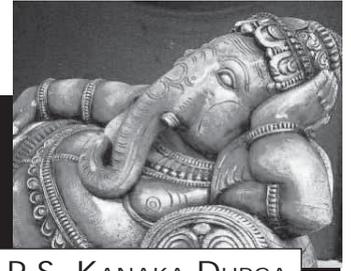


"NARRATIVE TRADITIONS" AND "FOLKTALES OF ANDHRA PRADESH"



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The folklore of India in general and Andhra Pradesh in particular encompasses various aspects of expressive behaviour as a dialogue between human groups and their physical and social environments. These manifold cultural forms are information banks and communication systems that explicate the spatio-temporal dynamics of adaptive processes. Folklore studies from the Indian perspective perhaps lies in the amalgamation of the hegemonic model based on literacy and the mnemonic model grounded in orality. The former brings out the linear structural paradigms innately represented in cultural expressive traditions and the latter reveals the non-linear and hyper-textual structural patterns that form the cultural behaviours of the Indian populace.

The study of folklore, therefore, is vital for hermeneutic, ideological and philosophical reasons. Hermeneutically, it combines literacy with orality and analyses Indian culture by juxtaposing written records with oral records in hyper-textual formats. Ideologically, it ensures the continuity of cognizance of Indian culture preventing interference of global agencies that try to superimpose universal cultural models over people. Philosophically, it strengthens cultural practices of non-hegemonic and marginalized communities that have sustained

the ethos of the country wherever folk cultures are still alive and have contributed immensely to the notion of nation.

Tale telling is a folk practice that not only reveals the worldview of the tellers and their stock audience but also strengthens their bonds as a community. The whole process of performance of tale telling articulates the identity of the folk community. The papers on "Narrative Traditions" and "Folktales of A.P." included in this issue are an attempt to describe and analyze the verbal expressive traditions of communities practising the folk arts in Andhra Pradesh. The articles on the different verbal and non-verbal art traditions of Andhra Pradesh such as Burra Katha, Oggu Katha, Pagativesham, toy making and metal craft in this issue attest the fact that these are still living traditions of the Telugu speaking people.

In the wake of globalization, however, communities practising these arts are being marginalized and struggling to retain their own identity. 'Giving back to the people what we have taken from them and what rightfully belongs to them' is the ethical and moral basis of the study of folklore. This self-consciousness, if developed, would benefit various folk groups that are often stereotyped as illiterate and backward. Already, the forces of modernity as represented in the new socio-economic formations regulated by the global capitalist market have re-codified existing language systems and semiotics through the electronic media and eclipsed the communities that were based on orality. To prevent this, the new generation needs to be sensitized through the publication of such newsletters and other means. Hence, this humble attempt. ❁