

CULTURAL HERITAGE OF INDIAN EPIC RAMAYANA

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Abstract:- The Indian Epic Ramayana and its study in our country since time immemorial read or listened to have influenced on art and culture in different periods of history. Another context in this regard is the coinage “Adikavi” Valmiki, the first successful creator of literature in this essay I have tried to focus on the tradition, source, history and present perspective of Ramayana in India. Considering the source of Ramayana it can be said that surely there is humane aspect in it. Similarly it can also be noted that initially the religious feeling was not so much related with the Ramayana cult. In fact the story of Ramayana was a folktale which has widely been narrated and popularized. Valmiki made it a perfect match of the time day pouring his imagination and colour. Also Ramayana has changed its course coming in contact with the new colour and shape. Different stories and sub stories gradually were inducted and made it more closer to common life. They have made the powers which could control the society made this epic the symbol of particular path and view. There is also a unique impression of Ramayana in Temple Terracotta. So the Ramayana which was manifested in the hands of valmiki as the epic, emerged, not only as a literature but a cultural heritage of India. Ramayana left a very deep impression in Indian painting and sculpture. Throughout India we can see its impact in various ways.

Key Words: Epic, Folktale, Ramayana, Temple Terracotta, Valmiki.

Introduction:- Ramayana the unique creation of the epic poet Valmiki in Sanskrit language has been one of the most popular, universally read and widely circulated literary work throughout India. The manner in which this Epic narrative in verse enthralled the imagination of the common people of India from east to west, and even beyond frontiers is truly amazing.

The essence of the aspiration of this vast country nurturing diverse forms of culture seems to be inherent in the verses of this epic poem. The relevance of Ramayana composed over several centuries from 3rd or 4th century B.C. to 2nd or 3rd century A.D in our present day life is amazing. We may remember The Great poet, philosopher, first Asian Nobel Laureate in Literature Rabindranath Tagore in this context in his Drama Raktakarabi (Red Oliender) who said that in Ramayana, God did not demean himself by assuming the role of a human being rather humanity attained divinity by supreme development of its own virtues. An attempt has been made in this treatise to present a clear picture of the idea about the study of Ramayana in India and south-east Asia as a whole.

Body of the Paper:

There are at least twelve compositions of Ramayana found in different regional languages and they are considered the treasure of Indian literature.



century)

- Bhabartha Ramayana (Marathi, Eknath, 16th century)

A list is given below:-

- Kamba Ramayana (Tamil, kamban, 11th-12th century)
- Ranganath Ramayana (Telugu, Budhraj, 12th century)
- Pampa Ramayana (kannad, Vimalsuri, 12th century)
- Valmiki Ramayana (Malayalam, Panikkar, 14th century)
- Valmiki Ramayana (Assamese, Madhavkandali, 14th century)
- SriRampanchali (Bengali, Krittivas Ojha, 15th century)
- Bilankla Ramayana (Oriya, Sarala Dasa, 15th century)

- Ramcharitmanas(Awadhi,17th century)
- Ramayana (Kashmiri, Prakash, 19th century)
- Maithili Ramayana (Maithili, Chandranath Jha, 20th century)
- Kokbarak Ramayana (kakbarak, Tripura, Pravas Chandra Dhar, 20th century)



Pic 2 : Manuscripts of Palm Leaf

There are Tribal Ramayanas in oral tradition which are different from above mentioned books.

It can be observed that the poets of different languages in India ornamented valmiki's Sanskrit Ramayana in their own language and culture.

Though the origin of those compositions was no doubt Sanskrit the poet attributed in the compositions their own culture and language.

Before being composed as epic Ramayana existed in the form of narrative among the masses. Even after getting the form of this created different folk trends,the story of Rama extended its impact in the manner of family tradition, ideals and also in the day to day livelihood. A relation between the Ramayana and common livelihood can easily be traced out in this great epic.



Pic 3 : Ravana in Assamese Folk Culture

In Asamese AnkiaBhavna (folk drama), the song of Bihu (dance of crop festival), the song of praising durga i.e. Durgabarageeti (praising songs of goddess durga) or in the puppet dance the story of Ramayana is narrated.



