

# **Haradas Appacha Kavi: The Birth and Ambivalences of Modern Kodava Theatre**

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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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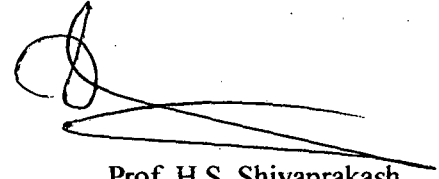
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**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the M.Phil dissertation titled '**Haradas Appacha Kavi: The Birth and Ambivalences of Modern Kodava Theatre**' submitted by Jyothi Jayaprakash at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi-110067, for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy in Theatre and Performance Studies**, is her own work and has not been submitted so far, in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of this or any other University or Institution. We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
Dean

  
Prof. H.S. Shivaprakash  
Supervisor

## DECLARATION

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**Haradas Appacha Kavi: The Birth and Ambivalences of Modern Kodava Theatre**” is being submitted for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of this University.

The dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this University or any other University.

I would like to accept that the omissions, commissions and translations of texts from regional languages are entirely mine.



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Dedicated to

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*Haradas Appacha Kavi: The Birth and  
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# ***INTRODUCTION***

## INTRODUCTION

The beauty of Theatre is that it encompasses all walks of life in a way that appeals to the aesthetic sensibilities of a society. The art of theatre is meant to communicate, provoke and ignite ideas and action besides provide entertainment. Folk and regional theatres have their own subtlety and aesthetics that have attracted researchers all over the world. However, there are many such theatres in the country that have been pushed into the background due to lack of research. Theatre in Kodagu, a small district in Southern Karnataka, India is one such area which falls woefully short of critical assessment and appreciation.

There seems to be a lack of awareness among the general public in Kodagu about Theatre and its powers. This is the principal motivation for me to choose this subject as the topic for my research. Looking at the topic from the periphery, I found that there are several interesting factors that provide substance to enrich research in the area. With this idea in mind, I shall attempt to explore the situation by problematizing certain general aspects that theatre deals with, concerning gender, modernity, socio political conditions, and nationalism through an academic framework. An attempt at presenting a historiography of Kodava Theatre that has been overlooked or unexplored against the rich backdrop of Indian theatre has been done by Dr. Rekha Vasanth in her two books, "*Kodava Rangabhoomi*" and "*Adhunika Kodava Sahitya*", both masterpieces in Kannada. And thus, these are the only sources that focus on Kodava theatre and literature. This work will focus on the works of the great poet Haradas Appacha Kavi, of Kodagu whose works are the first available literature written in Kodavattakku, the language of the Kodavas<sup>1</sup>.

Kodagu district in the southern state of Karnataka nestles in the hills of the south-west coast of India. They have their own language-the Kodavattakk- which incidentally, does

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<sup>1</sup> M.P. Rekha, *Arikattu*, (Bangalore: Kikkeri Publications, 2010), 67.

Recent studies by Dr. Rekha Vasanth claims that Coravanda Appaiah, a scholar and Appacha's contemporary had written parts of his book "*Kodavara Kulacharadi Tattvojjeevini*", in 1902, a compilation of the customs and traditions of the Kodavas, partly in Kodavattakk using the Kannada script. But Appacha Kavi can be credited with writing entire books in Kodavattakk and indeed the first person to write a play in Kodavattakk using Kannada script.

not have a script of its own. Kodavas still hold themselves a race apart. They are a tall, fair and warrior-like race whose origins are still being debated. They have their own unique culture, religious rites and rituals that bear some resemblances to the Hindu religion, but cannot be termed Hindu. The Kodavas are thus a close knit community which has its own unique culture and values that are distinct from the rest of Karnataka. The term “Kodava”, though implies the ethnic traditional race of Kodagu, in contemporary Kodagu it encompasses all Kodava-speaking communities like Kannadigas, Gowda, Malayalis, Tamilians and other ethnic tribal people like Kurubas, Yeravas etc., of Kodagu that attach their sentiments to the region of Kodagu. It must be noted that, during the course of the dissertation, the use of the term “Kodava” applies, in particular, to the ethnic Kodavas of the region alone, as considering all the other heterogeneous communities will otherwise exceed the scope of this study. This idea has recently spurred controversies in contemporary Kodagu with a large part of the population demanding that Kodagu be given its own separate statehood owing to the aforesaid distinct cultural values. While I will not venture into the political overtures in this regard, I shall try and relate it to the present condition of an accepted cultural amnesia which hints at the gradual weakening of intrinsic Kodava cultural values by the present generation, owing largely to rapid urbanization and consequent migration of Kodava youth. This phenomenon has led to the dilution of the rich concentration of Kodava cultural values.

The Kodavas have a unique language, the Kodavattakk which was born out of a conglomeration of languages and belongs to the Dravidian language family and is influenced by or related to Tulu, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and is considered as a dialect of Kannada. While a unique language is one of the things that are being upheld as elements for conferring statehood, on closer observation, one sees that Kodavattakk has become a “Linguistic Island” surrounded by much larger indigenous languages and as such is in danger of extinction. It is said that the life of a language is governed by and is continually enriched by the literature it produces and its usage in everyday life. When the literature starts deteriorating, the language begins to collapse. In that respect, Haradas Appacha can be looked upon as the pioneer of the Kodava language, since he gave birth to the first ever written literature in Kodavattakk. Even though he wrote just a handful of plays, in a period where it was considered an arduous and highly ambitious, not to

mention a highly expensive task to write and publish, his works are respected and discussed to this day in Kodava literary circles. In contrast, in present day affluent Kodagu, where the standard of living is comparatively very high, the mass of literature produced is minimal. There has been a lot of thrust in the direction of preserving the language. But this is indeed a daunting task as it is found that the younger generation however, does not seem to really grasp the importance of this. With the age of globalization and migration of Kodavas, a general trend of modernization is seen where speaking English or rather, not speaking Kodavattakk is seen as a matter of great pride as Kodavas attached a lot of prestige to the use of English. This is not only intrinsic to the Kodavas as this trend is seen in most Indian communities that climb up the social ladder toward 'modern' ways of living.

The Kodava community has had a very complicated history and has witnessed many changes over the turn of the century. The British rule brought with it the English education system and other aspects of modernization. The crisis of the traditional Kodava society as a result of modernity was addressed by Haradas Appacha, who highlighted these issues in his productions time and again through his satirical and humorous performances. His plays critique modernity and chide the citizens of pre independent Kodagu who allowed themselves to be transformed by, and take pride in, the uncritical and unabashed imitation of western cultural values. This problem was addressed by Haradas Appacha in the light of traditional Kodava patriarchic values deployed with a greater element of the quotidian and spiced up with a rustic sense of humour.

#### **ELEMENTS OF FOLK AND RITUAL**

The fact that Haradas Appacha's plays are the first written materials available on theatre in Kodagu, brings to mind another important question: What was the cultural scenario of Kodagu before the 'era' of Haradas Appacha. The knowledge of what existed before him is almost obscure. As most theatrical forms have their origin in folk forms, in looking at the origins of Kodava theatre, I shall try and explore how Haradas Appacha's plays might have been influenced by folk forms from Kodagu. The forms that prima facie bear a likening are the "Bodnamme" festival during which the performers dressed in

various rustic makeshift costumes perform what is called the "Bodokali"<sup>2</sup>. After the harvesting season, the performers go singing from house to house, making satirical performances. The performance is complete with acting, music and drums, a chorus, and use oil lamps and torches during the night. The villagers sit all around, listening to the performers cracking vulgar, sexual, ribald jokes, creating a satire on the dominant class or the ruler they despise, all in the name of God. Thus in this spontaneous folk performance one sees the formation of a complete theatre space. Similarly folk songs like "Balopattu" and folk dances like "Bolakkattu", the "Poonjolemaaye" songs that are sung during the "Joyipaattu" section of the "Huthhari" (harvest) festival and also the "Seenwar" section of the same festival are cluttered with theatrical elements from where Haradas Appacha might have borrowed his style.

In South Kodagu, there is a performance of the Bekkesudlur Mandattavva (a local name for Goddess Parvati) which comprises of a sacred space with a big fire pit. During a period of seven continuous nights many skits are performed. Performed in an overt style of mockery, instances of births, deaths, rituals, and major events that happened during that year are imitated in an entertaining way. Nobody leaves the performance space once they enter it because the audience is likened to a devotee who must sit through the worship of the Lord, here, the performance for Goddess Parvati. Hundreds of people gather around the fire. Such performances, that are rooted in the folk imagination act as clues to the beginning of Kodava theatre.

There has been a lot of speculation that the Kodavas had links with the ancient Greeks. Greek theatre originated because of rituals. Plays were enacted in order to worship and please the Greek gods, Dionysius being the most popular of them. Thus in the way that ritual is identified as the reason for the origin of Greek theatre, so also, Kodava theatre is said to be born out of rituals and folk, though not through worship to a particular God like the Greek icon, Dionysius. But gradually, since Kodava language, because of its minority status wasn't as popular as was Greek, was not communicated widely and hence the development of theatre in Kodagu hasn't been followed up. Thus, rituals and folk forms can be identified as the two major roots for the origin of Kodava

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<sup>2</sup> Titira Rekha Vasant, *Kodava Rangabhoomi*, (Mangalore: Prasaranga, 2001), 16.

theatre. I shall try to analyze how these elements have been used in Haradas Appacha's plays.

### **INFLUENCE OF TRAVELLING COMPANY THEATRES**

Another major area of consideration is that Haradas Appacha's period coincided with the time when there was an influx of company theatres. For example, the "*Gubbi Nataka Company*" and the "*Mohammed Peer Nataka Company*" were travelling in and out of Kodagu, which had influenced Haradas Appacha's style of play writing in a major way. But it is important to note that while these company theatres mostly incorporated social and mythological themes in their plays, Haradas Appacha exclusively adapted scripts from Hindu mythology to entertain and educate his Kodava audience.

In 1890, when the *Tiptur Natak Company* visited Madikeri, in Kodagu, Haradas Appacha had carefully observed and studied the acting style, dialogues and music. He also befriended many of the actors and even managed to land himself a few roles in these plays himself. With the help of a few friends, he managed to buy some of the theatrical props and costumes from one of the theatre companies that were leaving Kodagu. Haradas Appacha was indeed renowned as a singer and had a keen eye for theatre, but he also worked as a temple administrator in the Mujrai area of Bhagamandala. His association there with the Brahmins helped him gain the intricate knowledge of Sanskrit language, which he tried to use marvelously in his plays. Later, with a seven member team of his friends, he studied and produced a Kannada play "*Chandrasahas Kathe*" ✓ written by Venkatadri Shyamrai, an accomplished poet from Madikeri. Thus, by 1891, Haradas Appacha began his theatrical journey in acting and play writing through "*Yayati*" (1906), "*Savitri*" and "*Subramanya*" (1908) which lasted up to 1918, the year he wrote his final play "*Sri Kavery Nataka*".<sup>3</sup>

### **CHOICE OF SUBJECTS**

Locating the period of Haradas Appacha as one that witnessed turbulent changes with the British rule, especially the cultural transition, it is indeed fascinating to look at the ideas that keep emerging time and again in his works. Like every society, Kodava society

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<sup>3</sup> Titira Rekha Vasant, *Kodava Rangabhoomi*, (Mangalore: Prasaranga, 2001), 16

too underwent changes as a result of colonial rule. Haradas Appacha's four plays give substance for careful and detailed content analyses that lend focus on the representation of modernity and the crisis of the traditional patriarchal Kodava society of his times in colonized India. He highlights gender issues, the role of women, and blatantly criticizes corruption in a carnavalesque manner that brings in a Bakhtinian element of the comic. Each play he composed seems to highlight these issues in a subtle yet focused manner complete with thought provoking instances delivered in a comic fashion jolting the viewers' minds.

Would I dare to suggest that through each play, Appacha has a specific purpose or a distinct message to convey to the people of Kodagu? One must dwell upon the choice of material that the playwright chose in order to find answers for these. Out of the vast and innumerable number of characters that enliven Hindu mythology, Appacha chose four distinct characters. Yayati, Savitri, Subramanya and Kavery. One, a king who is engaged in a classic tale of lust; the other a *pativrata* who defeats the God of death in wit; another, a god-son destined to kill the demon *TarakAsura* and finally, the story of a sacred river that brought prosperity to the region of Kodagu. At a glance, these plays would seem to be mere "stories" from a grand epic, retold in Appacha's words, in Kodavattakk. So what is it that makes his rendering so unique?

V.S Kandekar in his introduction to his famous novel '*Yayati*' says,

A writer of fiction would be guilty of transgression if he made any basic change in the character of Rama and Sita, or Krishna and Draupadi. But the same rule does not hold in respect of secondary characters; the writer of fiction may make changes in the subsidiary characters to suit his theme, even if based on mythology. It is for this reason that the *Shakuntala* of Kalidasa is a little different from that of Vyas, the *Rambhadra* of Bhavabhuti is not the Rama of the first poet.<sup>4</sup>

Appacha's selection of secondary characters thereby gives him ample freedom to play around with their histories, without altering their roles in the main narrative. It is with these secondary histories that Appacha plays havoc in order to push his ideas through the medium of the myth. One over arching feature that runs through all these stories is that the characters have all been removed from their original high pedestals in mythology and

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<sup>4</sup> V.S. Khandekar, *Yayati: a classic tale of lust*, trans. Y.P.Kulkarni (New Delhi:Orient Paperbacks, 2009), 6-7

have been brought down to every day, regular, quotidian set up, and, most importantly these characters have been assigned unique Kodava sensibilities that made them easy to identify with the Kodava ethos.

Yayati for instance, the king, (who could well be a village head of the day,) did not just “happen to pass by” and chance over Devayani. Rather the king goes out hunting in order to save his subjects from the wild boar that had been causing havoc in the estates. Even in the indication of the passage of time of the one thousand years that Puru bore the curse of the old age of his father, Yayati, Appacha has vividly described the system of bribe and corruption that was rampant in the then Kodava society in terms of land tax, revenue, survey numbers etc. Thus Yayati comes across as any other village head/chief of the day. The feelings and emotional states he experiences are but humane.

V. S. Khandekar is of the opinion that before the year 1942-51, if he had written his version of Yayati, he would have confined himself to an elaboration of Sharmishtha’s love affair. But the novel, written in 1959 is a result of his exposure to the “strange spectacle of physical advancement and moral degeneration going hand in hand”.<sup>5</sup> It would be safe to say that in his choice of Yayati, almost half a century before Khandekar, Appacha had witnessed somewhat similar amalgamation of advancement/modernity and consequent moral degeneration facing the society. Appacha’s characterization of Yayati comes across clearly as a modern alienated man, the blind pursuit of carnal pleasures being the only destination he seeks. The Kodava people are likened to Yayati who would not mind the loss of spirituality and moral values as a result of blind imitation of western cultural values resulting in a degeneration of the principles of a “proper” societal set up that Appacha, like Khandekar nostalgically yearns for.

## THE ROLE OF WOMEN

The idea of moral degeneration surfaces through many instances in the play where he uses the characters of Devayani and Sharmishtha to critique the modernized woman while still giving her the power to manipulate the situation as she desires. It is interesting to note that all his plays give a lot of importance to women. The plays practically revolve

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<sup>5</sup> V.S. Khandekar, *Yayati: a classic tale of lust*, trans. Y.P.Kulkarni (New Delhi:Orient Paperbacks, 2009), 6-7



around the women characters. In *Savitri Nataka* and *Kavery Nataka*, it is obvious that women play the central role. However it is interesting to note that even in *Yayati Nataka* and in *Subramanya Nataka* too, where, the plays though named after the male characters, both Yayati's and Subramanya's lives are largely governed by Devayani - Sharmishtha and Lavali respectively. Yayati falls prey to Devayani's persistent obstinacy and to Sharmishtha's lustful temptations. Both women gain their goals through their feminine charm over Yayati.

In *Subramanya Nataka* too, apart from the legend of the *Igguthappa Kund* or the Subramanya Hill, Lord Subramanya is shown as a torn lover yearning for Lavali, who once gets custody of her, timidly proposes to elope, to hide from her father. Lavali however, comes across as a strong ideal of womanhood that questions traditional notions of being a "proper" woman. Thus women play a substantial role in his plays. Both Kavery and Savitri Natakas are obviously female centric plays. In *Savitri Nataka*, Savitri plays the lead, tricking the god of death into bringing her husband Satyavan back to life. Satyavan is the dutiful son who is afraid to take a wife without possessing a kingdom; his aged father is a picture of melancholy, having lost his kingdom and dignity in battle and the only other male character is the Friend/ Minister, who plays the role of a *Vidushaka* and is ridiculed by Savitri's female friends, again defeated in witty wordplay. In *Kavery Nataka* too, the glory and power of Kavery overshadows all the male characters that bow in submission to her. The role of women is pivotal in Appacha's plays and lends momentum and character to the script, urging active discussions on stage and off-stage.

The *Kavery Nataka*, however, has another agenda. Apart from a ridiculing of the higher Brahmanical values and the caste system, this play highlights Appacha's keenness on glorifying the Kodava race, as having a grand legendary backdrop. However, I must mention that the details he mentions in the play are not his interpretation or his version of ancestry of the Kodavas, but is what is recorded in the "*Kavery Purana*". His purpose of writing the play, that too, in Kodavattakk, was to educate the ignorant Kodavas of a glorious "past" that they were blissfully unaware of. It is possible that Appacha fondly hoped that the knowledge of this legendary past would help boost the Kodava morale and reinstate them to a royal status. As to the question of cultural ambiguity, today, most Kodavas claim, that they are descendants of a Kshatriya ancestry. This idea became

perpetuated due to the age old proliferation of the myth of Kavery and its unbreakable link with the Kodava race.

Did the poet doubt this glorified Kodava ancestry? There is indeed a possibility that he did, essentially because to question is human. Even if he did doubt it, the mission he had taken upon himself was not an investigation, rather it was an urgent proliferation and reaffirming of the “myth” of the royal lineage that would, as mentioned before, encourage and enhance the performance of the then “unwilling and uneducated” Kodavas. Whatever that may be, we can safely surmise that one of his intentions was to provide a legendary backdrop to the Kodava race through his writings. Almost all of his four plays uphold the glory of the “Kshatriya” lineage of the Kodavas. He would indeed have had intentions to publicize this valuable information/myth of the Kodavas to a larger audience. The Kavery play was the last of his plays written around 1918. Later, his health started deteriorating (he died in 1944), which probably prevented him from attempting a Kannada version of the same. His writing in Kodavattakk was justifiable and commendable too, as it was important to educate the Kodavas themselves first, before disseminating the information to Karnataka /Kannada circles, and beyond. This perspective is a telling example of a genuine social commitment on the part of the first ever poet in Kodavattakk - Haradas Appacha.

### **SOCIAL COMMENTARY**

Another important feature that is impossible to neglect in his plays is the prominence of caste and class and an intense social commentary delivered in a satirical manner. In *Savitri Nataka*, Appacha presents a sarcastic critique on “modernized” Brahmins and their marriage rites.<sup>6</sup> But the biggest critique of course comes in the *Kavery Nataka*, where sage Agastya curses the Brahmins and banishes them to the level of *Ammakodavas*<sup>7</sup>,

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<sup>6</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Shri Savitri Nataka* in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998) 16-17

<sup>7</sup> Nadikerianda Chinnappa, *Pattole Palame: Kodava Culture- Folksongs and Traditions*, trans. Boverianda Nanjamma and Chinnappa (New Delhi: Rupa & Co, 2003), xxxiv :It is believed that Amma Kodavas are the descendants of a Brahmin girl and a Kodava man. According to this belief, centuries ago, a young woman from the family of a Brahmin called Tayakat Tambiran in Malayala (Kerala) attained puberty before she could be married. So she was blindfolded and left in the forest. She happened to reach Kodagu where she met a Kodava man who befriended her and took her into his home. Their offsprings were teetotalers and vegetarians like their mother. They are called Amma Kodavas. (Names of males among them have the suffix ‘Amma’, meaning mother, implying that they follow the mother’s customs. However,

stripped of their duties and rights as Brahmins. He paints a picture of lazy, opportunistic Brahmins who regard all other classes as insignificant and moreover, tricks them through their acquired hegemony of Vedic “knowledge” to fleece their meager savings, all in the name of God. This finds consonance in the ideas of Dr. Ambedkar who provided a subaltern perspective to see clearly the chameleon of Indian caste-ridden social set-up deceptively appearing in crimson colors and also find ways to guard the interests of the Dalits.<sup>8</sup> While years later, Ambedkar strove for a casteless, class-free society, Appacha had already foreseen the problems brought about by caste discriminations and also had forewarned about the consequential social tensions.

