back. Above all it has become a trend to use sound mechanism from the background due to necessity and it create a suitable environment for enacting a play. The chirping of bird, storm, flowing river, the sound of running horse, motorcar, rail, aeroplane etc. are shown in mobile theatre according to need through the use of powerful sound. Above all by using special sound effect, an attempt is made in mobile theatre to showcase a particular dramatic sequence through modern equipment that yields special sound.

Another side of Assamese mobile theatre that is growing day by day is cyclorama. A proscenium arch along with a black piece of cloth exists backwards and behind that there remains another white piece of cloth through which the work of cyclorama is done. For the necessity of the plot of the play incident, picture etc. are mixed with plot and these are showcased and all these cannot be completed through acting, but is essential in the story of the play.

Another device used in the mobile theatre off voice. The mythological plays performed in mobile theatre saw the voice of God on background. Now a days the dramatist uses off voice to highlight the psychological crisis of characters wish and dislikes etc.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion it is apparent

that in the context of mobile theatre of Assam the designing of the stage, light background music, band, cyclorama off voice etc. are used frequently. The mobile theatres of Assam have been using these since inception and with the progress of time and technology these dramatic arts have been enriched by ultramodern devices. It is true that often this technique of stage has been created to attract to audience. But the mobile theatres come closer to common people through the use of good acting on stage related to a play. The mobile theatre of Assam is not merely professional, but also dear to the heart of the common people. These sorts of dramaturgy are related to bread and butter of many people related to mobile theatre. These through the performance of plays Assamese mobile theatre has not merely enriched Assamese dramatic literature, it has also contributed to the development of Assamese society as a whole. From this angle it can be said that these mobile theatres and the plays performed through these platforms are our national properties.

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