

Since the days of Jyotireeshwar (*Dhoorta Saamaagam*) and Vidyapati (*Goraksha Vijay*) it became a fashion to introduce maithilee songs in sanakrit plays. Through the poems of Vidyapati, the vernacular songs assumed a great importance and in later years all vestige of Sanskrit and Prakrit disappeared. In the process two variants of the plays appeared; 1) Regular Maithilee drama having the structure and framework of Sanskrit drama but the real center of attraction is the vernacular music, 2) Irregular maithilee dramas which almost abolished the Sanskrit framework, used vernacular music and developed into a new type of musical or poetic drama e.g. *Gauri parinay Naatak* by Sivadatta and *Ushaharan Naatak* by Ratnapaani.

The name Kirtania indicates some kind of Kirtan (praise) of the lord and therefore, seems likely to have been used for the Maithilee drama since the days of Umapati, the celebrated author of Parijaat Haran. The theme there is the praise of the Lord Krishna and the special music used is *Naradiya* referring Devarshi Narada, the most devoted kirtania of Lord Vishnu and his incarnations. Of Course, the Kritan of Shiva (a most worshipped diety of Mithila) is also an important development of the Kirtania Drama. Lala Kavi, Shivadatta and Kanharam are known to have written equally great Kirtania Dramas with shiva as central Character.

A group of actors in Mithila was known as “Jamait” comprising Natua (actors) and Samaji (Musicians). Its’ leader was called “Nayak” who used to be convenor (Sutradhaar) and Hero of the performances. He used to enter into contract (Sata) with the organizers for performances during important social, religious and family functions at royal courts, public places and even at private house holds.

The main qualification of a successful actor (Natua) was to sing in proper Raag-Taal, audible to the vast audience and proficiency in gesticulation. Their attempt to impersonate a particular character was distinctly stylized and symbolic in tune with the accepted conventions.

The Kirtania performances were held at night on a simple platform stage. The Nayak or Sutradhaar used to make his appearance first after the *Nandi Paath*. His usual costumes were Nima, Jama, Pajjama, a pair of sandals called Padukaa and Satha Paag on his head, the traditional head gear and symbol of respectability of the time. Holding Phulhatha (a decorated rod) and generally accompanied by Nati, the Sutradhaar generally used to welcome the audience, introduced the occasion, the author of the play and the topic of the presentation, Often he used to take pride in showing off his scholarship and knowledge of learned things.

The number of actors at any particular center was small. There were stock characters like Nayaka, Nayika, Sakhis (two or three), King, Queen, Narada as Negotiator, Vipata (Joker). The first entrance of any dramatic personal have a *pravesh geet* (entrance song) describing the character, costume, purpose and mood. Sanskrit and Prakrit were used in dialogues and stage directions. For the rest, everything was conveyed through vernacular verses and songs. The orchestra (samaji) was specially trained in the *Naradiya* form of musical kritan.

Besides Music, vocal and instrumental, there was fun of the Vipata, attempt to bring symbolically animals and birds like Airavata, Horse, Garuda and Mayura and the stylized performances of actors with these objects used to be the highlights of the presentations.

There is a long list of these kirtania dramas. They are written in Nepal, Assam and of course Mithila in India.

KIRTANIA DRAMA OF NEPAL**▪ Bhatgaon:**

Under the ruler, Vishwamalla (1533);

→ Vidya Vilaap

- Har Gauri Vivah (1629)
- Kunja Vihari (?)

Under the ruler, Jagat Prakash malla;

- Usha Haran
- Naliya Naatakam
- Parijaat Haran
- Parvati Haran
- Malaygandhini
- Madan Charit, &
- Ramayan Naatak

Under the ruler, SumatiJitamitra malla;

- Kaliyamathanopakhyan
- Madalasa Haranam
- Geminiya Bharat Naatakam
- Gopichandra Naatakam
- Usha Haran
- Nav Durga naatakam
- Bhasha naatakam
- Bharat Naatakam

Under the ruler, Bhupatindra Malla;

- Madhavanal (1704)
- Gauri Vivah Naatak (1706)
- Pashupati Pradurbhava (1711)
- Gopi Chandra (1712)
- Usha haran (1713)
- Rukmini Parinay
- Vidya Vilaap
- Mahabharat
- Kansh Vadh
- Kolasur
- Vadhopakhyan
- Padmavati Naatak
- Jalandharopakhyan