As Rita Felski has described,

For some writers, it (modernity) is a “culture of rupture”, marked by historical relativism and ambiguity, for others it involves a “rational autonomous subject” and an “absolutist, unitary conception of truth”. To be modern is to be on the side of progress, reason, and democracy or, by contrast to align oneself with “disorder, despair and anarchy”. Indeed, to be modern is often paradoxically to be anti-modern, to define oneself in explicit opposition to the prevailing norms and values of one’s own time.<sup>9</sup>

It would be interesting to align Appacha with such an idea of modernity. What exactly were Appacha’s ideas on the “intrusion” of modernity with the everyday traditional ways of the Kodavas? Would he consider the British invasion in Kodagu as an “intrusion”? The analysis becomes complicated when one considers the historical fact that Kodagu was probably one of the very few regions in India that welcomed the British with a red carpet because of the persecution suffered at the hands of the Lingayat rulers.<sup>10</sup> Would that

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since ‘Amma’ meant father in old Kannada, this could also signify that their paternal ancestor was a Kodava.) The progeny of their children, whether boys or girls, remained Amma Kodavas even if they married Kodavas. It is said that intermarriage with Kodavas increased their numbers. Although their customs were alike, Kodavas and Amma Kodavas were looked upon as distinct communities after the end of the rule of the Lingayat kings, in the early part of the nineteenth century.

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Ronaki Ram, *Dr. Ambedkar and Nationalism*, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011, [www.ambedkar.org/News/-ambedkarandnationalism.html](http://www.ambedkar.org/News/-ambedkarandnationalism.html) (accessed 10 May 2011)

<sup>9</sup> Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 11

<sup>10</sup> I.M. Muthanna, *A Tiny Model State of South India* (Pollibetta: Tiny Spot, 1953), 36-42: The frequent clashes with Tipu Sultan during 1780s had depleted the population of Coorg. Besides, Tipu had abducted about 80,000 people of Kodagu including women and children. He took hostages to Srirangapatna and forcibly converted the survivors to Islam. As a result, Dodda Veerarajendra, the King of Kodagu had to attract people from other parts of the region to repopulate his kingdom. After Tipu’s treaty with the British

mean that the modernity brought on by the British were welcomed by the people of Kodagu? Or, having aligned with the East India Company led by the British to fight a common enemy, the Haleri Raja, and having ousted him, did the people want nothing more to do with the British and be blissfully happy in their own customs and traditions and general lifestyle? It is interesting that the period of Appacha is a time when the British have established themselves comfortably in Kodagu and had taken full control of the administrative missionary and the citizens are on the threshold of stepping into modern ways of living, owing to the British influence. From the works of Appacha one can glean the existent ambivalence on the idea of the “modern” in Kodava society. The confusion between being modern, progressive, reasonable and democratic and the resultant “disorder, despair and anarchy” brought about by shunning the ‘un-modern’ traditional ways is evident in his plays.

Many playwrights have attempted to paint a picture of modernity through theatre and performance. In parallel, even, Samsa, the great Kannada playwright, like Appacha, was far ahead of his times. There were very few productions of his works. True, there have been quite a few successful stagings of his plays in recent decades by talented directors. But none of them have been documented.<sup>11</sup> Only a few photographs, indifferent reviews and the director’s personal memoirs remain. In the midst of his troubled and threatened life, he wrote 23 plays all centering on the history of Mysore kings. However, 18 of his plays have disappeared. He may well have destroyed them out of the fear of being tortured by the Mysore police. His works celebrated the virtues and glories of Mysore kings, Ranadheera in particular.

## **NATIONALISM AND THEATRE**

Nationalism is a political ideology that involves a strong identification of a group of individuals with a political entity defined in national terms, i.e. a nation. In the 'modernist' image of the nation, it is nationalism that creates national identity. It is also used to describe a movement to establish or protect a 'homeland' (usually an autonomous state) for an ethnic

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in 1792, about 12,000 of the converted Kodavas who were in Srirangapatna escaped and came back to their homeland.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. H.S. Shivaprakash, *Hounded by British Spies: the Angst and Tragedy of Regional Modernisms in Karnataka*, Warwick Conference, JNU, March 2010

group. Nationalism also emphasizes collective identity - a 'people' must be autonomous, united, and express a single national culture.<sup>12</sup>

Theatre has also played a predominant role in the motivation of nationalism. With the idea of the "motherland" and nation building around it, tradition stood at a treacherous crossroad. The concept of the woman was given primary importance in the assertion of national identity. There indeed seems to be a subtle critique of modernity and westernization that is gradually changing the traditional patriarchal Kodava values evident in Appacha's plays. Women characters are an important element in his plays that he uses as a weapon in subtly critiquing the rise of modernity. He uses names of goddesses to show the ideal image of a woman (or the motherland) and through the sarcasm in his dialogues shows how the contemporary Kodava cultural values are deviating from the traditional patriarchal Kodava values and moving towards a societal set up that favours a blind imitation of the western colonizer.

This would entail a discussion on how was the modern woman looked at in the framework of nationalism?

...motherland is a woman's body and as such is ever in danger of violation-by "foreign" males/sperm. To defend her frontiers and her honor requires relentless vigilance and the sacrifice of countless citizen-warriors...the rape of the body/nation not only violates the frontiers but also disrupts the maintenance of the community through time. Also implicit in the patriarchal metaphor is the tacit agreement that men who cannot defend their woman/nation against rape have lost their "claim" to that body, that land.<sup>13</sup>

One of the corollaries of nationalism was sub-nationalism: a regional identity that was thought complementary to pan-Indian nationalism. The national and sub-national ideology became the substance of literary and theatrical imagination. It constructed the myth of a tradition, which, though meant to resist the colonizer, replicated the colonial

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<sup>12</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1993), 71.  
<http://www.psa.ac.uk/cps/2002/fowler.pdf> (accessed 17 June 2011)

<sup>13</sup> *Sexing political Identities/ Nationalism as Hetero Sexism*, in Women, states, and nationalism: at home in the nation? ed. Sita Ranchod-Nilsson and Mary Ann Tétreault (London: Routledge, 2000), 68,  
[http://books.google.co.in/books?id=LpRE7ko3EegC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Women,+states,+and+nationalism:+at+home+in+the+nation?+Sita+Ranchod-+Nilsson+and+Mary+Ann+T%C3%A9treault&hl=en&ei=6NsWTqPCNcfrAfq6ozQAQ&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCoQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.co.in/books?id=LpRE7ko3EegC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Women,+states,+and+nationalism:+at+home+in+the+nation?+Sita+Ranchod-+Nilsson+and+Mary+Ann+T%C3%A9treault&hl=en&ei=6NsWTqPCNcfrAfq6ozQAQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCoQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false) (accessed on 20 April, 2011)

image of India: a glorious past fallen on evil ways.<sup>14</sup> Historical evidence suggests that Kodagu was ambivalent in its stand on nationalism. The citizens of Kodagu seem to have benefited more from the British invasion. This naturally would have made them hesitant to fight the “enemy” that the entire country was fighting against. With their rule, came the three most important aspects that led them to befriend their British masters.

1. They introduced an education system that later helped provide well paying jobs in the British administration for the Kodavas.
2. They introduced the cultivation of coffee, a cash crop that catapulted Kodagu to a higher status in terms of trade and economy.
3. They brought about a uniform penal code that ensured equality and a reduction in crime rates in sharp contrast to the arbitrary dispensation of justice during the days of the Haleri Rajas thus bringing about an egalitarian society.

Appacha’s life history and plays help give an understanding of the socio- political conditions of Kodagu that led to its ambivalent position in the context of nationalism, in the ‘sub-sub national’ level, penetrating a level deeper, from the national (India) and the sub-national (Karnataka). Appacha’s own exposure to national and sub national contexts helped him respond to the scenarios when they are mixed and complicated in terms of encountering the three cultures: a) His own native culture b) Mainstream Karnataka culture and c) Alien culture- The British culture in a situation of diglossia.

## **SIGNS OF AMBIVALENCE**

Many translations and adaptations of the plays by Appacha have been undertaken over the years. With special reference to Haradas Appacha, after his play *Yayati Raja* in 1906, in 1950, Sriranga wrote *Sanjeevni*, with Devayani as the main protagonist. In 1961 Girish Karnad wrote *Yayati* which dealt mainly with the question of man’s existentialism, while Haradas Appacha’s *Yayati Raja* places the scenario in Kodagu, dealing with down to earth people in down to earth situations. Haradas Appacha’s “*Savitri Nataka*” too has been attempted by many eminent writers in Kannada. For example, “*Savitri*” by Masti Venkatesh Iyengar, “*Yamana Solu*” translated by Kuvempu , “*Savitri*” by Sriranga, “*Savitri Satyavan*” by Shivaram Karant etc. Haradas Appacha’s “*Savitri Nataka*” was

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<sup>14</sup> Dr. S. Chandrashekhar, *Sahitya Mathu Charitre* , (Bangalore:Namma Prakashana, 1999), 19-24

written about 16 years before all the others and talks about the changing customs and practices of the Kodavas due to the advent of modernity.

After the period of Haradas Appacha, some of his plays were performed in and around Kodagu by students due to the painstaking efforts of stalwarts like Dr. I.M.Muthanna a great scholar and prolific writer of Kodagu. But the trend gradually changed. Theatre took a setback with hardly any plays being produced till 1976 with the establishment of the *BEL Kodava Sangha*, Bangalore in 1976 by B.S. Chittiappa. In the 80's there emerged the *Hosa Navya Natakas*, or the new theatres that brought with it new developments in theatrical techniques which led to the construction of modern, natural dramas. This was taken up by organizations like *Srishti Kodagu Ranga*, *Neeenasam Theatre Institute* etc. Here, theatre was studied rigorously as a scientific technique and paid a lot of importance to lighting, sound techniques, professional make-up techniques, the use of stage properties and stage/set construction.

Many plays were written on historical rulers like the *Haleri Arasaru*, *Diwan* stories of Mysore etc. A lot of Kannada plays were translated and adapted into Kodava theatre. Many Western dramas and Shakespeare's plays like Macbeth were performed in native Kodavattakk. They also performed children's plays and street plays that addressed contemporary social issues centering on environmental, political and comic themes. Thus, during the period between 1980 and 1998, Kodava theatre comparatively flourished marking a golden age for theatre in Kodagu. Its significance was to the extent that Kodava theatre was sent as the sole representative of Karnataka to Delhi for a performance at theatre festivals. The famous director A.C. Cariappa of Kodagu, was chosen for the Rajasuya award for his contribution to theatre.

But even after all this, there was found to be a severe lacunae and ambivalence in the writing and production of Kodava play scripts, centering on the then contemporary Kodava social issues and lifestyle. The *Yakshagana* form in Kannada helped boost the Kannada and Tulu Folk theatre scenario into popularity and fame whereas the Kodavas had no such popular cultural performance to bank upon. All said and done, Kodava theatre today is in a highly ambivalent condition owing to the fact that Kodava theatre was/is not being developed as a strong and significant movement. The reasons for this

have to be identified. However, the main reason seems to be the lack of actors and the lack of commitment on the part of the actors. In the current money-driven modern society, theatre is not being looked upon as a comfortable means of livelihood and nobody wants to work for personal joy or as a hobby. These reasons have been dealt with in later chapters.

According to A.C. Cariappa, the viewers/audience has not decreased, but the doers/performers/artistes have. Thus there is a need to promote research in the area, conduct workshops and theatre festivals, bring in professional artistes and provide proper, reasonable remuneration for theatre artistes that would help promote interest in the theatre movement among the youth and save the legacy of Kodava theatre from disappearing into oblivion. It is said that the birth and death of a language depends on the literature it produces. Such is the case with Kodavattakk. With the meagre quantum of literature being produced, Kodavattakk is heading in the wrong direction. Tulu and Konkani are also considered as sister languages to Kodavattakk. However, both Tulu and Konkani have had a better exposure, almost like Kannada theatre. Recently, there have been attempts to revive the language and culture of Kodagu. This could be looked at in the wake of the demand and struggle for Kodagu being declared as a separate state by some factions of the society. The Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy has been set up at Madikeri (1994), the district headquarters. Dr. B.V. Karanth's '*Rangaayana*' has been set up in Mysore. These endeavours, albeit in a small scale, could be looked at as a launch pad for the promotion of further research and development in the area of theatre in Kodagu.

In the wake of a dying theatre tradition and language this attempt at a critical evaluation of Haradas Appacha's works in particular and Kodava theatrical tradition in general would be a humble contribution to the Kodava cultural scenario. I believe I am at an advantage because my knowledge of the Kodava language gives me automatic and direct access to Haradas Appacha's play texts. More importantly, my status as a non-Kodava would help me be impartial in my observations of the customs and practices of the Kodavas, thus lending an objective investigation through this study. These two attributes as a researcher would help me both in subjectively involving myself in the



study to carefully understand the traditional Kodava practices, as well as to objectively present the results of the study, in the role of a passive but concerned observer.

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***CHAPTER I***

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***LIFE AND WORKS OF HARADAS APPACHA***

## LIFE AND WORKS OF HARADAS APPACHA

Appaneravanda Appacha, or Haradas Appacha was born into the Appaneravanda family to Medappa and Bollavva, in Kirndaad village near Kadiyathnaad in Kodagu, in September 1868. He lived a prosperous twenty years in his uncle's house near Virajpet. His paternal grandfather was a great scholar, who had no sons of his own. Under his tutelage, Appacha learnt the basics of literature and Math. Even at the tender age of seven, he could recite many verses from the Jaimini. While it looked like Appacha's early formal education was going to suffer, he was fortunate to have Savitramma, a Brahmin lady who took great interest in Appacha and along with her son Subbaraya, began his education. It was from her that he learnt the *Amarakosha*, the Sanskrit Thesaurus which was of great help to him in his later years as a poet. When he was eight years old, his uncle enrolled him in a Kannada school. Later, around 1878, his father sent him to an English school to study the English language.<sup>15</sup> However, he could not progress much in English education due to ill health in his childhood.

During those days, education facilities were very inadequate and because it was difficult to access schools from far flung villages, Appacha was only able to study up to class IV. Appacha made use of most of the facilities that were available then and steadily picked up whatever he could grasp. Even in early childhood he displayed a keen interest in music and literature. After school hours, he used to visit learned men in the village and listen eagerly to the stories from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavadgita, Vedas and Upanishads. The exposure to music from an early age helped create a rhythmic style and melody to his later literary creations. After a while, Appacha joined the Virajpet village office as a volunteer from 1886 to 1888 which involved quite a lot of copy writing. He later quit that job and worked in the Mujrai department of the district administration. He then joined the Omkareshwara temple in Madikeri as a temple administrator. There, in the company of Brahmins and pundits, he extensively studied Kannada and Sanskrit literature.

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<sup>15</sup>Haradas Appacha, *Atmasharitre*, a condensed version of his autobiography, quoted in I.M.Muthanna *Kodagina Haradasa Appacca kaviya Sri Kaveri nataka* (India:s.n, 1967), 3: "... those days it was fashionable for children from affluent families to learn the English language because it was meant to parade the wealth and opulence of those families as being powerful enough to afford the luxury of English education. And since my father had his own coffee estate to his credit, and me being his only son, he sent me to study the English education."

## CREATION OF A PLAYWRIGHT

A turning point in his literary enterprise came, just a few years later in the form of travelling company theatres. The first part of 1890 saw the Tiptur Natak Company visiting Kodagu and staging plays in several places.

I was so intrigued by the issues that were discussed in these plays and the way they were staged that I made friends with one of the men who played a powerful female character and learnt many verses from him. I also befriended many more actors who taught me many *ragas*. I followed the drama company day and night till the time they left Kodagu, learning and practicing the verses as much as I could.<sup>16</sup>

...the second year again, a few companies visited Kodagu and impressed with my keen interest and enthusiasm they even let me play a few small parts in their plays. This boosted my interest in theatre, and I learnt many more *ragas* and verses from these companies. In about two years, I could recite hundreds of verses from my memory. This enhanced my knowledge of “*ragas*” that helped me significantly in composing my own poetry. The people of Kodagu started addressing me as “Kavi”....<sup>17</sup>

This seems to be the major event that inspired Appacha to delve deep into the theatre scene and learn the art and techniques of theatre. It led to Appacha’s maiden foray into the theatre arena through a drama “*Chandrahasa Kathe*”, which he staged, composed by his friend and close associate, Sri.Venketadri Shyamaraya, a well known poet in Madikeri.

...there was a huge crowd. I remember the happiness on the faces of the people and the appreciation they showered on me after watching my role, my acting skills, my voice modulation and body language; I was amazed at myself...<sup>18</sup>

In the year 1892, he got married and after a couple of years, he quit his job at Madikeri and moved to Bhagamandala to work as the temple administrator at Sri Bhagandeshwara temple, where, again, in the company of erudite Brahmin scholars he

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<sup>16</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Atmcharitre*, a condensed version of his autobiography, quoted in I.M.Muthanna *Kodagina Haradasa Appacca kaviya Sri Kaveri nataka* (India:s.n, 1967)

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

became well acquainted with the Vedas and Puranas. But his lack of formal education caused considerable mental agony in his yearning for perfection in literature.

... Although the place escalated my interest in poetry, I spent many sleepless nights trying to comprehend techniques of rhythm and metre etc, owing to the lack of knowledge of Sanskrit language...<sup>19</sup>

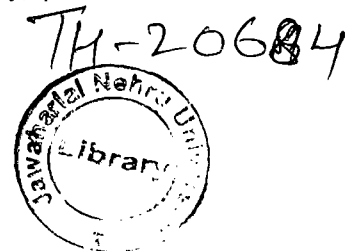
In 1895, Appacha showed some of his own works to the superintendent of schools who visited Bhagamandala on vacation. Being a celebrated poet himself, the superintendent suggested that Appacha must make good use of his language skills and write poetry in his own native tongue – the Kodavattakk, by using the Kannada script this inspired him to research into mythology where he stumbled upon the Yayati story.

In 1906, he composed Yayati Nataka, in which he emphasized on the ideals of devotion to the king, discipline, respect for the ancestors and veneration to God. This was followed by the Savitri and Subramanya Natakas (1908) that discussed the proper conduct of women, devotion and loyalty to husband, description of man’s ideal conduct, devotion to the Lord etc. In 1909, he is said to have written a Kannada drama, “Sati Sukanya”/ Sukanya Parinaya, which was never published. The original manuscript was lost and till date, there is no sign of it. He formed his own drama company in 1916 and toured several places in Kodagu and neighbouring places like Periyapattana, Hunsur etc. In 1918, he composed the Kavery Nataka that explained the importance of River Kavery, the description of the People of the region, their lifestyle, customs and traditions. In 1919, he staged “*Mudduraja*” another play which was also never published. This drama was specially written for an immediate and impromptu performance as a cultural event during the departure of the then Deputy Commissioner.<sup>20</sup> He even learnt the Harikatha tradition (the traditional art of storytelling in India) and performed it to the entire satisfaction and applause of his mentors. He made it possible to conceive of the Kodava language as having immense poetic potential like any other mainstream language. In the same year,

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid

<sup>20</sup>Haradas Appacha, *Atmacharitre*, a condensed version of his autobiography, quoted in I.M.Muthanna *Koḍagina Haradāsa Appacca kaviya Śrī Kāvēri nātaka* (India:s.n, 1967)



his name appeared in the “Madras Mail” newspaper in praise of his performance in Mangalore, with the headline, “Kodagu’s <sup>21</sup>Haridas in Mangalore.” It ran as follows:

As Shakespeare is to English, so is Haridas Appacha to us. He performed the “*Shivaratri Rahasya*” Harikatha very entertainingly. Even in his old age, he impressed the men and women gathered there immensely with his clever words, skilled talent and expertise in music. Thereafter, <sup>22</sup>Mr. Mangesharai greatly praised Haradasa’s talent. Born in Kodagu and composing literature in the Kodava language, he has proved to the world that the Kodava language has immense poetic potential. It is impossible to describe his miraculous talents in words. He is, indeed a “Haradasa”.