Pic 4 : *Chhou Dance of Bengal*



Pic 5 : *Patachitra of Bengali*

In Bengal the story of Rama has been a part in the folk culture. In the famous Chhou dance (a folk dance with musk) of purulia district of Bengal or in the Kushan (folk drama) of North Bengal the story of Ramayana is projected as one of the main themes.

In the Patachitra (handmade paper a round shaped soil pots) of Bengal, Ramayana is one of the main themes. The subtle touch of colour in the pots exposed the different stories of Ramayana in a beautiful way. The Ramayana songs which patuas sing in their own version are based on Bengali Ramayana i.e. Krittibasi Ramayana. Without songs patachitra is incomplete.

In Orissa patachitra is also very popular but it is shown in different way. The story is based on Dandi Ramayana, popular Oriya Ramayana. This trend of folk art is accepted every where.



Pic 6 : *Ravanachhaya (shadow dance of orissa)*

Ravanachhaya (shadow dance of orissa) draws exclusively upon the Rama legend. These is no written play. It is entirely contained in the oral tradition.

However it uses the lyric from Vichitra Ramayana written by Viswanath Khuntia a medieval oriya poet. It is a very rare form of shadow theatre surviving in orisa. The decorated marriage pandal with sita, her companions and the priest.

Ramleela is the main cultural exposure of Hindi Ramayana. This is a special festival all over the country and even people from abroad have come to witness the cultural feasts of Ramnagar inn benaras or in Ramleelamaidan in Delhi.

There is also a unique impression of Ramayana in Temple Terracotta. So the Ramayana which was manifested in the hands of valmiki as the epic, emerged, not only as a literature but a cultural heritage of India.



Pic7: *Temple Terracotta based on Ramayana*

Ramayana left a very deep impression in Indian painting and sculpture. Throughout India we can see its impact in various ways.



Pic 8: *Hazara Rama Temple, Karnataka*

In south Indian Ramayana there is a famous dance style i.e. “kodiyattam”, based on Ramayana.

In Karnataka puppet art reminds us this epic.

In all Indian languages we can see many proverbs, idioms which are generated from the Ramayana.

Indian relationship in family follows the Ramayana , so in sociological aspect Ramayana is related.

The story of Ramayana is the simple expression of inner wealth of the Indians. Family and household principle which are so trusted and caring to the Indians find their triumph through different experiments in Ramayana. Ramayana is the epic of Indian household bondage. Not force, not terror, nor the Varsity of the state, the Ramayana is placed on the high alter of heroism clutching the gentle and loving house life.

In fact the social revolution the confluence of the Aryan and non-Aryan civilization the introduction and expansion of cultivation are the root of Ramayana.

Conclusion:- The impact of Ramayana is not confined in our country but it is extended to east and west and clearly shows its human facet. If we delete the spiritual aspect of Ramayana it will remain the story of human beings - the story of their joy and sorrow, sacrifice, love and languishment. Undoubtedly we can analyze the activities of Rama, we can also point out his fault. This vastness we can inherit from the great poet valmiki. And here Ramayana touches the deepest core of 21st century heart- which is supposed to be filled with science, technology and e-mail.

Brief Biography of Author: Professor of Bengali and Director of Bankim Chandra Comparative Indian Literature in Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, India. Teaching experience - 22 years and Research experience – 28 years. Completed Ph.D. (1994), Post.Doctorate Research (2002-2005) and Major Research Project on Cultural Heritage (2006-2009). Ph.D Awarded under my supervision – 8 and ongoing – 6. Publication of Books – 6 (incl. 2 edited books). Publication of Articles – National - 30;International -10. More than 50 Lectures delivered in different Regional, National and International Conferences. Participated in German-Bengali Poetry Workshop by Sahitya Akademi, Kolkata, 2009 and International conference in North Illinois University, Chicago, 2010; Bangladesh, 2013 & 2016.

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