Under the ruler, Ranjit Malla;

- Krishna Charita (1738)
- Krishna kailash Yatropakhyan (1747)
- Usha Haran (1754)
- Indrajaya Natakam (1764)
- Manharayopakhyan (1768)

- Ram Charit
- Madhavanal
- Kam Kandala
- Nal Charit
- Prithupakhyan

▪ **Kathmando (kantipur):**

Under the ruler, Prataap Malla;

→ Abhinav Prabodh Chandrodaya

Under the ruler, Sidhi Narshingha dev;

→ Harishchandra Naatakam

Under the ruler, Shrinivaas malla;

→ Lalit kuvalayashva

Under the ruler, Vishnu Singh Malla;

→ Usha Haran

KIRTANIA DRAMA OF ASSAM

The great vaishnav saint and poet Shankar Dev had travelled through Mithila during 1481-1493. He observed the Kirtania Plays with Krishna as central character. This along with poems of vidyapati has influenced him to the extent that he created and presented plays in praise of Krishna. His disciples followed him and there were a tradition of Maithilee Plays in Assam. Those plays were similar in style and language but different in respect of approach towards the subject and theme. Gradually it developed into a distinct form of theater now widely known as Ankiya Nat. The plays are;

By Shankar Dev; Kaliya Daman (1518), Patni Prasad (1521), Raskrida (1540), Rukmini Haran, Parijaat Haran and Ram Vijay (1568).

By Madhav Dev; Arjun Bhanjan, Bhojan Vyavahar, Bhumi Letova, Bhushan herova, Ras Jhumar, Katora khela, Goal Para, Chhorodhara

By Gopal Dev; Janma Yatra

By Ram Charan Thakur; Kansh Vadh

▪ **Mithila**

As stated in the prologue, Dhoorta Samagama by Jyoteereshwar was the first play to introduce vernacular songs in the plays written under structural design of Sanskrit drama. It started the tradition of plays with three linguistic combination and came to be known as Kirtania Naatak. Chronically the following are the playwrights and their plays;

1. Vidyapati (1350-1450): Goraksha Vijay
2. Govind: Nal Charit
3. Ramdas Jha: Anand Vijay Naatika
4. Devaanand: Usha Haran
5. Umapati: Parijaat Haran

6. Ramapati: Rukmini Parinay
7. Lal Kavi: Gauri Swayamvara
8. Nandipati: Krishna Kelimala
9. Gokulananda: Man Charit Naatak
10. Shiv datt: Gauri Parinay, Parijaat Haran
11. Karnajayanand: Rukmangad Naatak
12. Shrikant Ganak: Shri Krishna janma Rahasya

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 14. Ratnapani: | Usha Haran |
| 15. Bhanu Nath Jha: | Prabhavati Haran |
| 16. Harsha nath Jha(1847-1898): | Usha Haran, Madhav nand |
| 17. Vishwa Nath Jha: | Rameshwar Chandrikaa(1907) |
| 18. Chanda Jha: | Ahalya Charit (1912) |
| 19. Baldev Mishra: | Raj Rjeshwari, Rameshodaya (1950) |

(KUNAL)

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Scheme for “Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India”

Form for National Inventory Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage of India

A. Name of the State : **Bihar**

B. Name of the Element/Cultural Tradition (in English) : **Kirtania Naatak**

B.1. Name of the element in the language and script of the community Concerned, if applicable : **Maithilee**

C. Name of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned (Identify clearly either of these concerned with the practice of the said element/cultural tradition) :

Mithila, now a linguistic region comprising parts of Bihar and Nepal.

D. Geographical location and range of the element/cultural tradition (Please write about the other states in which the said element/tradition is present

India: Bengal and Assam

Nepal: Bhatgaon, Kantipur (Kathmandu)

E. Identification and definition of the element/cultural tradition of the India

(Write “Yes” in one or more boxes to identify the domain(s) of intangible cultural heritage manifested by the element. If you tick ‘others’, specify the domain(s) in brackets.)

- i. (**Yes**) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage
- ii. (**Yes**) performing arts
- iii. (-) social practices, rituals and festive events
- iv. (-) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
- v. (-) traditional craftsmanship
- vi. other(s) (-)

F. Provide a brief summary description of the element that can introduce it to readers who have never seen or experienced it : **Annexure One**

G. Who are the bearers and practitioners of the element/Cultural Traditions? Are there any specific roles or categories of persons with special

responsibilities for the practice and transmission of it? If yes, who are they and what are their responsibilities?