Appacha had three sons, Medappa, Muthappa, Ayyanna and three daughters, Bollamma, Kaamavva, and Seethamma. <sup>23</sup>In the year 1926, in a tragic turn of events in his life, some miscreants set fire to his house. He lost most of his savings and copies of his manuscripts to the blazing fire, which left him a pauper. In trying to make ends meet, he began travelling through villages, performing Harikathas from the year 1927. Once after the staging of *Yayati*, where Appacha himself played the part of the protagonist, he said,

...even though I am of poor background, at least through the medium of theatre, I am able to become a King and hold court for at least a day! <sup>24</sup>

By the year 1934, he had almost retired from the theatre scene. In 1936, he wrote his autobiography (in Kannada) with the help of which most of his personal life has been pieced together. By that time, Appacha had almost lost his hearing and his health had deteriorated considerably. On 21<sup>st</sup> November 1944, he passed away. Of his personal life, not much is known. Even the autobiography refuses to divulge details of his lifestyle, family life etc. It is interesting that while his plays emphasize, in a major way, the

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<sup>21</sup> In the newspaper clipping, the name appears as Har’i’dasa and not Har’a’dasa.

<sup>22</sup> Ullal Mangesharai was a great scholar and also the headmaster of the school in Mangalore in which Appacha performed the *Harikatha*.

<sup>23</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Atmcharitre*, a condensed version of his autobiography, quoted in I.M.Muthanna *Kodagina Haradasa Appacca kaviya Sri Kaveri nataka* (India:s.n, 1967),18

<sup>24</sup> See Illustration VIII

Haradas Appacha, *Atmcharitre*, a condensed version of his autobiography, quoted in I.M.Muthanna *Kodagina Haradasa Appacca kaviya Sri Kaveri nataka* (India:s.n, 1967)

importance to the role of women, his autobiography contains negligible details about his mother and wife, although there is some mention about his children<sup>25</sup>.

Appacha Kavi was a good playwright, pioneered the written form of Kodavattakk, and also produced and directed his own plays. But he was a failure as an entrepreneur. He suffered ignominy as well as great financial losses in his endeavour to promote theatre in Kodagu. Had it not been for the chance discovery of some of his printed papers lying in a heap in a printing press by the famed author and intellectual of Kodagu, Sri .JM. Muthanna, all his works would have gradually faded into oblivion. He found out the real worth of Appacha Kavi's talents and with all the resources at his command, he staged the Yayati Nataka – considered as the magnum opus of Appacha Kavi, by the school children at Madikeri in the year 1943.

### **1. YAYATI NATAKA**

Yayati was a Puranic king and the son of king Nahusha, one of the ancestors of the great Pandavas. He had two wives, Devayani and Sharmishtha. Devayani was the daughter of Sage Shukracharya, the guru of all Asuras. She had been cursed by Kacha, son of sage Bruhaspathi, the guru of all the Devas, that she would not marry another Brahmin. Sage Shukra was living in the kingdom of the Asura king Vrushaparva, whose daughter Sharmishtha was a close friend of Devayani.

One day as Devayani and Sharmishtha along with their retinue of servants were amusing themselves in a forest nearby, they had an argument over who was more beautiful and in the fight that ensued, Sharmishtha accidentally pushes Devayani into a nearby well. King Yayati, who was passing that way, heard her cries for help and rescued her by pulling her out. Devayani insisted that since he had pulled her out with his right hand, he must make her his queen. Yayati says that he being a Kshatriya does not have the right to marry a Brahman lady. But Devayani forces her father Shukracharya to get her married to Yayati and also, in revenge, forces the Asura king Vrishaparva to assign

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<sup>25</sup> On the night of April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1929, some miscreants set fire to Appacha's house, leaving him in a devastated condition. He mentions in his autobiography, "I will never be able to account for the unique things that were destroyed in that fire. As the money I had kept safe in case of an emergency had also been destroyed, I felt like jumping into the fire that blazed before my eyes and attaining heavenly peace. But my third son held me back and thus, fortunately or unfortunately I remained alive.

his daughter Sharmishtha to be her maidservant for life. Even though thus banished, Sharmishtha somehow manages to get close to the King. Sharmishtha's schemes work beautifully and she gets her way. Guru Shukracharya however warned Yayati that he should never share his bed with Sharmishtha.

Sharmishtha was given a place to live in a shaded glade called *Ashok Vatika*. One day Yayati happened to pass by Ashok Vatika where Sharmishtha the maid lived. Seeing him, Sharmishtha confessed that she too was in love with the king and wanted him to marry her. She told him that she belonged to a royal family and Yayati, being a Kshatriya, could marry her. Yayati reluctantly agrees and they wed secretly. They continued to meet clandestinely. Thus while Yayati had two sons through Devayani– Yadu and Turvasuti, he also had three sons through Sharmishtha – Druhyu, Anu and Puru. When Devayani came to know about the relationship of Yayati and Sharmishtha and their three sons she felt shocked and betrayed. Devayani, in anger, went back to her father's house. Shukracharya was displeased with the king, and cursed that he would lose his youth and become an old man instantly. As soon as Shukracharya uttered his curse Yayati became an old man. Shukracharya said that his curse once uttered could not be taken back but added that the only concession he could give was that if Yayati wanted, he could exchange his old age with someone who was willing to part with his youth. Yayati was relieved at the reprieve he was given and was confident that one of his sons would willingly exchange their youth with him. Yayati went back to his kingdom and requested all his five sons one by one to give their youth to him to enjoy worldly happiness. All the sons, except Puru rejected his demand. So Yayati took the youth of Puru. Later on, as a reward for his sacrifice, Puru became the successor to the kingdom of Yayati. Yayati realized the futility of his shallow actions, renounced the world and did immense penance to redeem himself of his folly and gain enlightenment. As a result of his endeavour, he attained enlightenment and won great admiration and respect of the Gods.

## **2. SAVITRI NATAKA**

The childless king of Madra, Ashwapati, lives ascetically for many years and offers obeisance to God Savitr. His consort is Maalavi. He wishes to have a son for his lineage. Finally, pleased by the prayers, God Savitr appears to him and grants him a boon: he will soon have a daughter. The king is joyful at the prospect of a child. She is born and



named Savitri in honor of his patron God. Savitri is born out of devotion and asceticism, noble traits she herself will practice.

Savitri is so beautiful and pure, she instills awe and respect in all the men in the vicinity. When she reaches the age of marriage, no man asks for her hand, and so her father tells her to find a husband on her own. She sets out on a pilgrimage for this purpose and finds Satyavan, the son of a blind king named Dyumatsena, who after being cheated of everything including his eyesight, lives in exile as a forest-dweller. Savitri returns to find her father speaking with Sage Naradaa who announces that Savitri has made a bad choice: although perfect in every way, Satyavan is destined to die one year from that day. In response to her father's pleas to choose a more suitable husband, Savitri insists that she will choose her husband and once Naradaa announces his agreement with Savitri, Ashwapati acquiesces.

Savitri and Satyavan are married, and she goes to live in the forest. Immediately after the marriage, Savitri adopts the clothing of a hermit and lives in perfect obedience and respect to her new parents-in-law and husband. Three days before the foreseen death of Satyavan, Savitri takes a vow of fasting and vigil. Her father-in-law tells her she has taken on too harsh of a regimen, but Savitri replies that she has taken an oath to perform these austerities, at which Dyumatsena offers his support.

On the morning of Satyavan's predicted death, Savitri asks for her father-in-law's permission to accompany her husband into the forest. Since she has never asked for anything during the entire year she has spent at the hermitage, Dyumatsena grants her wish. They go and while Satyavan is splitting wood, he suddenly becomes weak and lays his head in Savitri's lap. Yama himself, the God of Death, comes to claim the soul of Satyavan. Savitri follows Yama as he carries the soul away. When he tries to convince her to turn back, she offers successive formulas of wisdom. First she praises obedience to Dharma, then Yama himself for his just rule, then Yama, the supreme, as King of Dharma, and finally praises the noble conduct with no expectation of any return. Impressed at each speech, Yama praises both the content and style of her words and offers her any boon, except the life of Satyavan. She first asks for eyesight and restoration of the kingdom for her father-in-law, then a hundred sons for her father, and then a hundred sons for herself through Satyavan. The last wish creates a dilemma for Yama, as

it would indirectly grant the life of Satyavan. However, impressed by Savitri's dedication and purity, he offers one more chance for her to choose any boon, but this time omitting "except for the life of Satyavan". Savitri instantly asks for Satyavan to return to life. Yama grants life to Satyavan and blesses Savitri's life with eternal happiness. Satyavan awakens as though he has been in a deep sleep and returns to his parents along with his wife. Meanwhile at their home, Dyumatsena regains his eyesight before Savitri and Satyavan return. Since Satyavan still does not know what happened, Savitri relates the story to her parents-in-law, husband, and the gathered ascetics. As they praise her, Dyumatsena's ministers arrive with news of the death of his usurper. Joyfully, the king and his entourage return to his kingdom.

### **3. SUBRAMANYA NATAKA**

The Subramanya story embodies a discussion on the proper conduct of women, dedication and loyalty to husbands, exposition of man's ideal life and the importance of devotion to the Lord. The purpose of Lord Subramanya's avtar to kill the dreaded TarakAsura is the most important aspect of the story that is well known to most devotees. But Appacha has taken a quotidian view of the great God and weaved a love story about him with Lavalı, a beautiful damsel of divine birth. The other aim of the story is to establish the importance of the famous Iguuthappa hillock of Kodagu in relation to the myth of Subramanya Avtar.

Lord Kumaraswamy, one of the sons of Lord Shiva and Parvati, as the avatar of Subramanya is the unrelenting lover who is captivated by Lavalı and undergoes great pains to attain her. Lavalı is the adopted daughter of King Dhanapati and Queen Gunamati, the Queen who upholds the ideal of the *pativrata* dharma like no other woman. Lavalı also stands by the side of her Lord, Subramanya and is ready to undergo any sacrifice and peril as long as she is with her beloved husband. Thus, in this play, the great Gods are brought down from their divine pedestals and are given an everyday lifestyle, relating them to the problems faced by the common man.

### **4. KAVERY NATAKA**

As the name suggests the Kavery Nataka is an excerpt from the *Kavery purana*, a part of Veda Vyasa's *Skanda purana* and contains a detailed description of the origin of

the river Kavery. An avatar of Goddess Lakshmi, Lopamudra is born as the daughter of sage Kavera. The great sage Agastya takes a fancy for her beauty and marries her and keeps her safe in his sacred tumbler. She had agreed to marry him on the condition that he will not covet any other woman. One day when Agastya went to pay respects (*sandhyavandane*) to Kanike, who in real life, is a tributary to river Kavery, apart from being a beautiful woman in the Kavery Purana, Kavery seizes the opportunity and escapes from the tumbler. She flows as a river, bringing prosperity to the land of Kodagu.

Several sub plots are effectively woven into the story to illustrate the glory of River Kavery. These include, the origin of the Kodavas, the story of the demon *Kakaalaka* who is forgiven of all his sins because he happens to fall into river Kavery and thus attains heaven; the story of the Triguni Patta, a Brahmin, who is greatly praised by the Trimurtis for his unbreakable devotion to Kavery; the story of Lord Indra and river Sujyoti, , another tributary of river Kavery; the supremacy of Kavery over Ganga, the rituals associated with paying obeisance to the river, and also occasional sarcastic comments on the fleecing nature of Brahmins.

An analysis of various issues which surface time and again in Appahca's treatment of his characters in various stages would be apt at this stage. The period in which he lived and wrote his plays throw open various cultural and social issues, dilemmas and problems which he rightly addressed in his own inimitable way. The message to his audience, particularly his Kodava brethren, was profound.

#### **a. WOMEN AND GENDER COMMENTARY**

One all pervasive trope that has been universally used in order to explain most concepts and societal functions is the idea of women. Be it economics, religion, politics, culture, anthropology etc, the role of women in each (and many more) of these fields becomes a serious question of debate and negotiation. Modernity too, pitches in a lot of its theories on women and gender issues, capitalizing on feminist ideologies and feminist art and literature. "Feminism as a collection of movements aimed at defining, establishing and defending equal political, economic, and social rights and equal opportunities for women. This overlaps conceptually with those of women's rights. Much of feminism

deals specifically with the problems women face in overcoming social barriers.”<sup>26</sup> It is indeed obvious that the movement came about as a response to the oppression of women in all walks of life. Rita Felski suggests in her “Gender and Modernity”, that “Woman is aligned with the dead weight of tradition and conservatism that the active, newly autonomous, and self defining subject must seek to transcend. Thus she functions as a sacrificial victim exemplifying the losses which underpin the ambiguous but ultimately exhilarating and seductive logic of the modern.”<sup>27</sup> The terms “women” and “sacrifice” go hand in hand in pre-feminist thought. In feminist thought and thereafter, the two terms are pitched against each other, the first trying to win over the second, in a thrust for equality and freedom. In this struggle, masculinity tends to get equated with modernity while femininity carries around the weight of traditional conservatism.

Against this backdrop, how then, does Haradas Appacha balance the concepts of women’s rights and modernity? Or, is he able to achieve the subtle balance between the two? It is indeed obvious that in almost all his plays, women play strong and significant roles. Can we therefore categorise Appacha as supporting feminism? His treatment of women in his four plays would give us a clear picture of his views on feminism and modernity. In Yayati, he sings:

*Madicha aanena nambolu*

*Padicha nari, chinga, karadi, mosalena nambolu*

*Chadipa paambna nambolu*

*Pongala namavadadhi kashta*<sup>28</sup>

Which translates as “one can trust a rutting elephant, an angry tiger, a bear, crocodile; one can even trust a wily snake, but one can never wholly trust womankind”.

At a glance it looks as though Appacha has vested all the control in the hands of women. Women come across as scheming, cunning and highly intellectual beings having powers of conspiracy that could dismantle the male potency. She is highly powerful and capable of burning fear into the minds of men. But the flip side is that it is increasingly

<sup>26</sup> Feminism – Definition and More from the Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary, www.Merriam-webster.com (accessed on 28 April 2011)

<sup>27</sup> Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 2.

<sup>28</sup> Chenanda S. Chengappa, “Haradasa Appacha: Yayati Nataka”, *Poomale*, 11 August 2010

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difficult to do away with women because of the strange seductive logic they embody. Women are a need in the society for man to survive. If not to conjure up ideas of equality, at least to assert an unquestioning power over her, in order to prove his own mighty authority. But with the rising power of feminism, there is a perceived threat to male potency. She is mightier and more dangerous than a “rutting elephant, an angry wild animal or a wily snake”. This inner struggle is a recurring theme in Appacha’s plays too. On the one hand he warns about the extremely potent nature of the female, giving her centre stage, the limelight that is central to the play, influencing the actions of all others who become secondary characters in comparisons to hers, while on the other hand, he sums up the oppression of women as an inescapable condition that she must pay for, as a compensation for all her feminist ‘hysteria’ that she unleashes on the society, (read men.)

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...this double-spectrum-of women’s responses to their oppression (feminism and hysteria) and of men’s reactions to these responses (feminism and hysterization)-produced a field of conflicting currents of thought which inevitably left their mark on the dramatists of the day. The figure of the woman pervades the culture of the fin de siècle as a powerful symbol of both the dangers and the promises of the modern age.<sup>29</sup>

Appacha also seems to carefully embody this conflict in thought. On the one hand he places the woman on an all powerful pedestal, on the other he wants to control her potential domination over nature that threatens the supremacy of the male species. Therefore, what are these women in Appacha’s plays trying to say? Or rather, what is Appacha trying to convey through the voices of these women?

Yayati, being the title of the play though would seem to be about the adventures of a King, but on closer observation it becomes clear that the king is a mere instrument, controlled by Devayani and Sharmishtha. This is true not only of Yayati, but also in the case of the other male characters: Shukracharya, Devayani’s father yields to the wishes of his daughter, King Vrishaparva is forced to give away his daughter Sharmishtha on account of Devayani’s stubborn nature, Yayati himself falls prey to the seductive beauties of Devayani and Sharmishtha. Unable to take control of himself, he loses his will and determination and is in total submission to the whims and fancies of Devayani and Sharmishtha. Devayani and Sharmishtha both achieve their goals. Devayani marries

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<sup>29</sup> Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 3.

Yayati and also gains Sharmishtha as her maid in the bargain, while Sharmishtha, though designated as Devayani's maid for life, still commands the love and attention of Yayati that she desired for. In craving for Yayati, Sharmishtha confesses to her maid, the uncontrollable desire she feels for the king. To which the maid reflects,

Women of today, lusting after men are becoming a bad influence and bringing a bad name on womankind.<sup>30</sup>

The playwright views women as beings that are en route to becoming all powerful. There is also a subtle hint of criticism on the same, bordering on jealousy, which proposes that indeed women are dominating the scene and in the process, are bringing destruction on themselves; a kind of warning to the women to watch their limits and to men to beware of the rising female power. The contrast is clear. Like Felski explains,

The contradiction of modernity are portrayed with penetrating clarity: on the one hand, an exhilarating sense of liberation resulting from the challenge to tradition and established forms of authority, on the other a nascent bourgeois individualism which asserts itself in the desire for uncontrollable growth and domination over nature.<sup>31</sup>

The contradictions become evident in many more instances throughout the plays. It is interesting to note the freedom that women enjoyed in selecting their partners. Devayani insists to her father that she must marry Yayati. In *Savitri Nataka*, Savitri is sent away by her father to select the partner she desires. Lavali, in *Subramanya Nataka*, chooses her spouse Kumaraswamy, irrespective of her royal status and duties as a princess. King Yayati sums it up when he exclaims:

A woman can select her man (and touch him) as she wishes. But a man is not allowed to do the same.<sup>32</sup>

The King says that if one has to get married, he must look at the woman's lineage, her lifestyle, her property, etc.

Even if her heart is pure, if there is nothing worthy of mention in her three earlier generations, then she is not fit to be a wife.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Yayati Raja Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998), 64.

<sup>31</sup> Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>32</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Yayati Raja Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998), 52.

Here what is evident is that while women enjoy almost unbridled freedom of choice, men have to keep in mind terms such as “status”, “dignity” and “norms”. If one reflects longer on this aspect, it would seem that such is the case in situations where women came out of cloistered spaces to find their mates. During earlier days, when women were restricted entirely to the household and the breadwinner of the house was the sole “owner” of the women in his house, women had no choice, but to wed the man that was chosen for her by the elders. But in a situation of role reversal, it exposes the stark realities of the thought processes in the male mind that ultimately leads to the choice of a partner, precisely because earlier, women were mere objects, commodified and desired by men. Today, women ~~had~~ a “voice” and a “choice”. *have*

In *Savitri Nataka*, Savitri questions Narada whether it is “proper” for a woman to choose her husband. Narada says that when parents choose partners for their daughters, any flaw of the husband becomes the responsibility of the parents and moreover the daughters go hysterical, accusing the parents of having made a wrong choice. Therefore it is safer for girls to choose the partners themselves. He even commends the Kshatriya race for having such a provision in their tradition. The power of “choice” is instilled deep in all female characters in Appacha’s plays.

In the *Subramanya Nataka*, there is an entire scene devoted to a conversation between the queen and her daughter Lavali, that exposes the very private thoughts of the women of two generations. The queen mother represents the ideals of a bygone era, where a total submission to the man constituted “ideal womanhood” and Lavali represents the new age woman, who is outgoing, has the freedom of choice and has a voice to speak out in defiance. The queen criticizes the ways of modern girls who sit down with men, shake hands and flash their best smiles when they spot men even at a distance. If a handsome man visits their homes, they immediately switch to hyper-hospitable modes saying, “Boy! Get me a chair!” to the servants, and then “Dear, sit down” etc.<sup>34</sup> So saying, she warns Lavali that she should uphold the family tradition that the king and herself have been following for ages and should do nothing that would make the royal

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<sup>33</sup> It was the custom of Kodava elders, to examine the lineage of a prospective bride for the past three generations.. ie; Mother, Grandmother and the great Grandmother of the bride.

<sup>34</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Subramanya Swami Nataka* in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998),35.

family hang their heads in shame. Lavali's replies hold the substance of one that is too sure of her beliefs as she says,

Why should one cover her face and hide when in the presence of a man? Are they our enemies? A little socializing would do no harm. If a woman's mind is as strong as her will, then even the scariest of men will not bring fear to her mind. It is the nature of weak willed women that complain endlessly about their husbands after marriage and look for gossip and affairs...<sup>35</sup>

In Lavali's words, Appacha not only exposes the societal conditions that were prevalent during his period, hinting at many an unhappy marriage, but also, speaks in a progressive voice that aims at upholding the ideal modernized woman. Here, one has to reflect upon which side Appacha chooses to take in the above situation. While through Lavali, he envisages a more liberal society not "tied down" by tradition, he provides a word of caution through the voice of the queen mother. He is probably hinting at a tender, young, temporal generation which is on the verge of taking an apprehensive step towards a "modern" way of life, while still acknowledging the traditional values that has sustained them till the present prestigious status with the woman taking center stage as a faithful wife, the protective mother, and the dutiful daughter. Thus Felski says,

Finney points to the centrality of familial ties and identities-as mother, daughter, wife- in the construction of modern forms of subjectivity. The so-called private sphere often portrayed as a domain where natural and timeless emotions hold sway is shown to be radically implicated in patterns of modernization and processes of social change. The analysis of modern femininity brings with it recognition of the profoundly historical nature of private feelings.<sup>36</sup>

In the *Savitri Nataka*, the father, worried about the delay in getting his daughter Savitri married off at the right age laments, "A father who cannot marry off his daughter at the right time, a husband who abandons his wife during her pregnancy and the children who do not take care of their aged parents, all will have to bear insults and will be devoid of blessings." Appacha captures the woeful condition of the women poignantly in the words of Kavery when she says,

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<sup>35</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Subramanya Swami Nataka* in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998),35.

<sup>36</sup> Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 3.



There is no freedom written in the destiny of women! I took the form of Lopamudre with the blessings of Adinarayana. Then I was adopted by Lord Brahma who in turn gave me away to Kaveramuni on earth. Later, sage Agastya took interest in me and made me his wife without even considering my wishes. A woman's life sustains on the charity shown to her by others<sup>37</sup>.

Sujyoti too, referring to the sad story of Ahalya bemoans her own condition where Lord Indra forces her to marry him knowing that she is helpless.<sup>38</sup> The women characters in his plays seem to have limitations imposed on them by the *Manu Smriti* which gave out specific roles to women in particular during the period. *Manu Smriti* originated some time during 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, and it was well in vogue during 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The legal position of women, according to Manu, the earliest exponent of the law, was very bad. They were always dependant on somebody – on the father, the husband, or the son.<sup>39</sup>

Kancha Iliah also refers to the *Manu Smriti* while he examines the status of women in the early ages:

...a woman should, in her childhood be under the control of her father, in her youth under the control of her husband, if her husband is dead she should be under the control of her son.<sup>40</sup>

Though examples showing how women in general are oppressed, Appacha seems to be genuinely concerned and is trying to convey some sort of hope towards progress and freedom. This can be deduced by the very fact that all the women characters are given different shades of life : one a scheming daughter of a powerful sage, the other a devoted wife tricking the God of death to bring her husband back to life, the queen mother warning her daughter of the “improper” conduct of women in society, and Lavalali, the indomitable spouse. Still, one must remember that it is through the medium of these ‘fetishised, libidinised and commodified femininity’ that the plays draw up their conclusions. The women remain the all powerful governing instrument of all the plays -

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<sup>37</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Sri Kavery Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998) 46, 61.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid 81

<sup>39</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Calcutta: The Signet Press, August 1946), 91.

<sup>40</sup> Kancha Iliah, *God as a Political Philosopher: Buddha's Challenge to Brahmanism*, (Kolkata :Samya, 2004), 182.

sometimes feminist, sometimes hysteric, but nevertheless covertly being highly powerful. Thus, as Rita Felski explains,

... The figures of the feminist and the hysteric emerge in Finney's analysis as key symbols of the gender politics of modernity, apparently opposed yet closely related images that permeated the culture of the *fin de siècle*. Just as the feminist expressed a rebellious, emancipatory and outer directed response to the condition of female oppression, so she argues the hysteric exemplified a rejection of society that was passive, inner-directed and ultimately self-destructive.<sup>41</sup>

These ideas get articulated across the works of Appacha Kavi.

#### **b. SOCIAL COMMENTARY**

Other important features that are prominent in his plays are the influences of caste and class and also the intense social commentary delivered in satire. Humour is indeed a significant part of Appacha's plays. All his plays contain liberal doses of humour which is sometimes sarcastic and sometimes hilarious that lends an earthy touch to the plays making it easy for the common man to relate to. He covers a range of social issues like, bribe, rape, dowry, marriage and divorce, Government and corruption, the nobility of the Kshatriya dharma, the opportunistic nature of the Pattamas (Brahmins), the importance of education, the ill treatment of elders by the younger generation, and the unquestioning emulation of western culture. An in depth analysis of Appacha's plays gives a clear picture of the social condition of those days. Appacha has never missed an opportunity to openly criticize the people in power and the general public about their errant ways while delivering it in a quotidian manner, drenched in wry humour.

The texts used by Appacha for his plays are stories from scriptures. How then can one be sure that the instances mentioned in the plays are indeed adaptations from contemporary Kodava society? Time and again, playwrights and writers have used fiction as a medium in order to represent the non-fictional reality of the society. So also, Appacha's play texts seem to be strewn with clues that indicate the authenticity of the instances. The most important of these is the blind imitation of the western society by the Kodavas that seemed to be draining out their traditional values, transforming them into "modernized" individuals with western sensibilities. The authenticity of this can be

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<sup>41</sup>Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 3.

located in the period in which the plays are written. It is indeed around the turn of the century, with the British rule that westernization slowly crept into the sleepy little state of Kodagu.<sup>42</sup> Indications of this are given in Kavery Nambisan's fictional work, "*The Scent of Pepper*". The novel clearly depicts the social changes that were brought about after the advent of British rule.<sup>43</sup>

...These Coorgs laughed, talked and moved with the same precise confidence as their white superiors. They painted themselves, they flirted. The men took to trousers, well cut jackets, hats and bow ties, and looked good; but the women knew that the Kodava sari accentuated their beauty like nothing else.<sup>44</sup> The few who tried to wear frocks with short sleeves or no sleeves found that the stiff black hairs on hitherto unrevealed places weren't easy to hide. So they reverted to the sari.<sup>45</sup>

The process of modernization had perhaps already begun around the time that Appacha began writing. In his lifetime he bore witness to the changing scenario of Kodagu's social life. These testimonies he brought out time and again in his plays. In *Yayati*, he describes how Devayani and Sharmishtha shake hands when meeting each other like western women do. In Kodagu, women rarely greeted each other with a shake hand. The commentary on the changing social life of the Kodavas comes thereafter when the *sakhi* reflects, 'Look at these women! Shaking hands like men do! How many more such "new" acts would we get to witness I wonder! If a smart young fellow comes home, they immediately don their best outfits, boots and shoes and flash their shattering smiles saying, "How are you getting on, friend dear?" (In English)'<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Kavery Nambisan, *The Scent of Pepper* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2010) A note to the reader: Kodagu, as they called their land was settled by the British circa 1800, and brought extensively under coffee plantation. So valuable did the coffee trading become that the British deposed the reigning Haleri Raja and annexed Coorg- their anglicisation of the earlier name in 1834.

<sup>43</sup> Kavery Nambissan's '*Scent of Pepper*' is a novel first published in 1996 in which , the customs, culture and gradual transition of Kodava society to modernity through British influences are vividly portrayed. Most of the events mentioned in the novel are real, especially those during the freedom struggle. These have been corroborated from various authentic publications mentioned here in the bibliography. Further Kavery Nambisan in her foreword to the novel acknowledges the sources from where she collected the materials for her story. The novel is set in a period 1834to 1947(?) and this is almost the very same period when Appacha Kavi lived and composed his dramas. The excerpts from the novel included in this are paper only as a means to augment the picturisation of the Kodava societal set up of a bygone era.

<sup>44</sup> See Illustration XII, XIII

<sup>45</sup> Kavery Nambisan, *The Scent of Pepper* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2010), 47-48.

<sup>46</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Yayati Raja Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998) , 7-8.

Though Appacha uses a critical tone through that of the *sakhi*, he remains ambiguous on his stand on “proper” behavior of Kodava women. At this point it is necessary to note one important thing. He seems to be criticizing his women for liberal, permissive ways when he describes Sharmishtha and Devayani, and also it is the same case with Lavali and Savitri where the main protagonists and their female friends are covertly rebuked for talking back at their elders. It is interesting to note that while they are criticized for their overt ways, it is indeed these women who govern the flow of the play, as well as being successful in their schemes, as has been discussed earlier. However, on closer examination, we find that the women who ultimately taste victory in the end are of a different colouring. Savitri and Lavali are the *pativrata* wives, who will stand by their husbands through the various hardships. Yayati, fumbles in his ways and takes Sharmishtha as his mistress; the one act through which Devayani is punished for her evil scheming ways that toppled all her jealous efforts so far. Sharmishtha’s punishment for her “sin” of seducing the king comes in the form of her youngest son Puru having to bear the curse of his father by inheriting old age prematurely. Savitri, for all her boldness chooses a husband who carried with him the curse of untimely death; Lavali’s choice of her mate leads her to leave her royal house and elope, hiding from society. Thus, all the women characters in Appacha’s plays, go through a complete cycle.

1. Displaying the boldness and transgressing the boundaries of the “traditional notions of womanhood.”
2. Being punished for the same, in ways that make them realize their folly.
3. Works as the most significant weapon in the play, their “proper-ness” ultimately delivering success.

It is Savitri and Lavali’s *pativrata* dharma, of total devotion to their husbands that brings with it the resolution to the conflicts in the play; Devayani’s and Sharmishtha’s love for Yayati that makes him realize the uselessness of a life lived in lustful pleasure.

But there is a marked difference in the portrayal of Kavery because she seems to have been created in the form of the ideal woman. Kavery never transgressed any of the usual “conventions”. She, in the form of Lakshmi, is Vishnu’s devoted consort; she desires to become Lopamudre and to be beneficial to others on earth; after being adopted by Brahma and given away to sage Kavera as a reward for his penance she plays the role of a dutiful daughter till her father’s death. She plays the devoted wife to sage Agastya

and when he betrays her trust, she flows away as a river, finally fulfilling her dreams. On her route, she delivers justice to the Kodavas and “sanctifies” the land, bringing eternal peace and prosperity to Kodagu and the Kodavas. Thus, all in all, Kavery seems to be modelled on the “flawless” and “ideal” form of womanhood. Does it therefore imply that the Kavi was portraying through Kavery the “proper” conduct expected of women in the society, the non-conformity of which will lead to the “punishments” that his other female characters go through? This fact begs closer scrutiny as *Kavery Nataka* is the last play he composed, probably like his final message to the society. However one must indeed give room for the fact that his health and hearing began to deteriorate shortly thereafter. But Kavery, as he himself claims, was his masterpiece. If one takes this idea forward of Kavery being the ideal model, then the social life of Kodava women with the turn of the century indeed left much to be decided. In “The Scent of Pepper” one of the characters of Kavery Nambisan laments thus:

The Kodava women bobbed their hair and wore slacks, served tea with cream cakes and sandwiches and kept beautiful gardens. They sent their children to exclusive boarding schools in Bangalore and Ooty where they would be comfortable eating with a knife and fork, and would return with polished accents and a belief that social refinement was equal to achievement. ...Fools.<sup>47</sup>

Appacha too mentions the use of the fork and knife as a western influence that the Kodavas were imitating, in the name of gaining respectability in the society. He also mentions in his autobiography about affluent Kodava families sending their wards to English medium schools, not because they could afford it, but because the ability to use English in everyday conversations was considered to be a matter of prestige by the Kodavas.

With the critique of the boldness of women in his plays, Appacha is perhaps hinting at an apparent “permissiveness” on the part of the women towards the foreigners. When Devayani and Sharmishtha go for a swim without being accompanied by a trusted male, the *sakhi* comments on the impudence of the women, noting that it is a time when soldiers (the British army) wander around aplenty and the women are parading their

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<sup>47</sup> Kavery Nambisan, *The Scent of Pepper* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2010), 12.

beauty under a possible circumstance of the danger of violation.<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, there are many instances where Appacha insists on the need for women to be married at the appropriate age, probably expressing his disapproval of the permissive and open behaviour usually by women while extending their famous hospitality, which exists even today.<sup>49</sup> In the gazetteer of Kodagu, by G. Richter, written in the year 1870 he mentions,

At the unexpected arrival of a European visitor there is at once a great commotion amongst the fair Codagitis (Kodava women). Clean dresses are donned, ornaments put on and there is a running to and fro within the house.<sup>50</sup>

The need for women to be married at an early age also seems like a word of caution to parents to protect their daughters against violation. In the Subramanya play, an entire scene is developed around this issue and on prevalence of rape.<sup>51</sup> The scene describes how a *Puliyadi*<sup>52</sup> desires a servant girl and lies in wait to pounce on her at the right opportunity. The scene further explains how the *Puliyadi* was accused in a rape case too, but was acquitted by virtue of a flawed judicial system. The mention of rape and the flaws in controlling such cases is a direct attack at the government and its law enforcement system, pointing an accusing finger at the corruption and disorder widely prevalent in those times.

It must also be noted that Appacha has reserved entire three scenes in the fifth act in *Yayati* to paint a vivid picture of rampant corruption<sup>53</sup>. The first scene talks about the nature of governance in the absence of the king. There is extreme indiscipline and carelessness about life and the social system. He also makes a statement exclaiming how

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<sup>48</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Yayati Raja Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998), 9.

<sup>49</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Yayati Raja Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998), 57. The sakhī mentions this with regard to Sharmishtha, as she longs for Yayati's affections.

Haradas Appacha, *Subramanya Swami Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998) 39, Narada mentions with regard to Lavalī

Haradas Appacha, *Sri Savitri Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998), 12: King Ashwapati worries about his daughter.

<sup>50</sup> G. Richter, *Gazetteer of Coorg* (New Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2008), 124.

<sup>51</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Subramanya Swami Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998), 29.

<sup>52</sup> *Puliyadi* is a general derogatory term assigned to any person who is a habitual womanizer.

<sup>53</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Yayati Raja Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998), 95-105.

the country will go to ruins if it is run by corrupt officials. There is an exquisite description of the local toddy and its effect of intoxication. This is probably a take on the intoxication induced by physical pleasures, of which Yayati is the great example. Intoxication implies loss of spirituality and humanity which is a dangerous trend. Appacha is warning the people of Kodagu against this malady, not to get intoxicated by the pleasures offered by western cultural values that the citizens are imitating in the name of “refinement”.

The second scene describes the system of bribe that was rampant in the society. In the name of tax, levied for inexplicable things and unheard of places, the authorities blindly cheated and looted the locals. With many forms of taxes slapped on to the poor village folk they were being fleeced out of whatever minor profits they could eke out from agriculture. When the locals are unable to pay the tax, they extract bribe which, in the story of Yayati, the manager uses for his daughter’s wedding celebrations. The problem of bribe has already been described earlier. When Yayati’s close friend threatens to disclose the secret of the clandestine marriage with Sharmishtha, Yayati silences him with a bribe of a *Pommaale* (gold chain). Sharmishtha too, bribes him with a diamond chain to keep mum about the secret affair.<sup>54</sup> The third scene is a complete rendering of a song about corruption that Appacha had composed earlier, which proposes that one should never employ untrustworthy people in the government. His own experience as a clerk mentioned in his autobiography wherein he narrowly escapes some corruption charges also serves as a backdrop to his inclusion of the criticism of the rampant corruption in the society.<sup>55</sup>

It is impossible to neglect the issues on class and caste between the Brahmins and the Kodavas that Appacha has described in almost all his plays. As mentioned earlier, In Savitri, Appacha presents a sarcastic critique on “modernized” Brahmins and their marriage rites.<sup>56</sup> The Brahmins, earlier self sufficient in their prayers and rituals, today hold jobs in offices and will not step out without their “shoes, boots and trousers”.

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<sup>54</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Yayati Raja Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998), 70-71.

<sup>55</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Atmcharitre*, a condensed version of his autobiography, quoted in I.M.Muthanna *Kodagina Harada sa Appacca kaviya Sri Ka ve ri na taka* (India:s.n, 1967)

<sup>56</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Sri Savitri Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998), 16-17.

Moreover, they get their daughters married to rich old men who spoil them with luxury, beyond limits. But the biggest critique of course comes in the Kavery Nataka, where sage Agastya curses the Brahmins and banishes them to the level of <sup>57</sup>*Ammakodavas*, stripped of their duties and rights as Brahmins.<sup>58</sup> He paints a picture of lazy, opportunistic Brahmins who regard all other classes as insignificant and moreover, cheating them through their acquired hegemony of Vedic “scriptures” to fleece the poor of their meager savings all in the name of God. There is an interesting elaboration on the clever ploy of the Brahmins where they purposefully modify names of Hindu Gods to tribal names, with a view that no one other than the Brahmins are allowed the luxury of calling out the names of Gods. For example, the local name ‘Gosai’ instead of ‘Govinda’, ‘Chinda’ for ‘Shiva’, and ‘Koma’ instead of ‘Rama’.

Here, one is reminded of the story of Shambuk, the Shudra who was killed by Lord Rama, for ‘illegally’ reciting the Vedas.

It is found in the last book of the epic *Uttara Kanda* which is a later addition to Ramayana as it contains many later social issues like casteism, Sita's abandonment etc. After Lord Rama returns to Ayodhya and is crowned the king of Ayodhya, the death of a child occurs in the kingdom. He is told that calamities such as this occur when Dharma is not followed in a kingdom. Rama tries to find out the reason and comes to know that a person of the Shudra jati, called Shambuka is performing penance which he is strictly not supposed to do according to the Varna system. He is executed, by beheading, personally by Rama.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Nadikerianda Chinnappa, *Pattole Palame: Kodava Culture- Folksongs and Traditions*, trans. Boverianda Nanjamma and Chinnappa (New Delhi: Rupa & Co, 2003), xxxiv : It is believed that Amma Kodavas are the descendants of a Brahmin girl and a Kodava man. According to this belief, centuries ago, a young woman from the family of a Brahmin called Tayakat Tambiran in Malayala (Kerala) attained puberty before she could be married. So she was blindfolded and left in the forest. She happened to reach Kodagu where she met a Kodava man who befriended her and took her into his home. Their offsprings were teetotalers and vegetarians like their mother. They are called Amma Kodavas. (Names of males among them have the suffix ‘Amma’, meaning mother, implying that they follow the mother’s customs. However, since ‘Amma’ meant father in old Kannada, this could also signify that their paternal ancestor was a Kodava.) The progeny of their children, whether boys or girls, remained Amma Kodavas even if they married Kodavas. It is said that intermarriage with Kodavas increased their numbers. Although their customs were alike, Kodavas and Amma Kodavas were looked upon as distinct communities after the end of the rule of the Lingayat kings, in the early part of the nineteenth century.

<sup>58</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Sri Kavery Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998), 104-108, 94-97.

<sup>59</sup> Valmiki Ramayana, Uttara Kanda, Sarga 67, Verse 4, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/rys/rys7067.htm>, (accessed on 1 June 2011)



This also finds consonance in the ideas of Dr. Ambedkar who provided a subaltern perspective to see clearly through the chameleon of Indian caste-ridden social set-up deceptively appearing in crimson colors and also find ways to guard the interests of the Dalits.<sup>60</sup> While years later, Ambedkar strove for a casteless, classfree society, Appacha had already foreseen the problems brought about by caste discriminations and also had forewarned about the consequent social tensions. Appacha, speaking from a subaltern point of view openly criticizes the Brahmins for their mean ways of belittling the locals and cheating them.

### c. CLOWNING AND THE CARNIVALESQUE

The element of humour that runs through all of Appacha's plays is quite interesting. Comic relief is provided time and again when the plot gets serious. The plays are littered with comic elements that would have brought a smile to many a face in his audience. In the *Yayati Nataka*, the Raja's friend, the *Mitra*, plays the role of a jester, clowning about and lightening the script. His witty insights on everyday life are catchy and thought provoking, delivered in a humorous fashion.<sup>61</sup> He goes hunting with the King in the forest; when a shot is fired, scared for his own life, he clammers up a tree and misses his step and falls off clumsily. Limping about, he explains how he suffers at the hands of his wife, complaining that she is lazy and proud and makes him do all the housework. In another situation, a villager claims that he has eleven daughters whose husbands while visiting him would bring whisky and mutton whereas Yayati has got only sons who would have to carry mutton/whisky to their in laws' houses. In the *Subramanya Nataka*, the entire scene devoted to the courting of Subramanya and Lavali, is another example of Appacha's witty humour. Subramanya appears in the form of an old man, lusting after Lavali as she cunningly tries to ward him off. Subramanya is persistent as he tries one trick after the other to annoy Lavali.<sup>62</sup> His antics and dialogues render the whole scene light and hilarious.

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<sup>60</sup> Dr. Ronaki Ram, *Dr. Ambedkar and Nationalism*, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011, [www.ambedkar.org/News/-ambedkarandnationalism.html](http://www.ambedkar.org/News/-ambedkarandnationalism.html) (accessed 10 May 2011)

<sup>61</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Yayati Raja Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998), 18-19.