The Jamarits (Kirtania Performer Troupes) are Extinct Now.

- H. How are the knowledge and skills related to the element transmitted today?
- 1. Research, Experimentations, Adaptations and Play presentations by me (Kunal) through my troupe “Bhangima”, Patna.**
 - 2. Another Maithilee theatre troupe “MAILORANG” of New Delhi has been attracted to the form by partially experimentations of the Kirtania Device.**
- I. What social functions and cultural meanings do the element/cultural tradition have today for its community?
- 1. Kirtania Drama is major link between Sanskrit Drama and modern plays.**
 - 2. It is an important phenomenon for understanding Vaishnaism and Brajbuli – The Vaishnava Lingua Franca.**
 - 3. The visual richness of the style has high dramatic value**
 - 4. It showcases the unique dramatic traditions of the region (Mithila – The Maithilee speaking areas of Bihar (India) and Nepal).**
 - 5. Kirtania Drama was inspiration to Ankia Nat of Assam and Some of its plays like Parijat Haran were enacted through these styles. Hence, there is a wide range of interaction element among the states.**
 - 6. It is essentially a musical drama uses classical as well as folk varieties.**
- J. Is there any part of the element that is not compatible with existing international human rights instruments or with the requirement of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, or with sustainable development? I.e. describe any aspect of the element/cultural tradition that may be unacceptable to Law of the country or may be in opposition to practicing community’s harmony with others.
- None**
- K. Your Project’s contribution to ensuring visibility, awareness and encouraging dialogue related to the element/cultural tradition.

The main motto of my project is to ensure visibility, awareness and encouraging dialogues related to the cultural tradition. The project

desires to consolidate and document the whole experience in digital and print format;

As in Project 1-10.

L. Information about the safeguarding measures that may protect or promote the element/cultural tradition

a. (Write "Yes" in one or more boxes to identify the safeguarding measures that have been and are currently being taken by the communities, groups or individuals concerned)

i. (**No**) transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education

ii. (**Yes**) identification, documentation, research **Through ICH Programme**

iii. (**No**) preservation, protection

iv. (**No**) promotion, enhancement

v. (**No**) revitalization

b. Write about the measures taken at local, state and national level by the Authorities to safeguard the element/cultural tradition?

State: Bihar – None

National – First Serious effort is ICH

M. Write about the threats, if any, to the element/cultural tradition related to its practice, visibility and future longevity. Give facts and relevant reasons based on the current scenario.

Yes, the practise, visibility and future longevity of the Kirtania Presentations are in danger. The Reasons are;

1. After six centuries of practise tradition, the degeneration started from second quarter of last century. Except printing the play manuscripts nothing was done to arrest the degeneration.

2. Traditional sponsors, the elite of the community lost interest and the practitioners ie. The Artists being illiterate artisans were unable to get going.

3. The state government remained oblivious and did not take any interest in encouraging the cultural traditions including Kirtania.

4. My solo endeavour though earned praise and fame, but nothing could be done beyond that.

5. **The drama style is uniquely stylised, hence requires detailed and rigorous training.**
6. **There are no measures to encourage participation of the younger generation towards the tradition.**

N. Safeguarding measures proposed

(This section should identify and describe safeguarding measures to protect and promote the element/cultural tradition. Such measures should be concrete and can be implemented to formulate future cultural policy for safeguarding and promoting the element/cultural tradition in the state)

Kirtania and almost all folk theatre traditions of Bihar are vanishing at very fast speed. There should be a centre for study, documentation and training of Kirtania and other folk traditions in Bihar.

O. Community Participation

(Write about the participation of communities, groups and individuals related to the element/cultural tradition in formulation of your project)

There are members of the rural mass who still practise their performing art may be the participants for the revival and furthering the traditions. They are;

1. **Pamarias**
2. **Sankirtan Mandalis**
3. **Member of Naach troupes like Salhes Naach, Vidapat Naach, JalimSingh Naach, Hirani-Virani Naach, Reshma – Chuharmal Naach, etc.**
4. **Urban theatre troupes like Bhangima (Patna) who understands the traditions**

P. Concerned community organization(s) or representative(s)

(Provide detailed contact information for each community organization or representative or other non-governmental organization that is concerned with the element such as associations, organizations, clubs, guilds, steering committees, etc.)