<sup>62</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Subramanya Swami Nataka*, in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998), 45-67

The purpose of using comedy usually, apart from lightening the heaviness that a serious plot brings about, is social criticism. When the main characters openly indulge in social criticism, it could cause complications with the authorities and the author and directors are all held responsible. This is precisely the license that comic characters enjoy. As Mikhail Bakhtin explains in *Rabelais and his World*,

...the basis of laughter which gives form to carnival rituals frees them completely from all religious and ecclesiastic dogmatism, from all mysticism and piety. They are also completely deprived of the character of magic and power; they do not command nor do they ask for anything. All these forms are systematically placed outside the church and religiosity. They belong to an entirely different sphere.<sup>63</sup>

It is in this sphere that Appacha too locates his comic characters, openly lashing out against the changing social values of the Kodava social set up, delivering a strong social commentary through the safe haven that the realm of the comic offers. A site that is expected to later initiate discussions and negotiations, the comic offers a carnivalesque platform in which everyone can participate.

During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit.<sup>64</sup>

It is in this free, universal space that Appacha releases his commentary, to initiate discussion.

In his criticism of the high handedness of the authorities or the “improper” ways in which the kings and sages behave, there is the strong hint at the degradation affecting the pedestal of power. He does this in an attempt to deliberately simplify the superior characters to everyday situations in life of the simple village folk. Yayati becomes a village head, lord Kumaraswamy becomes a simple man, hopelessly in love, Lord Indra is a lustful “womanizer” etc. As Bakhtin says,

Degradation and debasement of the higher do not have a formal and relative character in grotesque realism. Degradation here means coming down to earth, the contact with earth

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<sup>63</sup> Mikhail Mikhaïlovich Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (Bloomington:Indiana University Press, 1984), 7.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

as an element that swallows up and gives birth at the same time. To degrade is to bury, to sow, and to kill simultaneously, in order to bring forth something more and better.<sup>65</sup>

It is indeed the purpose of satire to bring forth something new and useful after deliberating on the fodder that the comic engages the spectators in. And this is also what Appacha aims at doing - an exhibition of the social conditions that leads to a betterment of the society.

How were these scenes performed? There is no way to reconstruct the performance as it was first performed since there is little documentary evidence. It must be noted that all of Appacha's plays are introduced by the *Sutradhar*, a concept that has been elaborated in detail in Bharata's *Natyashastra*<sup>66</sup>. However, Appacha's narrator seems to be modeled more on the idea of the '*Sthapaka*'.

... There should enter one *Sthapaka*, who should resemble the *Sutradhara* in every respect. He sings a *cari* song in praise of Gods and Brahmins in sweet and good phrases, of different *bhavas* and *rasas* and propitiating the audience according to the rule and procedure, mentions the play and the story. He should introduce the story in a divine manner if it is related to Gods and in a worldly manner if it relates to human beings, and again in a worldly manner if it is a mixed one, leading to the *mukha* or the *bija* (opening of the story). After this the *Sthapaka* should exit.<sup>67</sup>

The *Sthapaka* fits the role of the narrator in Appacha's plays, singing verses and explaining the play while referring to contemporary situations too. It is possible that Appacha Kavi while in the company of Brahmin scholars at Bhagamandala came across several important Sanskrit plays by Kalidasa like *Raghuvamsa*, *Meghasandesh*, *Shakuntalam* etc. In these Sanskrit plays characters like *Maddavya* in *Shakuntalam*, *Manavaka* in *Vikramorvasheeyam*, *Gautama* in *Malavikagnimitram* etc are shining examples of *Vidooshaka*. On closer examination, one would see that Appacha's comic

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<sup>65</sup> Mikhail Mikhaïlovich Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 21.

<sup>66</sup> The term sutradhar literally translates as 'the one who holds the threads.' In classical Sanskrit theatre, the sutradhar is a central figure who combines various generic elements to create a coherent narrative by acting as a producer, a narrator, a director, and even a manipulator of the performance.

<sup>67</sup> Adya Rangacharya: *The Natyashastra* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd., 1996), 51.

characters resemble the character sketch for comic actors laid out by Bharata. In the *Natyashastra* he says,

... *hasya* is the *sthayi bhava* of *hasya*-laughter. Laughter is stimulated by disfigurement of dress, decoration, impudence, greediness, roguery, incoherent speech, deformed appearance, mistakes etc. It is expressed by the *anubhavas* like expanded (or blown)lips, nose, cheeks and wide staring and contracted eyes, sweating or red face and holding one's side etc. The *vyabhicari bhavas* are dissimulation, laziness, lassitude, sleepiness, sleep, awakening (from sleep) etc.<sup>68</sup>

Appacha's characters have been so vividly described through their dialogues that one gets a sense of their form. They seem to soon break into one or more of the characteristics that Bharata mentions.

Persons like dwarfs, dull witted ones, the hump-backed, the deformed, those with ugly faces or dull eyes or one eyed, fat, flat nosed and of evil nature etc. should be given the role of slaves.<sup>69</sup>

Let us examine some of Appcha's comic characters.

The *Natyashastra* says,

A menial servant should be one who is quarrelsome, talkative, ugly, a drug addict and an expert at knowing who is to be respected and who not.<sup>70</sup>

While the *Sakhi* in *Subramanya Nataka* is manipulative and cunning, and receives bribe for keeping the divine love affair a secret, the one in *Yayati Nataka*, while pally with the female protagonists, openly criticizes them behind their backs. In *Kavery Nataka*, there is the old lady who encounters Mohini on her way to seduce the demons at the "Amritmanthan". She is old and obese which she herself mentions and offers a loud commentary on the bold ways of women.

About characters of secondary importance or lesser, the *Natyashastra* says '...a *Vita* (companion of courtesans and pleasure-loving princes) should have all the qualities of a *sutradhara* but also be an expert in dealing with courtesans, a man of sweet tongue, glib talk and eloquence. A jester should be dwarfish, possess big (protruding) teeth, hunch

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid 57

<sup>69</sup> Adya Rangacharya: *The Natyashastra* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd., 1996), 337.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid 339.

backed, bald headed and tawny eyed. He should entertain the audience by imitating people and their manner(-ism)s. He should be freely mixing with women and be ready-witted.' So also, in *Yayati Nataka*, the king's friend cracks jokes about his wife, is old and not able-bodied, doesn't enjoy bathing, is pot bellied and coaxes Yayati to approach the women while also reprimanding Yayati for secretly wedding Sharmishtha. Like the *sakhi* in *Subramanya Nataka*, he also receives bribe from both parties to keep the illegal wedding a secret.

Bakhtin describes gluttony and grotesque as an important tool in the realm of the comic.

... the grotesque images preserve their peculiar nature, entirely different from ready-made completed beings. They remain ambivalent and contradictory; they are ugly, monstrous, hideous from the point of view of "classic" aesthetics, that is, the aesthetics of the ready-made and the completed.<sup>71</sup>

... eating and drinking are one of the most significant manifestations of the grotesque body, the distinctive character of this body is its open unfinished nature, its interaction with the world. These traits are most fully and concretely revealed in the act of eating; the body transgresses here its own limits: it swallows, devours, rends the world apart, is enriched and grows at the world's expense.<sup>72</sup>

The characters that exemplify these characteristics in Appacha's plays are:

1. The *Kembatti*, or the demon of the *Kavery Nataka*, who paints an eerie picture as he mentions the pleasure he gets out of eating human flesh.
2. The *Puliyadi* from the *Subramanya Nataka* a pot bellied, obese, fat, old man that lusts after younger women, has a snotty nose and dirty eyes, bribes and amuses himself in the pleasures of toddy.
3. The *Mitra* from *Savitri Nataka*, another pot bellied, manipulative character of weak body but indulges himself in all kinds of food and is perpetually hungry.

These characters truly are the substance of Bakhtin's descriptions of the grotesque. While Appacha seems to borrow from the ideas of Bharata and Bakhtin, one

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<sup>71</sup> Mikhail Mikhaïlovich Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (Bloomington:Indiana University Press, 1984), 25.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid 281

must also not ignore the influence of the *Bodnammepaattu*, a folk form of Kodagu, which is performed in the carnivalesque style at the “*Bodnamme*” festival during which the performers dressed in various costumes perform what is called the “*Bodokali*”. After harvest, the performers go singing from house to house, making satirical performances. It is complete with acting, music, drums and a chorus using oil lamps and torches during the performances at night. The villagers sit all around, listening to the performers cracking vulgar, obscene jokes, creating a satire on the dominant class or the ruler they despise, all in the name of God, as an excuse. Because of their obvious sensuous character and their strong element of play, these carnival images closely resemble certain artistic forms, namely the “spectacle”. Appacha would have been inspired by the “spectacle” to employ these forms to depict the comic in its place.

The above analysis of Haradas Appacha’s life and works provide an in-depth insight about his ideas and concepts that he weaved very carefully into his plays. The inclusion of important facts such as changing social tradition, the condition of women and the prevalence of social evils and corruption have been very intricately carved into the many layers of his script. The sub-text that runs parallel with the main plot comes across very clearly. Appacha’s purpose of including these sub-texts must have been to kindle the audience’s imagination, leaving them with thought provoking instances that urge them to sit up and think. Whether the purpose was served requires a sociological study, but the messages he wanted to convey have been expressed very beautifully in his plays.

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## ***CHAPTER II***

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### ***THEATRE AND NATIONALISM***

## THEATRE AND NATIONALISM

To situate a play or a playwright in a political and sociological context necessitates an enquiry into the sociopolitical conditions of the period, in order to provide clues as to the influences and circumstances that colored the content and style of playwriting. This chapter aims to locate Haradas Appacha in the sociopolitical conditions of the period in an attempt to find probable relevant connections that might have inspired his playwriting.

### A CRITICAL JUNCTURE

Haradas Appacha's period happens to be a highly critical one in Indian history. The period between 1865 and 1944 almost envelops the entire era of nationalism that the country witnessed with enthusiasm. As mentioned earlier,

Nationalism is a political ideology that involves a strong identification of a group of individuals with a political entity defined in national terms, i.e. a nation. In the 'modernist' image of the nation, it is nationalism that creates national identity. It is also used to describe a movement to establish or protect a 'homeland' (usually an autonomous state) for an ethnic group. Nationalism also emphasizes collective identity - a 'people' must be autonomous, united, and express a single national culture.<sup>73</sup>

From the annexation of Kodagu by the British in 1834 to the point of Indian independence in 1947, Haradas Appacha was an observer of the turbulent events that unfolded in Indian history in the colonial period. He was born into a country that was already seething with the ideas of nationalism and freedom, which later got catapulted into a full scale movement that ultimately secured independence for the country. So, one would naturally expect a writer of his caliber to contribute substantially to the nationalist movement as did many playwrights of Karnataka and elsewhere during that time. This forces us to question whether Appacha with his literary contributions during the national movement was a passive observer or an active revolutionary.

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<sup>73</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1993), 71, <http://www.psa.ac.uk/cps/2002/fowler.pdf> (accessed 17 June 2011)



It is indeed a daunting task to locate exactly the year or date or event that sparked the freedom movement in India. As is clear from history books, many regional and linguistic groups were fighting against the Muslims or the Mughal incursions from about 200 years before independence. The French and the British, who happened to be here for trade purposes intervened in the situation only after the local chieftains sought their help. As I.M Muthanna writes in his “*Karnataka History, Administration and Culture*”,

In the process of intervening or taking sides, the British obviously succeeded in establishing their supremacy over the country...But what one is apt to forget is that none of those wars or skirmishes was started by the British.<sup>74</sup>

However, the fact remains that the land was eventually ruled by the British, which later on led to the insurgence of nationalist ideals and subsequent independence from the colonial rule. Therefore it can be surmised that within colonialism lay the seeds of nationalism as Albert Memmi rightly describes in his *The Coloniser and the Colonised*.

Although Memmi is revered for having shown that colonial rule contains within itself the seeds of nationalist (often violent) revolt, the book’s greater insight lies in the exposition of how colonialism denies humanity both to those who inflict and those who suffer it.<sup>75</sup>

The pain of the colonized, however, usually regarded as the more painful of the two rendered many literary and cultural movements that spearheaded the national movement in the country.

Appacha’s name has not appeared as a prominent personality in the national scenario as having any importance. In fact, it is rather deplorable that his name does not appear anywhere in a reading of Indian literary or cultural history. Even the famous “Oxford Companion to Indian Theatre” does not have any mention of the great playwright Kodagu has ever produced. While it is important to explore the reasons for the absence of the same, what becomes quite evident is that Haradas Appacha did not feature in the long list of names that adorned the halls of fame of the Indian nationalist movement. ✓

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<sup>74</sup> I.M. Muthanna, *Karnataka History Administration and Culture*, (Bangalore: s.n. 1977), 388.

<sup>75</sup> Patrick Chabal, (Untitled Review) in *Development in Practice*, Volume 14, Number 5, August 2004, 71 [www.jstor.com](http://www.jstor.com), (accessed 30 May 2011)

## SUB- NATIONALISM

The idea of “sub-nationalism” would seem to be of help in resolving this issue. First coined by Professor Chandrashekhar in a discourse on G.S. Shivarudrappa’s opinion on sub-nationalism, he explains,

In general, all literature produced in our country can be called “national literature”. The nation has attained its identity by virtue of its many facets described by the nation’s poets and writers. But, a regional literature that has a national essence imbibed in it, and at the same time is soaked in its regional atmosphere and ethnic impressions can be termed as being ‘sub-national’ literature, and the ideas it punctuates is known as sub-nationalism.<sup>76</sup>

Sub-nationalism thus can be treated as the actual nationalism in its true spirit. Earlier, only these existed in the Indian sub continent. Indian nationalism is a relatively modern construct and derives its strength only from these nationalisms. Scholars have discussed sub-nationalism in the context of nationalism in terms of nationalism as a response to the colonial rule. For the first time, colonialism brought the whole nation together and as a result, nationalism’s critique of colonialism emerged. But the emergence of national identity in colonialism was coeval with the emergence of various regional identities. These regional identities were not seen as being antagonistic to the nationalist ideal, but were seen as complementary to it. A lot of playwrights across the country worked to enthuse ideals of independence and freedom in the minds of the people. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the formation of the Indian National Congress and the leadership of stalwarts like Dadabai Nauroji, Gopalakrishna Gokhale and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, there occurred a much awaited revival of the national spirit that had died down after the last uprising against the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857. With huge amounts of literature being produced, Kannada literature too flourished, giving special focus and attention to the social, economic and political conditions of the state even with tough competition from Marathi and English literature. Under the colonial rule, by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, major cities of Karnataka like Mysore, Bangalore, Dharwad, Belgaum, Mangalore and Madikeri had provisions of higher education. Even though the “Central College” was established in Bangalore in 1864, Karnataka did not have a university of its own till 1916 with the establishment of Mysore university and then in 1922 with the Karnataka college in Dharwad. Thus with the influence of English education system and

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<sup>76</sup> S. Chandrashekhar, *Sahitya Mathu Charitre*, (Tiptur: Namma Prakashana, 1999), 21.

the encouragement by the Mysore rajas, during the turn of the century, Kannada literature and more importantly, Kannada theatre saw considerable development.<sup>77</sup> M.L. Shrikantesh Gowda, Basavappa Shastri, M.S. Puttanna and S.G. Narasimhachar were some of the writers that spearheaded the literary drive in Karnataka. The “*Bharata Kalathejaka Sangeeta Samaja*” was established in Dharwad in 1905 and in 1909 the “Amateur Dramatic Association” was established in Bangalore. Writers like Kailasam, influenced by the travelling company theatres composing plays like “*Tollugatte*” and also Huyilugola Narayanarai with his “*Stree Dharma Rahasya*” touched the social nerve of Karnataka. Both these plays questioned the strong influence of the British on Indian minds and their gradual anglicisation in the process. Some of the other plays that were composed in this period had *puranas* as their central theme. These were Samsa’s “*Suguna Gambhira*” (1922) and B.M. Shrikantayya’s “*Gadayuddha Natakam*”(1926) and “*Ashwathaman*” (1926).<sup>78</sup> It must be noted that the stories from *puranas* and history were used as an inspiration from and for the rising national movement, by bringing down the great characters from their epochal pedestal into the everyday lives of the people, nudging them to not disregard their age old traditions and customs due to foreign influences. Here one sees a resemblance to the ideas purported by Appacha in his works. Is it safe then to hypothesize that Appacha, through his works had well contributed to the freedom movement?

On the unification of the nation, there is a poem by the great poet Subramanya Bharatiyar:

In the beautiful moonlight of the river Sindhu  
 Along with beautiful girls of Kerala  
 Then come singing beautiful Telugu songs

The above lines help the inclusive nationalistic spirit by treating the regional identities as parts of a whole. Likewise in Karnataka, ‘Rashtrakavi’ Kuvempu, in his *Naadageethe* sings,

*Jaya Bharata jananiya tanu jaathe*  
*Jaya hai Karnataka maathe*

Thus bringing forth the brilliant of India as a mother and Karnataka as her daughter.

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<sup>77</sup> K. Marulasiddappa, *Adhunika Kannada Nataka* (Bangalore: Ankita Pustaka, 2009), 102.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid* 110

B.M. Shri's 'Bharata Maate', 'Kannada Thaay Nota' and Bendre's 'Narabali', 'Makkalivarenamma' are other examples that are in praise of Mother India and Mother Karnataka, that is both national and sub-national.<sup>79</sup>

Through these different metaphors poets see regional identity as being complementary to national identity and such formulations and expressions of regional identity is different from militant regional identities that emerged in later periods when antagonism emerged occasionally between regional development and national development. Thus, regionalism which is friendly to nationalism can be called sub-nationalism. In Karnataka, during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, both poets and scholars were not only trying to re-imagine a new India, but they were also trying to re-imagine a new Karnataka. A seamless continuity was assumed between the two identities. However, Kodagu regional identity was not in perfect agreement with Karnataka nationalism. Then, how did Appacha relate himself to India's nationalism and to Karnataka's sub-nationalism? This question necessitates an enquiry into the role of Kodagu in the national movement, which for our purposes, may be referred to as 'sub-sub nationalism'. The term holds good as it looks at the nationalist movement in Kodagu, within Karnataka which we have already discussed as sub-nationalism. This penetration into a deeper layer of the organization engages its discussion with the sub-national (Karnataka) and the national (India). In the larger framework of Indian nationalism, how does Kodagu negotiate its presence with the regional nationalism in Karnataka and a sub-regional nationalism, within Kodagu itself?

### **KODAGU'S ROLE AND HARADAS APPACHA**

The origins of the Kodavas are still being debated upon but what is clear from historical inscriptions available after the ninth and tenth centuries is that Kodagu was never ruled by its own people. 'The small region fell under the rule of several south Indian dynasties like Gangas, Pandyas, Cholas, Kadambas, Chengalvas and Hoysalas. After the fall of Hoysala rule in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Kodagu came under the Vijayanagara enterprise. Subsequently Kodagu was ruled by petty local chieftains called 'Nayakas' till

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<sup>79</sup> S. Chandrashekhar, *Sahitya Mathu Charitre*, (Tiptur: Namma Prakashana, 1999), 23.

the advent of the Lingayat rajas.’<sup>80</sup> After a very turbulent and complicated history, Chikka Veera Rajendra, the last king of Kodagu was deposed and the region was subsequently annexed by the British in 1834.

The British in Kodagu is a very interesting study since Kodagu was one of the few territories that welcomed the British rule. This was because of the usual smart tactic the British used i.e. to claim that the rulers were ‘despotic, debauched, repressive and inefficient’<sup>81</sup>. Moreover, Chikka Veera Rajendra, the last king who ruled over Kodagu, alienated himself from the Dewans and ministers as a result of which the agitated ministers entrusted the White Man to depose the unpopular raja. Under the British rule, the citizens of Kodagu experienced a new taste of liberty and freedom that was impossible during the reign of the despotic king.

The British officers noticed that the people were quite appreciative of the changed order and found them to be keen on improving their standard of living.<sup>82</sup>

With such new found independence, Kodavas looked upon the British as their saviours. The affiliation was so strong that the Kodavas even came forward to fight for the British against the Sepoy Mutiny, which had engulfed the northern parts of the country.<sup>83</sup> This demonstration of loyalty was recognized and Mark Cubbon, the Chief Commissioner of Mysore and Coorg, issued a notification in February 1861 exempting the Kodavas from the Disarming Act which continued even after independence whereby Kodavas and some other communities in Kodagu who owned land since the time of the rajas were exempted from section 3 and 4 of the Indian Arms Act of 1959.

In such a condition of loyalty to the British, when the idea of nationalism simmered throughout the nation, Kodagu had an ambiguous stand. On one hand was the affinity to the White Man who had “raised” them from their repressed living conditions, and on the other was an idea of a united democratic nation, ruled by the citizens of India with no obligation to any foreign force. It was indeed a tough choice to make. While they

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<sup>80</sup> P.T. Bopanna, *Rise and Fall of the Coorg Stage: Kodagu's Loss, Karnataka's Gain*, (Bangalore: Rolling Stone Publications, 2009), 55.

<sup>81</sup> C.P. Belliappa, *Nuggets from Coorg History*, (New Delhi: Rupa & Co.,2008), 127.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid 125

<sup>83</sup> Ibid 129

sided with the British to gain independence from the oppressive regime of the Haleri rajas, the interjection of Nationalism plunged the people of Kodagu into a state of dilemma. Thus Kodagu's ambivalent role in the freedom movement is a very interesting study.

Of course there were a large number of people in Kodagu who were in support of the idea of nationalism. For most of them, it was not just the affiliation towards the British that raised doubts in their minds, but it was also the results of nationalism that they feared most. Nationalism, under the leadership of Gandhi, proposed a united nation where everyone was *equal*. Gandhi stressed on non-violence, religious and ethnic equality and brotherhood, as well as an active rejection of caste-based discrimination and untouchability for the new nation. This was, in a sense, unacceptable to majority of the Kodavas who had their full faith in the ancient texts which bound them to the royal Kshatriya blood.

In the *Scent of Pepper*, on Gandhi's visit to Kodagu, Nanji, the grand matriarch says,

... It was honorable to be born a Kodava. Now here was Gandhiji who said that all were equal, and actually encouraged the intermingling of castes. How could anyone be equal to a Kodava or a Kodava be equal to anyone else? What would happen to their race, already sullied by the wicked Haleri rajas? As if making such stupid statements was not enough, Gandhiji called the polayas 'Harijans', ate and slept and lived with them.<sup>84</sup>

Thus it becomes clear how a section of the population of Kodagu feared the "disastrous" results that nationalism could bring about. To understand how Appacha functioned as a playwright in such a critical period in history, one must look not only at his works that might reflect a nationalistic flavor but also at the historical and socio-political conditions and 'events' that he was being associated with. In all his four works, the dominant themes are: an address of modernity as a result of the advent of western democratic ideas like social reforms, equality of sexes, scientific and technological progress, opposition to superstitions and conventions, a provision of a historical backdrop to the Kodava race, an emphasis on the dangers of forgetting cultural and ethnic values.

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<sup>84</sup> Kavery Nambisan, *The Scent of Pepper* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2010), 169

While the underlying intense social criticism might be regarded as a hint at nationalism, there does not seem to be many traces of an openly strong feeling of nationalism that he wished the people of Kodagu to imbibe.

Delving into the circumstances in which Appacha writes, with Kodagu giving an ambiguous stand on nationalism, it seems that the playwright found it difficult to express his ideals on nationalism, if he had any. In contrast, if he was opposed to the idea of India as a unitary free nation, even that does not seem to be evident in his works. Looking at a contemporary issue, in Manipur, with the insurgency still a persistent social problem, playwrights like Kanhailal for example, spoke strongly on the issue of nationalism.

Through his performances, Kanhailal speaks against the cultural and political colonization of Manipur, that of the dominating, ruling Vaishanva class on one hand, and of the Indian represented by the central government on the other. Ethnicity in his theatre gives rise to the burning question of preserving the ethnic and regional identity and freedom while expressing solidarity with the struggles taking place elsewhere in the world, as for example, when he speaks against oppression in Africa.<sup>85</sup>

Even Kuvempu, the great poet of Karnataka, who was opposed to caste system, scriptures, superstitions, astrology, vilification of women, believed in social equality, truth etc., while at the same time, he also truly believed in spiritual values. He rejected Brahmanical superstitions and took to Upanishads for spiritual guidance and was influenced by the rationalistic spirituality of great men like Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Swami Vivekananda too believed in progress, scientific vision and western psychology while at the same time he extensively popularized India's spiritual heritage. He impressed that for a country with a very great historical past, the present has fallen into a deplorable condition. Therefore there is a need to bolster it up with western science and technology, rationalism etc. Incidentally this is the image of India produced by the west: a glorious India, fallen on interregnum and then revived later during the colonial age. This coloured the views of all the reformers of the period like Dayanand Saraswati, Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Vivekananda and so on. Even Subramanya Bharati, an important freedom fighter and an iconoclastic reformer from Tamil Nadu,

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<sup>85</sup> Kamallesh Datta Tripathi, *Traditional Sanskrit Theatre and Ethnicity in Modern Indian Theatre* in H.S. Shivaprakash, ed., *Theatre Business and Management of Men: Indian Theatre in 2000* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2011), 78.

rebelled against the binding nature of convention. Once on his visit to Benaras he witnessed the undue exploitation of the locals by the Brahmins which angered him and prompted him to burn his sacred thread after which he never wore it. Although born into an orthodox Brahmin family, he gave up his own caste identity.<sup>86</sup>

Thus in all these great names that line the annals of history, one finds resemblances with the persona of Appacha that we have established so far. He was caught, almost a hundred years ago, like Kanhailal today, in the same confusing situation of the nation versus the state, and like Kuvempu, Vivekananda and Subramanya Bharati, reflected upon the conflict between modernization and tradition. But, what remains true is that while all these other names catapulted to fame, Haradas Appacha whose literary output does not seem to give him much credit for any nationalistic fervor as it did in the case of the other stalwarts, instead vanished into the silent pages of history, unknown to the realm of contemporary theatre and performance. The reasons for this have to be explored.

So why did Appacha not voice his opinions even though he was equipped quite strongly with the might of his literary talent? Only an ethnological and detailed cultural anthropological analysis of the general disposition of the Kodavas would reveal complete meaningful answers to this question but is currently beyond the scope of this study. In an excerpt from an article written by Hilton Brown, ICS, in Blackwood's Magazine titled "*The Astonishing Land of Coorg*" published in November 1922, he mentions a statement that could provoke controversy. Brown was the district magistrate in Coorg in the 1920's. He writes,

There is just one disconcerting feature about the Coorgs- their ready willingness to be dominated by the outsider. If an Apparanda or a Kodandera or a Nadikerianda or Biddanda or any other of the fine old Coorg families should chance to read this, he will

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<sup>86</sup> It is a famous anecdote that when he was made the court poet of the king of Tanjore, when the king was taking a procession out on the streets of Tanjore, he was reading to his disciples, a revolutionary poem by Shelly, *Ode to the West Wind*. The king wanted the court poet to join the procession. But he said, "To me, Shelly is more important than the king's procession." The king fired him. But he was a great devotee of lord Krishna and worshipped him till his last days.



probably buckle on his *odikatti*, his war-knife, and set out for my blood. For the Coorg's profession is all to the contrary but the fact remains.<sup>87</sup>

While one could take this as an outsider's point of view, i.e. that of the colonizer, it is interesting to note that some Kodavas too echoed these sentiments. Dr. I.M. Muthanna, for example, an extremely prolific writer, having published his works in English, Kannada as well as Kodavattakk, also seems to echo Brown's sentiment, hinting that India fared comparatively well under the English rule. His anglophile sentiments are reflected in his work "*Karnataka History and Culture and Administration*", where he writes,

...no other country other than Great Britain could tolerate and accommodate seditionists and law-breakers of India in those days in England and a Gandhi in South Africa, and none other than the British could stand-by and encourage such staunch pioneer fighters for the country's freedom like Octavian Hume, Mrs. Annie Besant, B.G.Tilak and again a Gandhi in India, and thus train a band of dedicated (and a lot more opportunistic) people to make the country what it is today.<sup>88</sup>

While he establishes the supremacy of the British rule as being beneficial to the country, elsewhere he echoes in harmony a Longmans' publication of 1915, quoted by Lala Lajpat Rai,

... The railways, the telegraphs, the industrial projects and factories speak in unmistakable terms that the Europeans are far superior... The wonderfully complex machine of their administration.. the dramas of Shakespeare, the poems of Milton and the writings of Bacon attest the intellectual eminence of these ruling people. The perseverance, courage and self sacrifice of Englishmen excite feelings of respect and admiration in our minds. What wonder is it then that in their company we feel ourselves conquered and humiliated?<sup>89</sup>

Instead of launching into a critique by decrying the westerners and trying to derecognize their achievements even in the field of culture and literature, I.M. Muthanna's intention seems to be to inspire the countrymen to perform and produce more

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<sup>87</sup> P.T. Bopanna, *Rise and Fall of the Coorg Stage: Kodagu's Loss, Karnataka's Gain*, (Bangalore: Rolling Stone Publications, 2009), Foreword

<sup>88</sup> I.M. Muthanna, *Karnataka History Administration and Culture*, (Bangalore: s.n. 1977), xi.

<sup>89</sup> I.M. Muthanna, *Karnataka History Administration and Culture*, (Bangalore: s.n. 1977), xvi

outputs in all walks of life and in the process, he tries to get across the point that the British rule only brought more good to the country than bad.

I said in my publication of 1969 that if the British had not come in those days to unite or unify our utterly chaotic country of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and check the flow of the Hindu blood as a result of Islamic onslaught of many centuries, and had they not revived our religious, cultural and literary glory, things would have gone on quite differently with some thousands of mini-balkanized states over the entire body of the sub continent and obviously ruled by some hundreds of mutually feuding and fighting mini-Nawabs... Indeed, let us recognize this truth with all humility no amount of denigrating or playing down the achievements of those distant islanders of Europe, who came here to play their destined and yet a historic role, would give us a sound sleep, either!<sup>90</sup>

Indeed Muthanna has made it very clear that the British did not rule the country all too unjustly as people blatantly accuse. If that was not enough, B.D. Ganapathy (1920-1997) another great prolific writer of Kodagu, also mentions thus:

The prime reason for Kodagu to have been annexed in 1834 and subsequently ruled by them was the Kodavas themselves, with them applauding the British reign and the British keeping them in good faith.<sup>91</sup>

All these accounts point to the fact that the British were favoured by the Kodavas and they did not mind their colonization or the domination so much as long as their living conditions were sufficiently comfortable. The Kodavas could not be fascinated with the concept of a united India. While even the two major prolific writers, I.M. Muthanna and B.D. Ganapathy of Kodagu felt the strong affiliation that Kodagu had for the British rule, Haradas Appacha, emerging in such a situation as a lone soldier with only his pen as his weapon during his period, did not articulate any explicit ideas on nationalism in his literary outputs.

So, if the general feeling in Kodagu was of a subtle submission to colonialism, then when did the nationalistic fervor enter the hearts of the Kodavas?

In 1918, an organization called Coorg Land-Holders Association, comprising mostly of people who benefitted from the English education imparted by the British, was started

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid xxi

<sup>91</sup> I.M. Dhanu, *Bachimada D. Ganapathy* (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 2002), 40.

with its head quarters at Mercara. The Association was the harbinger of the political movement in Coorg. The leaders of the association included Codanda Madayya, Maneyapanda Muthanna and Biddanda Ganapathy.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, if by the year 1918, Kodagu had been stirred by the political movement with the actual establishment of an association, the seeds for the same would naturally have been nurtured a few years earlier. However, the first record that we get of any kind of 'uprising' is in 1918 with the formation of the Coorg Land-Holders Association.

Here, it would be of academic interest to note how Partha Chatterjee negotiates the question of nationalistic fervour in the far off province of Bengal. In his essay titled, *Bengal: Rise and Growth of a Nationality*, he suggests that different nationalities, for example Gujarat, was different from that of Bengal which could perhaps have been due to the differences in grassroots nationalism.<sup>93</sup> He posits that the establishment of "The Indian Association" in 1876 by a special class of intermediary proprietors of land in Bengal consisting of persons belonging to successful professionals in law, journalism, teaching and civil service, had reaped the benefits of British domination through education provided by the British and were bent upon influencing the course of each and every provincial legislation on agrarian matters.

In comparison, the members of the "Coorg Land-Holders Association" were also beneficiaries of English education but they were not at all concerned with any sort of agrarian reforms. They were mainly occupied with preserving the political identity of Kodagu as an independent state in direct wishes of the British administration. Even in the Bengal scenario of nationalistic movement, Partha Chatterjee argues that the most compelling reason for participating in the nationalistic struggle was to safeguard the interests of its leaders. The Bengal society had become stratified thanks to the colonial rule which ensured that the feudal system prevailed strongly so as to preempt any formation of a mass movement against the colonial rule. He writes,

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<sup>92</sup> P.T. Bopanna, *Rise and Fall of the Coorg Stage: Kodagu's Loss, Karnataka's Gain*, (Bangalore: Rolling Stone Publications, 2009), 56.

<sup>93</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *Bengal: Rise and Growth of a Nationality*, *Social Scientist*, Vol.4. No. 1, The National Question in India, Aug., 1975, 67-82, [www.jstor.org/table/3516391](http://www.jstor.org/table/3516391) (accessed 15 June 2011)

In most colonial situations, in fact, it is the indigenous big traders and uppermost layers of the professional class dependent upon the colonial system who start the national movement in order to secure better trade or employment. The fact that the leading class is weak and to a large extent dependent upon the imperial power explained the various compromises this class will make with the imperial powers abroad as well as with feudalism at home.<sup>94</sup>

Kodagu happened to be a predominantly agricultural area and the prevailing mild feudalistic pattern served the interests of both the ruling class Kodavas (master) and their serfs like *Yeravas*, who were and even today are very well looked after by their masters. Zamindari system with its adverse implications elsewhere in India was not predominant in Kodagu region. Hence the British rule which succeeded the rule of the rajas were found to be satisfactory to all classes of people. Added to this is the fact that unlike in the Bengal situation, agrarian reforms were not felt necessary. The almost smooth transition from the rule of the Lingayat rajas to the conquering British administration presented no obstacles either to the government or to the people except that during the raja's time people were allowed to pay taxes in kind but the British insisted on cash payment. There was no Hindu -Muslim question either in Kodagu whereas in (east) Bengal the Bengali Muslim middle class distinctly felt a perception of uneven development, with the Hindus enjoying a major share of land holdings. Thus, the political scenario in Kodagu was rather different from that of Bengal. Partha's argument while applicable to the political scene in Bengal as well as the plight of Indian National Congress party leadership in Bengal of those days does not hold much in common with the unique situations prevalent in the political movement and its leadership in Kodagu.

The political analysis so far compels one to believe that whatever political upheaval or undercurrents that were happening in Kodava society did not particularly affect a large section of the people of Kodagu in their daily routine. Therefore, the very fact that Appacha did not voice his opinions either for or against this important event does not belittle his avowed pursuit of creating a social and moral upliftment in Kodava society of which he was an integral part.

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

An interesting fact that arouses curiosity is that after Appacha composed his *Yayati* in 1906 and *Savitri* and *Subramanya* in 1908, both plays that offer a strong critique of the changing social values of the Kodavas as a result of foreign influence, as was a theme that was chosen by many Kannada playwrights of the period like Kailasam and Huyilugola Narayanarai mentioned earlier, there was a gap of ten years before his last work '*Kavery*', published in the year 1919. Appacha was constantly serving as a watchdog of Kodava culture, speaking out against an impending total washout of Kodava tradition. He chose, ten years later, to write a play that provided a glorious backdrop that valorized the Kodavas as a royal race but did not wield his pen in the direction of anything that sparked nationalism in Kodagu which was slowly simmering at that juncture in history. Again, Haradas Appacha does not seem to celebrate war-like virtues. In the context of the freedom struggle, India's patriotism was sometimes depicted by many writers in the form of its military heroes like Bankim Chandra's *Anand Mut* and Jayashankar Prasad's *Samudra Gupt*. Even Samsa and Bharatendu Harishchandra depicted the militaristic glory of the past. Appacha's women characters too never celebrated war-like virtues, as was the case in many mainstream literatures.

There is however an interesting little story that seems to be the only one in which Haradasa has raised a feeble voice on the political condition of Kodagu. The play was called '*Mudduraja*', staged on the occasion of the farewell of one of the commissioners of Kodagu, Harris.<sup>95</sup> Excerpts from the play show two characters, one a king and the other his *mitra*/friend, where the former praises the rule of the British while the latter voices concerns on foreign rule. Even in this episode, the poet's ambivalent nature on nationalistic ideas comes through. Through the voice of the friend the poet asks a very pertinent question that has perhaps been on the minds of many Kodavas: Why would a bunch of people come all the way across the oceans and rule our country 'justly'? In these words is evident the poet's fear of an impending doom. But, through the voice of the King, he lays these doubts at rest, probably due to the fear of the gathering of white men present, and the need to impress them which he does by invoking the righteousness of King Edward, Minto and Harris. But in the end, one cannot fail to notice a deep hesitation or ambivalence that stands out in this play.

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<sup>95</sup> I. M. Muthanna, *Kodagina Haradasa Appacha Kaviya Nalku Natakagalu*, (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 2011), 144-149.

## EXPLORING THE AMBIVALENCE

One of the clues for this hesitation lies in his autobiography where he mentions the problems he had with securing patronage to help him get his works published. Haradas Appacha, though equipped with immense talent, did not have the necessary means to get his works published. In his autobiography he mentions the perils he underwent to make ends meet. In context of Yayati, his first play he writes,

I presented the idea of printing the play on the occasion of the wedding ceremony of a rich person's daughter. A few members from the gathering made me recite a few verses from the play and were very pleased with my rendering and in 1906 the first copies were printed.<sup>96</sup>

Once printed, there was also the responsibility or a passion for seeing the play being performed. This wasn't an easy task either. He mentions how in the absence of professional actors or the salary to afford them, Appacha staged the Yayati play with a few students from Madikeri high school. They collected make shift blouses that were donated by the king of Kodagu to several people. They even procured curtains from neighbouring houses and performed the play on a low budget. He also mentions how he staged plays on occasions weddings of rich people and travelled with his little troupe as much as he could from Madikeri to Dakshina Kannada's Thirpu temple and from there to Kakotuparamnu, Murnad, Napoklu till the rains began and he had to return to Madikeri.<sup>97</sup>

The problem of finances plagued him throughout his life. He writes,

I ran into a lot of debts, trying to make ends meet. The daily allowance for the actors, the stage equipments and tents procured on rent etc., proved to be way too expensive. Although the tents filled up with people, the collection was not enough to take care of the expenses of a day. When performed in cities outside of Kodagu, non-Kodavas did not respond and hence resulted in poor collections. In trying to keep my actors happy and in clearing my already existing debts, I ended up with more debts and poverty.<sup>98</sup>

For this he had to depend on the patronage of the affluent Kodavas of the period. In the introduction to all his plays he mentions the great support offered by his patrons. Let us look at his patrons:

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<sup>96</sup>Haradas Appacha, *Atmcharitre*, a condensed version of his autobiography, quoted in I.M.Muthanna *Kodagina Harada sa Appacca kaviya Sri Ka ve ri na taka* (India:s.n, 1967)

<sup>97</sup> Ibid

<sup>98</sup> Ibid

1. Rao Bahadur Koravanda Nanjappa for Yayati (First edition)
2. Medappa (B.A.B.L), the third son of Yedenad Palekanda Pension Subedar Bollappa for Yayati (Second edition)
3. Cheppudira Biddappa for Subramanya
4. Muckatira Aiyappa for Savitri
5. Jammada Bolliappa and his wife Muddamma for Kavery (First edition)
6. Muthanna, Munsif Magistrate, Barrister at law, son of Koravanda Nanjappa for Kavery (Second edition)

These patrons were highly well of Kodavas who had acquired wealth, education and status by taking maximum benefits of the English education system and were highly placed. It must also be noted that this affluent upper class of Kodavas in general favored the British rule though there is a strong possibility that they would have camouflaged their nationalistic vision for a unified India. Therefore, Appacha must have realized that if he needed his works to be published, the content of his works must not be displeasing to his patrons. This must be one of the reasons why he steered clear of any kind of nationalist ideas that would present the colonial rule in an unfavourable light and possibly anger his prospective patrons.

The fear of loss of patronage is in itself a discouragement. But it seems that this was not the only fear that Appacha anticipated. With the establishment of the Kodagu Land Holders Association, that marked the first beginnings of national consciousness among the people, there came about other landmarks.