- i. Name of the entity
- ii. Name and title of the contact person
- iii. Address
- iv. Telephone number
- v. E-mail
- vi. Other relevant information

1. **Urban Theatre Troupe:**

Name: Bhangima

Contact Person: Kunal
Address: Rajlaxmi Residency, Flat No: 302,
B-35, Buddha Colony, Patna – 800001
Email: j.kunal@hotmail.com
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2. Pamaria Troupe:

Name: Israil Pamaria (Agua)
Address: Mithila Deep, Jhanjharpur
Mobile: +91 8521386464

3. Gatha Gayan Troupe:

Name: Bisundeo Paaswan
Address: Chikna Halt, Jhanjharpur
Mobile: +91 8757932464

4. Naach Troupe:

Name: Ghuran Paaswaan
Village: Mahathaur
Mobile: +91 8084954484

Q. Give information of any Inventory, database or data creation centre (local/state/national) that you may be aware of or of any office, agency, organisation or body involved in the maintenance of the said inventory etc.

1. Lokhit Rangpeeth, Madhubani

Contact Person: Mahendra Lal Karn

Mobile: +91 9334213318

Email: lokhitrangpeeth@gmail.com

2. Maithilee Literature Festival, Patna

Convenor: Ashok

Mobile: +91 8986269001

3. Swati Foundation, Saharsa

Managing Trustee: Prof. Abhay Narayan Singh

Mobile: +91 8651551005, +91 9431085291

R. Principal published references or documentation available on the element/cultural tradition (Books, articles, audio-visual materials, names and addresses of reference libraries, museums, private endeavours of artistes/individuals for preservation of the said element, publications or websites)

List of some books on and related to Kirtania Naatak;

<u>Sr. No.</u>	<u>Name of the Book</u>	<u>Name of the Writer</u>
1	Ankia Naat	Dr. Viranchi Kumar Barua
2	Rukmini Haran Naat	Ambika Nath Bora, University of Calcutta
3	Pracheen Bhasha Naatak	Jagdish Chandra Mathur, Dr. Dashrath Ojha (K M Munshi, Bhasha Vigyan Peeth, Agra – 1970)
4	Aspect of Early Assamese Literature	Dr. Viranchi Kumar Barua
5	Drama in Rural India	Jagdeesh Chandra Mathur, ICCR, New Delhi
6	Maithilee Naatka ka Udbhav aur Vikash	Dr. Pratap Narayan Jha, Baroda Vishwavidyalay, Baroda
7	Kirtania Naatak	Dr. Jaykant Mishra
8	Maithilee Sahityik Itihaas	Dr. Jaykant Mishra, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi – 1988
9	Nepalak Maithilee Sahityik Itihaas	Prafull Kumar Singh Maun
10	Pracheen Bangala – Maithilee Naatak	Dr. Vijit Kumar Datt, Vardhmaan Vishwavidyalay, Vardhmaan
11	Maithilee Natakak udbhav aur vikash	Lekhnaath Mishra
12	Maithili Folk Heritage	Dr. Jaykant Mishra
13	Mithila ka Itihaas	Dr. Upendra Thakur
14	Lokdharmi Natya Parampara	Dr. Shyam Paramar
15	Vidapat	Phanishwarnath Renu
16	Nepali Sahitya ka Itihaas	Dr. D N Sharan, Bihar Hindi Granth Akademi, Patna (1974)
17	Maithili Naatak par sanskrit kaa prabhav	Dr. jaymant Mishra, Maithili Akademi, Patna
18	Origin and development of the Assamese Drama and stage	D H Bhattacharya (1964)
19	Umapati	Dr. Ramdev Jha, Maithili Akademi (1980)
20	Kirtania drama of Mithila	Dr. jaykant Mishra, Akhil Bhartiya Maithili Sahitya

		Samiti, Allahabad
21	Mithila Pramparagat Naatak Sangrah	Late Dr. Shashinath Jha, Kameshwar singh darbhanga Sanskrit vishwavidyalay, Darbhanga (1989)
22	Prabandh Sangrah	Ramnath Jha
23	Mahapurush Shankardev Rachit Prajaat Haran Naat	Dr. Tarakant Jha
24	Hamari Natya Parampara	Srikrishna das, Sahityakaar Sansad, Prayag (1956)

Signature:

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