In 1920, Pandianda I Belliappa, a Congressman who later came to be known as the “Kodagu Gandhi” started the “Kodagu” newspaper, a Kannada weekly. He afforded his life and blood to the Congress movement in Kodagu and was one of the first to court arrest during the Indian freedom movement. It was his drive and enthusiasm that later brought Mahatma Gandhi to Kodagu in 1933. Pandianda Seetha Belliappa, his wife was the first woman congress leader to court arrest during the freedom movement. She was arrested for picketing liquor shops at Virajpet.<sup>99</sup> The Kodagu weekly started by the Coorg Company was thus largely instrumental in spreading nationalistic awareness among the people. The stalwarts of the freedom struggle, including Pandiyanda Belliappa and the

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<sup>99</sup> P.T. Bopanna, *Rise and Fall of the Coorg Stage: Kodagu's Loss, Karnataka's Gain*, (Bangalore: Rolling Stone Publications, 2009), 59.

sub-editor Cheppudira .M. Poonacha, who later went on to become the Chief Minister of Kodagu from 1952 to 1956, were part of the editorial team of the weekly which featured major political issues. The newspaper carried news on independence struggles around Kodagu and beyond and tried to ignite Kodava minds on the importance of a national struggle for independence. Of course the printing of the “Kodagu” angered the British government and the newspaper was brought under press ordinance, because of which publication had to be stopped till a caution deposit of Rs. 1000 was paid to the government.<sup>100</sup>

Chepudira M. Poonacha also plunged into the activities of the Congress Party. In 1932-33, he was appointed secretary of Kodagu Congress Samithi. Around this period, the party purchased a portable printing machine and Poonacha was given the task of writing, publishing and distributing a ‘mouth-piece’ of the party. The publication was named ‘Sarpastra’. Poonacha hid the machine in a forested area in his property. Once a week he would secretly print about 100 copies of the newsletter, which contained fiery articles against the British. He would fasten the bundle on to his bicycle and set out to Virajpet around four o’ clock in the morning. At Virajpet his friend Ramamurthy lawyer’s school-going brother - Mariappa - would collect the bundle from Poonacha. Mariappa would leave the copies hidden in the desks of students. Students would then distribute the ‘Sarpastra’ to people in their villages and neighbourhood. Soon ‘Sarpastra’ became a popular newsletter eagerly awaited by people. It not only kept the freedom movement alive in Kodagu, but also prompted many to join the struggle. The police could not trace the origin of this publication. After six months, the newsletter was renamed as ‘Veerabharati’. Poonacha continued this clandestine task for another month or so. Police were frantically looking for the origin of the publication. Congress leaders felt it prudent to shift the location of the machine. Extensive searches were made to locate the cyclostyling machine. When the machine was finally discovered, Chepudira Poonacha was sentenced to 9 months rigorous imprisonment at Kannur jail.<sup>101</sup>

These draconian measures instilled a sense of fear among the general public even though it also spurred the citizens to protest against British rule with more vigour. The

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<sup>100</sup> P.T. Bopanna, *Rise and Fall of the Coorg Stage: Kodagu’s Loss, Karnataka’s Gain*, (Bangalore: Rolling Stone Publications, 2009), 15.

<sup>101</sup> C.P Belliappa, *C.M. Poonacha’s role in the Freedom Movement*, 20Oct.2009[http://www.coorgtourisminfo.com/bellis\\_vision.php](http://www.coorgtourisminfo.com/bellis_vision.php)



message that becomes evident through these instances is that, the fight for the country's freedom was indeed a very dangerous affair. In such a situation, Haradas Appacha, already struggling to make ends meet, seems to have chosen to be wary of the dangerously tumultuous situation in Kodagu. Things worsened for the poet when in 1926, his house accidentally caught fire and he lost most of his possessions in the blazing fire and he was reduced to a pauper. He writes:

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of April, 1926, at about 9 in the night, some miscreants set fire to my house and reduced it to ashes. Everything that I had earned in the last 60 years of my life, being the only son of my father, was destroyed. I will never be able to account for the unique and rare things and documents that were consumed by that fire! The money I had kept safe in case of an emergency had also been destroyed. I felt like killing myself, but my third son held me back and fortunately or unfortunately, I am alive today.<sup>102</sup>

His words show the levels of desperation that he had descended to in order to merely survive. In such a situation, having lost even the reserve money that he had stored for emergencies, he retired from performing with his troupe, travelling from place to place as it proved to be too expensive. It is known that by 1927, Appacha had retired from playwriting and had begun composing and performing Harikathas. During the next two years he toured Kodagu, Puttur, Mangalore etc., performing Harikathas. The mention of his Harikatha performance appears in a newspaper in Mangalore. In his autobiography he writes,

A great man who had promised to help with the second round of printing of the Kavery drama had given me money in advance for the same. So in the year 1928, I went to my old publishers in Mangalore, the Sharada Press and met the manager. I was staying with a relative there. That night, a few relatives and close friends requested me for a recital. Thus, under the sponsorship of the school's headmaster, the great scholar Ullal Mangeshrai, I performed the "*Shivaratri Rahasya*" Shivakathe at the Training school on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1928.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Atmacharitre*, a condensed version of his autobiography, quoted in I.M.Muthanna *Koḍagina Haradasa Appacca kaviya Śri Kaveri nataka* (India:s.n, 1967)

<sup>103</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Atmacharitre*, a condensed version of his autobiography, quoted in I.M.Muthanna *Koḍagina Haradasa Appacca kaviya Śri Kaveri nataka* (India:s.n, 1967)

One of the newspapers carried this news with the headline, “*Kodagu’s Haridas (sic) in Mangalore*”.<sup>104</sup> One would imagine that for Appacha, having suddenly got such a high recognition as being called the “Shakespeare of Kodagu” would have inspired him to perform more Harikathas. But considering his strong views on social criticism and gender issues that he addressed in his plays, it is strange how even during a period of immense political turmoil being witnessed by Kodagu, he still chose to remain silent on the issue. It is interesting to find an observation at this juncture in the history of Kodagu that might have silenced him further.

In 1929, a Harikatha Vidwan, one Belur Keshavdas was exteined (*sic*) from Kodagu for staging Harikatha programmes to infuse patriotic feelings among the people.<sup>105</sup>

This incident must have strengthened the poet’s conviction of not taking a stand on nationalism. It is clear from the records that Appacha had stopped performing after 1929. Even in his autobiography, there is no record of any other performances that he staged anywhere after 1929. He spent the rest of his years trying desperately to get his *Yayati Nataka* and *Kavery Nataka* reprinted which he managed to after much difficulty and suffering. By that time, his hearing was impaired and his health began deteriorating completely. His autobiography in 1936 was the last thing he wrote before his gradually deteriorating health claimed his life on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1944.

Another important fact that seems to have been a reason for the silence could be the absence of a spiritual or nationalistic icon among the Kodavas that would have served as a rallying point in the freedom movement. Although Pandianda Belliappa was hailed as the ‘Kodagu Gandhi’, his contribution did not seem to be sufficient to awaken a national spirit in the field of literature and performance during that period. Moreover, part of Kodagu was still in a state of ambivalence as to whether or not to withdraw their support

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid

“As Shakespeare is to English literature, so is Haradas Appacha to us. He performed the ‘Shivaratri Rahasya’ Harikathe very entertainingly. Even in his old age, he impressed the men gathering immensely with his clever words, talent, skill and musical expertise. Thereafter Mr. Mangeshrai greatly praised Haradasa’s talent. Born in Kodagu and composing literatre in Kodava language, he has proved to the world that the Kodava language has immense poetic potential. It is impossible to describe his miraculous talents in words. He is, indeed, a ‘Haradasa’”

<sup>105</sup> P.T. Bopanna, *Rise and Fall of the Coorg Stage: Kodagu’s Loss, Karnataka’s Gain*, (Bangalore: Rolling Stone Publications, 2009), 60.

for the gallant British that had ameliorated the standard of living of the Kodavas to such an extent that they glorified Kodagu under the British regime as 'Rama Rajya'.<sup>106</sup>

In such a scenario, as mentioned earlier, Gandhiji's stand on equality of all classes and most importantly his love for Harijans was not deemed acceptable to a major section of the Kodavas. Since such a feeling was prevalent among the upper class Kodavas, it could be speculated that this could be the reason why Pandianda Belliappa did not become as popular as he could have, if it weren't for 'patriotic ambiguity' among the Kodavas. Incidentally, it was the drive and enthusiasm of Pandianda Belliappa that brought Mahatma Gandhi to visit Kodagu in the year 1934.

Gandhiji toured Coorg in February 1934 to propagate the eradication of untouchability. The Mahatma visited the Harijan colony at Kaikeri in South Coorg. He stayed at Ramakrishna Ashram at Ponnampet. He entered Coorg from Thithimathi and visited Gonikoppal, Hudukeri, Virajpet, Ammathi, Sidapur and Suntikoppa prior to addressing a large public meeting at the grounds near Raja Seat in Madikeri.<sup>107</sup>

Thus, it is clear that the faction of Kodavas that did not support Gandhiji's views would also not have supported Pandianda Belliappa's views either. Thus, in such a society like Kodagu, with so much ambiguity on the freedom movement, it would have been naturally difficult to produce a spiritual or nationalistic icon that would unify the minds of all Kodavas to revolt against a rule that they were beginning to get really comfortable with.

It would be unfair to say that Appacha absolutely ignored the foreign stimuli that he was experiencing with during his period. His plays show the myriad influences that he gathered as a result of his exposure to British rule and the travelling company theatres. He mentions in his autobiography that he was greatly influenced by the *Tiptur Natak Company* that visited Kodagu in 1890.

...The first of them was the *Tiptur Natak Company* that pitched a tent outside the Omkareshwara temple and enacted a play. Since it was a new phenomenon, the tents were always overflowing with curious onlookers. I was so intrigued by the issues that were

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<sup>106</sup> Vijay Poonacha Thambanda, *Conflicting Identities in Karnataka: Separate State and Anti-separate State Movements in Coorg*, (Hampi:Prasaranga,2004), 3.

<sup>107</sup> P.T. Bopanna, *Rise and Fall of the Coorg Stage: Kodagu's Loss, Karnataka's Gain*, (Bangalore: Rolling Stone Publications, 2009), 61.

discussed in these plays and the way they were staged that I made friends with one of the men who played a powerful female character and learnt many verses from him...<sup>108</sup>

In his plays, Appacha mentions a lot of instances of the Kodavas emulating their British masters. When Devayani meets Sharmishtha, they greet each other with a “shake hand”(Yayati,7), in (Yayati,8), the *sakhi* of Sharmishtha describes in detail the modernized Kodava woman. Through the words of the *sakhi* Appacha shares the concerns regarding the new casual modes of fashionable expressions and excessive use of English words in conversation by the new generation, with scant regard to the ‘respectful’ manners of the older generations. She says that these ‘modern’ Kodava women, dress themselves up in ‘boots’ and ‘shoes’ and say (in English) to the smart men that come by, ‘How are you getting on friend dear?’, greeting them with a ‘shake hand’. In *Subramanya Nataka*, (*Subramanya* 54-55) there is a mention the King’s “butler” who says that it is more fashionable to use the English language than Hindi, when he says, “Boy-ready, get me dinner soon Luksaart”; and not, “*Arre chokre, kya hua re, pulaw kyma banaya re*”. There is a subtle hint here that whilst the usage of English language was considered “class”, Hindi came in a close second, but not the traditional homegrown Kodavattakk. Then again, elsewhere, in *Kavery Nataka*, he has displayed his wonderful multilingual talent where in a discussion of the wedlock between Kavery and Sage Agastya, he uses, Kannada, Tamil, Tulu, Malayalam and Kodavattakk languages all in one scene!

It seems reasonable to believe that as a result of the interjection between nationalism and colonialism, Appacha imbibed upon himself all the influences that were being thrust upon the people during that time and consistently reproduced them in his plays. But also evident is the fact on the topic of nationalism and patriotism, Appacha deliberately maintained rather a deafening silence for the fear of loss of a livelihood that he had so carefully nurtured with only the might of his pen.

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<sup>108</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Atmcharitre*, a condensed version of his autobiography, quoted in I.M.Muthanna *Kodagina Haradasa Appacca kaviya Sri Kaveri nataka* (India:s.n, 1967)

## ***CHAPTER III***

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### ***IDENTIFYING AMBIVALENCES***

## IDENTIFYING AMBIVALENCES

This land is not one that is meant for Drama, Literature and Art. I burnt my fingers following that path. I am not disappointed in my efforts. I just followed the path shown to me by God almighty. But I suffer in my old age.<sup>109</sup>

-Haradas Appacha, 1940

These words of disenchantment by Haradas Appacha Kavi himself, pretty much summarises the perspective that this chapter aims to look at. In the above quote, the message that comes across, and unfortunately comes across rather forcefully is that Haradas Appacha, the one great playwright and poet that Kodagu had ever produced, laments the condition of theatre, drama and literature in Kodagu. As a nation that stands proud of its theatrical and performative legacy, this lament indeed is a blot on its tradition. This chapter is an investigation of the reasons for the gradual decline of the theatre scenario in Kodagu and the ambivalences it negotiates with; the reasons why even to this day, the theatre of Kodagu does not figure prominently in Indian theatre history. This ambivalence about Kodava theatre is certainly alarming. What is the ingredient that Kodava theatre lacks which makes it less significant than its Tulu, Konkani and Kannada counterparts?

The Kannada stage is a subject that has seen much research and development. Over the years, many scholars have worked extensively in collecting, documenting and analyzing the Kannada stage. The trajectory of the Kannada theatre shows a gradual development, a decline and then a welcome revival. In contrast, there is indeed not much research available on Kodava theatre. However, it would be interesting to map the trajectory of growth, decline and revival, if any, on the Kodava theatrical scenario as well to launch our investigation into the reasons for its perceived ambivalence.

### THE KANNADA STAGE

The modern Kannada stage has seen several plays and playwrights in the last century carving a niche for themselves beginning as early as 1880. The period during

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<sup>109</sup> *Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka* (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998), vii

1880-1920 is often termed as the 'Kannada Renaissance'. There were indeed several factors that led up to this, including the advent of the British administration and the scientific technology of printing and publishing that they brought with them, resulting in the establishment of modern educational institutions across the state. Like Kodava theatre, the beginning of a Kannada stage as such can be marked at the juncture that saw the influx of travelling Marathi and Parsi Company theatres that greatly influenced and kindled the artistic fervor of the still dormant talented minds in Karnataka.

The Kritapura Nataka Mandali was founded in Gadag i.e. Dharwad district in 1877, and the Halasagi Company near Belgaum around the same time. In the south, the Chamarajendra Karnataka Nataka Sabha commenced theatre activities in Mysore in 1879 under the patronage of the royal court, and in 1881 another troupe, the Rajadhani Nataka Mandali, came up in the same place.<sup>110</sup>

As would be quite natural, the growth of such companies kindled the spirit of competition and talent among the people which resulted in the creation of many competent theatre repertoires and artistic talents in Karnataka. Unfortunately, such was not the case in Kodagu. The reasons for this shall be discussed later. Tracing the history of the Kannada stage shows a gradual decline of the glorious era of the company theatres in Karnataka. But the fact remains that while they lasted, the company theatres left a lingering impression on the minds of the people.

The combined impact of all these companies, though, sustained the momentum of the movement at least up to Independence. It also gave birth to a large number of playwrights. The names can be mentioned as Bellave Narahari Sastri, Kandagal Hanumantha Rao, and B. Puttaswamaiah the more important among them.<sup>111</sup>

As was the general trend almost all over the country, the innovations brought about by the travelling company theatres sustained the interest in theatre-goers and reigned supreme over their imagination till the advent of films and television. But the aura they emanated died down with modern forms of entertainment that captured the immediate attention of the people. The fascination that they had initially exhibited for the mesmerizing effects produced by company theatres, gradually shifted towards cinema.

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<sup>110</sup> *Kannada Theatre, Indian Theatre*, [http://www.indianetzone.com/30/kannada\\_theatre\\_indian\\_theatre.htm](http://www.indianetzone.com/30/kannada_theatre_indian_theatre.htm) (accessed on 30 May 2011)

<sup>111</sup> Ibid

Thus there saw a sharp decline in the Kannada theatre scenario with the slow degeneration of Company theatres and amateur groups not being able to sustain their initial enthusiasm, resulting in lower viewership and audience base. Theatre as an art form was slowly vanishing.

Therefore, a process of assimilation was urgently needed for the art to survive. Sriranga, the first to sense this problem, not only wrote about it but also tried to find ways out of the situation. In the late 1950s, under the banner of Natya Sangha, he organized a series of theatre workshops, the first of their kind in Karnataka. Through these, an informal training for amateurs was begun and a new interest kindled in theatre as a medium.<sup>112</sup>

Kannada theatre today is in a far better position than when it started off. A large number of troupes, in towns like Mangalore, Udupi, Dharwad, Davangere, and smaller places like Sullia, Ilkal, Manchikeri, and Heggodu, do active and significant theatre work. Kannada theatre received further encouragement in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the setting up of theatre institutes like Ninasam Theatre Institute under K.V. Subbanna; two professional companies Ninasam Tirugata and Rangayana, in Mysore started operations. These institutions attracted talented and aspiring youth from all over the state. There were shifts in Kannada drama as well. The established generation of Karnad, Kambar, and Lankesh wrote new plays, often departing from earlier traditional methods. Today, Kannada theatre stands as a thriving industry, with the establishment of more and more theatre groups, staging plays on a regular basis.

Thus, the ample research available on Kannada theatre traces the pattern of a growth, decline and revival. The conditions in theatre today seem to promise a nurturing environment for theatre activities in Karnataka. This is also true of the very relevant contemporary Tulu and Konkani theatres. Even though Tulu and Konkani languages do not have a script of their own, very much like the Kodava language, it is surprising to note the vibrant theatre scenario in both these languages. A study of the trajectory of Kodava theatre would be incomplete without a brief overview of Tulu and Konkani theatres.

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<sup>112</sup> *Kannada Theatre, Indian Theatre*, [http://www.indianetzone.com/30/kannada\\_theatre\\_indian\\_theatre.htm](http://www.indianetzone.com/30/kannada_theatre_indian_theatre.htm) (accessed on 30 May 2011)



## TULU AND KONKANI THEATRE

Tulu and Konkani are sister-languages with Kodavattakk, both without a script of its own and spoken by a linguistic minority. However, in comparison, the theatre tradition in both Konkani and Tulu are much more enriched and thriving than the Kodava scenario.

The Konkani also called the Konkani Coast or Karavali, is a rugged section of the western coastline of India from Raigad to Mangalore. Residents of Konkani and their descendants are called *Konkanis*. The name may also refer specifically to the people, or the ethnic groups of the region, most of whom speak the Konkani language. Konkani is also the mother tongue of a Hindu Brahmin community called the Goud Saraswat Brahmins, commonly referred to as GSB's. Today, it is the official language of the state of Goa, consisting of a population that is predominantly Christian. The language is flourishing, with literature being produced regularly. Even in the theatre scene, there is concept of <sup>113</sup>'Tiatr', a Portuguese term for theatre which is a type of musical that is popular in the state of Goa. The dramas are performed in the Konkani language and include music, dancing and singing. Tiatr performers are called *tiatrists*.

Konkani tiatr has fostered the talent of hundreds of artistes in various areas of the dramatic art – as playwrights, actors, singers, directors, stage managers and musicians. In former times the writer was also the director and protagonist of the play. But over the decades, a division of responsibilities has been taking place although the change is at a much slower pace than hoped for by critics and well-wishers.<sup>114</sup>

A fascinating aspect of Konkani theatre is that women took to the Konkani stage as early as the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As Dr. André Rafael Fernandes elaborates in his book, '*When the curtains rise: understanding Goa's vibrant Konkani theatre*',

The Konkani theatre has the pride of being among the earliest to have actresses on the stage, about twenty-seven years before they could appear in Marathi, Gujarati and Bengali plays. Mrs. Regina Fernandes, the wife of João Agostinho Fernandes, became the first actress on the Konkani stage, when she performed in *Batcara* (Part I) on Tuesday,

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<sup>113</sup> André Rafael Fernandes, *When the Curtains Rise: Understanding Goa's Vibrant Konkani Theatre*, (Panjim: Tiatr Academy of Goa, 2010), 55.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid

November 22, 1904 at the Gaiety Theatre, Bombay for the inauguration of the Goan Union Dramatic Club.<sup>115</sup>

It is important to note here that in the Kodava stage, the first women actors appear only with the establishment of Addanda Cariappa's Srishti Kodagu Ranga in 1980! This strengthens the fact that Konkani theatre enjoys a far more vibrant popularity and the entire Konkani belt speaking Konkani has been enriching the language and theatre considerably in sharp contrast to Kodava theatre.

Similarly, Tulu is a language that is spoken in Tulu Nadu, a region which comprises the districts of Udupi and Dakshina Kannada in the west of the state of Karnataka and Kasaragod taluk of Kerala. Apart from Tulu Nadu significant emigrant population of Tuluva people is found in Kodagu, Maharashtra, Bangalore and even abroad.

Tulu as a language is widely spoken today and there is a lot of literature being produced in Tulu. Some eminent Tulu writers are great names that have contributed to Kannada literature, like Gopalakrishna Adiga, M.G. Ramachandra, Nagaveni etc. But although Kodavas have contributed to Kannada literature to some extent, it cannot be matched with the output of Tulu writers. There seem to be no counterparts to the great names in Tulu Nadu in Kodagu. In fact, in terms of theatre, Tulu is as popular as Kannada theatre. In terms of historical precedence too, Kodagu did not have a performative tradition like Yakshagana, a form which is still highly popular with the spectators and is also getting a lot of support from the rich South Canara people settled in Mumbai. The Tuluva community is sincerely committed to the preservation of this unique form of theatre. There are quite a number of professional and amateur troupes, and most of them get tour invitations from as far as places like Bombay and Delhi, apart from many small and medium towns and cities in Karnataka. The Tulu theatre performers thereby get attractive remuneration through these performances. Theatre in form of traditional Yakshagana, prevalent in coastal Karnataka and some parts of northern Kerala has been instrumental in preserving the finer aspects of the Tulu language and culture. Moreover, Tulu folklore has drawn the attention of international scholars. Lauri Honko

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid

from Turku University, Finland has translated the Tulu epic “Siri”, which is about a woman by the same name who attains divinity by virtue of her strength of character during adverse and trying times in her life. This epic is illustrative of the independent nature of the Tuluva women and is almost as voluminous as Homer’s Illiad. Kodagu did not have a similar grand epic or any other major work and such efforts of reviving and preserving the heritage and existing literature did not happen in Kodagu.

Against this backdrop, the evolution, progress, decline and possible resurrection of Kodava theatre scenario can now be examined and the results would help us locate its current status and pin point the reasons for the alarming situation of ambivalence in the field of theatre today.

## **KODAVA THEATRE**

### **THE GROWTH**

Haradas Appacha Kavi is regarded as the father of modern Kodava theatre. What existed before him seems to be almost obscure. However, theatre in its original form existed even before Haradas Appacha Kavi in the ethnic folk performances of the Kodavas. It is indeed true that the root of all theatres lies in the folk forms of the community in which it originates. This is also true of Kodava theatre. The unique folk oral literature of Kodagu seems to be replete with theatrical elements and situations which can be construed as the seeds for the beginning of theatre in Kodagu.

The “Bodnamme” festival which is part of a ritual celebration in Kodagu is one that is quite theatrical in nature. Here, the natives who are farmers by occupation dance smearing mud pack and hay on their bodies. They go from house to house exhibiting their performance in the courtyard of the house. In ‘*Bodnamme*’ thus, one can clearly detect the crucial elements that completes a theatre, i.e. stage, costumes, make up, masks, entry and exit of characters, lighting (oil lamps are used at night) spectatorship and audience participation etc. The “Poonjolemaaye” presented during the “*Joyipaatt*” section of the *Huthari* festival in Kodagu is also filled with theatricality. Such is also the case with the “Seenwar” part of the *Huthari* festival. Community dances like *Bolakkaatt*, *Peeliyaatt*, *Pariyakali*, *Ummathaatt* etc are also examples of the same. It is also known that in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, inspired from the ‘*Bayalaata*’ form of Dakshina Kannada

district in Karnataka, Kodagu also created its own form of *Kathaashravana*, *Bayalaata* etc. In North Kodagu, forms like *Suggi Haadu*, *Suggi Kunitha*, *Deepavali* songs became highly popular and spread to South Kodagu as well.<sup>116</sup>

Thus in a community that was already bustling with folk theatre, there came the influence of travelling company theatres performing Kannada plays in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the Gubbi Nataka Company, Mohammad Peer Nataka Company etc. The year 1890 saw the first of these companies in the form of the Tiptur Nataka Company in Madikeri. Haradas Appacha Kavi was greatly inspired by them. There he familiarized himself with the technicalities of theatre and music. With a group of seven friends he performed the “*Chandrasahsa Kathe*” in Kannada. From the year 1891 onwards, Appacha Kavi wholeheartedly plunged into theatre and dedicated his life to it. Thus, with the inspiration he gained from folk theatre as well as from the influence of Company theatres, Haradas Appacha began to write and produce the first plays in Kodavattakk. Haradas Appacha Kavi can rightly be called the ‘father of modern Kodava theatre’. The life and works of Haradas Appacha Kavi has been elaborated in earlier chapters but the theatre scenario, post the era of Appacha, presents altogether a different trend.

Research shows that the first sign of any kind of playwriting after the period of Appacha in the year 1919 was in 1958, the year in which I.M. Muthanna’s “*Abhijnana Shakunthalam*”, a Kodava translation of Kalidasa’s original was published.<sup>117</sup> In the year 1959, Haridasa Mukkatira S. Poovaiah, a man famous for his Harikatha expertise, better known by his pen name, ‘*Kavishishya*’ created the “*Vidhimahime*”, based on the mythological story of *Dhruva* but there is no evidence of these plays being staged. What is alarming here is that the gap between the period of Appacha’s playwriting and the next sign of theatre in Kodagu is almost 40 years! Similarly, after I.M. Muthanna’s attempts at staging the *Subramanya Nataka* in 1945, the next staging of a Kodava play happened only in 1976 by the BEL Kodava Sangha, a troupe established by B.S Chittiappa in Bangalore. It should be a matter of concern therefore that for almost thirty years theatre was dormant in Kodagu! Why was there no activity in the theatre scenario in Kodagu, especially while the entire country was active in the political turmoil of independence,

<sup>116</sup> Titira Rekha Vasanth, *Kodava Rangabhoomi*, (Mangalore: Prasaranga, 2006), 16.

<sup>117</sup> M.P. Rekha, *Adhunika Kodava Sahitya*, (Mysore: Sinchu Multigraph, 2010), 161-226.

whereas the Kannada stage actively performed during this period?<sup>118</sup> There is not a single play written in Kodavattakk that showcases the political condition of the country. One way of justifying this would be to suggest that around this period (1956), Kodagu was going through its process of annexation with the state of Karnataka and, also, given the fact that the Kodavas as a community is generally a passive lot, the direction of interest leaned towards the states annexation process. However, even on this sentimental subject, there hasn't been any theatrical or dramatic work done in Kodagu. While the newspapers in Kodagu carried regular reports on the political condition of the state and country, nobody seemed to have chosen the medium of theatre to reach out to the larger population in Kodagu.

In such a scenario, one is forced to think that theatre was not something that the Kodavas thought of as an important vehicle, not just for entertainment, but also for communication. However, Dr. Rekha Vasanth in her extensive listing and analysis of theatre in Kodagu upto 2006, paints an optimistic picture of Kodava theatre which promises a surge of interest in terms of collective social consciousness of the Kodavas.<sup>119</sup> While there are a lot of plays that deal with mythological stories, she also identifies a collection of social plays, about 35 of them between 1973 and 2006, that deals with the evils of blind imitation of western cultural values and education system, leading to a gradual but definite deterioration of ethnic Kodava cultural values. One cannot but help notice here the similarities in the themes as the one that Appacha suggested decades ago. Some of these plays also worked towards creating social and political awareness among the Kodavas by highlighting the changing socio-cultural condition of Kodagu. Another interesting aspect is that there has been a lot of translation of foreign plays into

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<sup>118</sup>Kannada nationalism or 'Karnataka Ekeekarana Chaluvali, the movement for unification of Karnataka, emerged side by side with the Indian nationalist movement. Tirumalamba wrote a number of poems invoking Kannadaness and the Kannada nation. C.N.Mangala, a noted Kannada critic observes that these were the poems to express Kannada nationalism for the very first time in Kannada. Then appeared B.M.Srikantaiah's poem 'Kannada Taayanota' (the vision of mother Kannada) in 1936. New form of poetry emerged in Kannada and, later, appeared in its full form in B.M.Srikanthaiiah's 'English Geethegalu', which were translations of poetry from English into Kannada. K.V.Puttappa, poet and the renowned novelist popularly known as Ku.Vem.Pu, celebrated the Kannadaness and the Kannada identity. Tirumalamba, Masti Venkatesha Iyengar, B.M.Srikanthaiiah, Tirumale Rajamma, Pan.Je.Mangesha Rao, Govinda Pai, K.V.Puttappa, D.R.Bendre, Kalyanamma, T.P.Kailasam, Sriranga, Kodagina Gauramma and other writers played a major role in addressing various issues related to Kannada culture...., Srushti. *Kannada Literature*, <http://srushti.blog.co.in/2008/08/12/kannada-literature/> (accessed 22 June 2011)

<sup>119</sup> M.P. Rekha, *Adhunika Kodava Sahitya*, (Mysore: Sinchu Multigraph, 2010)

Kodavattakk, situating them in the Kodagu scenario. For example, “*Kodagda Komati*” or ‘A Businessman of Kodagu’ an adaptation of Shakespeare’s “Merchant of Venice” translated by I.M. Muthanna in 1986; “*Biddu Tailorra Ponnuru*” or “Biddu Tailor’s Wife” an adaptation of Garcia Lorca’s “Shoemaker” translated into Kannada by Dr. H.S.Shivaprakash as “*Mallamana Mane Hotlu*” and then translated into Kodavattakk by Addanda Cariappa in the year 1993. Such literary and dramatic exploits by the Kodavas suggest that they have an open mind to foreign literature and such exposure to world theatre inspired some talented, creative playwrights to carefully adapt these foreign plays and create dramatic works that appeal to typical Kodava sensibilities.

## THE AMBIVALENCE

From the above study it is quite evident that while a decent number of plays have been written in Kodavattakk, (although the volume of literature produced is quite meager compared to the Tulu and Konkani counterparts) the theatre scenario hasn’t quite carved a separate niche for itself on a larger platform. It is also important to note that while plays have been written and still continue to be written, the staging of plays is suffering a serious setback. Most of these plays seem to be written without considering its ‘stage-worthiness’. Generally, deprived of staging, a play is incomplete and does not run its full purpose. Unfortunately, at present the future of Kodava theatre is not very promising. The playwrights do not seem to have adequate knowledge of what constitutes a theatre, its craft, its *stageability* and its inherent powers of communication. It seems that playwriting has turned into just another hobby without understanding its serious technicalities, and this is the main reason why such plays haven’t transformed into full fledged productions. The ambivalence in the area is alarming. The reasons that have led up to this situation in theatre scene must be investigated in order to preserve the theatre culture from deterioration.

### a. FUNDING AND PATRONAGE

An important cause for the present decay of theatre in Kodagu is lack of adequate funding and patronage. It must be noted that today, Manipuri and Kannada theatres are very much alive and thriving. This is mainly because of the very liberal state patronage that these theatres enjoy. Moreover, during the 70’s there was ample foreign funding for Kannada and Manipuri theatres, while Kodava theatre could not enjoy such benefits,

reminding of the days of Haleri rajas when there were no provisions for education or patronage for local talents.

This fact is also evident from the earlier descriptions in Appacha's own autobiography, about the difficulties he had to go through in order to secure patronage even for the printing of literary works. No attempt was made in this direction to encourage other literary works despite the fact that the annual Kannada Sahitya Parishat once had its venue at Madikeri in the year 1933. The state Government had set up the Kodava Sahitya Academy, headquartered at Madikeri in the year 1994. Ever since its inception, the Parishat has been rendering timely assistance to the promotion of Kodava language and culture through sponsored programmes and governmental fund allocations. The academy provides annual endowments of a Lakh rupees to persons working in the field of Kodava Sahitya, *Jaanapada*, *Samskriti*, *Kale* and *Bhashe*. However, in contrast, it would appear that the encouragement meted out to Kodava theatre by the Parishat is quite wanting. Apart from publishing several plays by individual authors, promotion of theatre activity has never been a major concern. This ambivalent mentality of the authorities inculcates the same disposition and unwillingness in the minds of the people at large.

#### **b. LACK OF WILL AND EMERGENCE OF NEW MEDIA**

It has already been discussed in the chapter on nationalism about the easy and laid back attitude of the Kodavas. In his autobiography too, Appacha describes how difficult it was to gain audiences for his plays and how even more difficult to find actors to perform in his productions.<sup>120</sup> Most often he had to make do with school boys whom he trained painstakingly. There seems to be a collective 'lethargy' in certain areas ingrained in the people of Kodagu. Thus we find in this yet another important factor for the decline of Kodava theatre: the lack of collective will on the part of the people. It was due to this that the ambition that manifested itself in Appacha Kavi soon got dissipated.

The arrival of television and the attendant multi-channel service has a very powerful impact on contemporary theatre, some people complain of dwindling audiences. They say

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<sup>120</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Atmacharitre*, a condensed version of his autobiography, quoted in I.M.Muthanna *Kodagina Harada's Appacca kaviya Sri Kaveerinaataka* (India:s.n, 1967)

that the comfort of viewing entertaining offerings at home weans away the audience from theatre. This is only a part of the story. In any case, even in Hindi, but for the brief interlude in the seventies and eighties, there has never been a consistent audience support for urban Hindi theatre.<sup>121</sup>

In such a scenario, for a theatre that had gone dormant since the age of Haradas Appacha Kavi, even to hope for an audience in the looming presence of more “exciting” forms of entertainment like the television, is like chasing a mirage. ‘Television is bad for theatre in two ways. First, as more and more theatre persons opt for soap operas, when they work in theatre, they bring with them the acting styles and mannerisms of these soaps, thereby negating the very purpose of their doing theatre. Second, to attract audiences, certain groups are staging only cheap comedies. Even in cities like Mumbai it is becoming almost impossible to sell serious and meaningful drama scripts.’<sup>122</sup> One look at the literature and drama output in Kodagu is enough to show that there is ambivalence regarding the choice of serious topics of discourse. The literature produced is usually light comedies or rhyming poetry. There is absolutely no work done on theatre appreciation and criticism. It is alarming that of the few plays that are staged in Kodagu, newspaper reporters are engaged to review them resulting in unprofessional and superfluous commentaries on the production. There is presently no sound body of theatre criticism in Kodagu that is crucial for nurturing the health of theatre anywhere.

### c. LUCRATIVENESS OF THEATRE

Kodava theatre has not developed as a strong and significant movement. According to A.C. Cariappa, an eminent theatre personality and a product of Ninasam Theatre Institute, Shimoga, who has written, directed and performed plays all over Karnataka and is also credited with the establishment of “*Srishti Kodagu Ranga*”, a professional theatre group, ‘the viewers/audience has not decreased, but the doers/performers/artistes have.’ However, the main reason seems to be the lack of actors and the lack of commitment on the part of the actors. In a money-driven modern society, where theatre is not a comfortable means of livelihood, nobody wants to work for

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<sup>121</sup> Nag Bodas, *Tradition and Contemporary Theatre in India* in H.S. Shivaprakash, ed., *Theatre Business and Management of Men: Indian Theatre in 2000* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2011), 63.

<sup>122</sup> Nag Bodas, *Tradition and Contemporary Theatre in India* in H.S. Shivaprakash, ed., *Theatre Business and Management of Men: Indian Theatre in 2000* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2011), 64



personal joy or as a hobby and actors are mostly motivated only by the lure of a profitable remuneration. A handsome regular source of income is not something that working in a theatre company can guarantee. <sup>123</sup>‘The major worry is the conversion of a theatre person into a media person. One cannot deny that the economics of theatre do not allow a theatre person to live off it alone. Coupled with this is the general societal atmosphere of making a fast buck and a lucrative career.’

Kodagu is a hill station and towns and villages are spread far and wide. Means of communication, availability of theatre space, weather pattern are all detrimental to the performance of any theatre.

Meaningful theatre is not an economically sound proposition. The tickets have to be moderately priced. The rents for rehearsal and performance spaces have multiplied manifold. Transport and publicity costs are high. It is, therefore difficult to sustain such theatre, particularly where the state support is dwindling with the lack of proper funding and patronage. Even to this day, Sangeet Natak Akademi is sticking to a maximum grant of just thirty thousand rupees for a production; the cost even for a moderate production in a small city is at least double this amount. But generally it has become difficult to do serious and meaningful theatre, leave alone a sustained and painstaking effort to see the inner meanings associated with traditional theatre practices. How many of us have the patience and the resources to rehearse a play for months and understand the real meaning of its link with tradition? <sup>124</sup>

Theatre artistes even from established drama schools who have made quite a name for themselves in the past, find their theatrical experience today quite disconcerting. Addanda Cariappa, who still cultivates theatre in his own meager way, laments about the lack of properly trained and committed actors and extraordinary costs of providing infrastructure like make up, lighting, sound systems, stage properties, availability of proper rehearsal and theatre spaces in Kodagu. These sentiments find consonance in the words of Zohra Sehgal, eminent theatre personality and actor when she says,

Very well trained and they come out of the national school of drama and what do they do? There is nowhere for them to perfect their art, to polish their art, to rise from one stage of experience to another. So they look here, right and left and then join some

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<sup>123</sup> Nag Bodas, *Tradition and Contemporary Theatre in India* in H.S. Shivaprakash, ed., *Theatre Business and Management of Men: Indian Theatre in 2000* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2011), 63

<sup>124</sup> Ibid

amateur groups. Though the amateur group does not pay them, it just demands them to come and behave whatever way they like. So that is not a professional approach. Some of these amateur groups are doing excellent, beautiful work. But they rehearse for sometimes five months, have workshops and after five months what they give is two performances or maybe three performances. If they are lucky, they are invited somewhere else out of town and give another two performances and that's all. That is not enough. People who cannot afford to be in these plays take up some other profession. But it is ridiculous doing a job in the morning and doing theatre in the evening. You have to be dedicated to one single art, and like in any art you cannot flirt with it. One has to work with blood and sweat. You have to dedicate your whole life to it...<sup>125</sup>

Zohra's words, like that of Addanda Cariappa of Kodagu echo the harsh realities of theatre artistes today almost everywhere. It only shows that if the fate of artistes passing out of reputed drama schools is so tragic, then for a small region like Kodagu which cannot even boast of an established theatre academy of its own as such, the results expected are obviously bound to be quite minimal.

#### **d. MIGRATION OF KODAVAS AND GLOBALIZATION**

Karl Marx pointed out a century and a half ago that "the need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeois over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere." So what is being globalised is the capitalist market. In this quest, the role of culture is quite crucial.<sup>126</sup>

The general trend of Kodagu shows that Kodavas are migrating to foreign lands as a result of the profound attraction to the aforementioned "culture". According to the latest 2001 census, the population of the Kodava-speaking people (besides the Kodavas, many indigenous people speak the Kodava language) was 16.81 percent compared to 35.20 percent Kannada-speaking population and 23.48 percent Malayalam-speaking population. The Kodava-speaking population which was 17.66 percent in the 1981

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<sup>125</sup> Zohra Sehgal, *Inaugural Address*, in H.S. Shivaprakash, ed., *Theatre Business and Management of Men: Indian Theatre in 2000* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2011), 3.

<sup>126</sup> Moloyashree Hashmi and Sudhanva Deshpande, *Theatre, Society and Politics*, in H.S. Shivaprakash, ed., *Theatre Business and Management of Men: Indian Theatre in 2000* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2011),

census went down to 16.26 percent in the 1991 census.<sup>127</sup> It is thus evident that the population of Kodavattakk-speakers is decreasing in Kodagu year by year. What they don't realize is that such migration is resulting in serious loss of ethnic Kodava culture back home. Most families send their children to schools outside Kodagu as they feel that education is more "refined" and "sophisticated" than the one back home. The younger generation prefers to work in metros or in urban spaces or better yet, across international borders not only as a reason for better salaries and employment opportunities, but also as a marker of their status in the Kodava society. While thinking about these points, one cannot but help recall Appacha's words when he describes in his plays, how, Kodava people, clamouring for 'modern' ways of living comfortably forgets their age old traditions and values that had laid the foundation for their lives since eternity. The prophetic sentiment echoed by Appacha on this topic is proving true now. Then it was the British and their ways, today it is the capitalist market and its promise of "better tomorrows". Though this is true of many other people and cultures as well, Kodagu is an interesting case study because unlike other cultures, the Kodava culture seems to be fast erasing itself from existence.

#### e. DECAYING LANGUAGE

In his essay, "*Indianisation*", Chandrashekhar Kambar writes,

...Language is used largely as a medium- what you convey becomes more important than the medium in which you convey. But for a genuine poet, language is also a signifier and the limitations of language must be overcome through language itself. Commitment to a language can alone perform this feat. This is perhaps what T.S. Eliot meant when he referred to the "refinement of the language of the tribe". A language, which is the product of a culture, can also create a culture and therefore, commitment to a language is also a commitment to culture.<sup>128</sup>

This issue of commitment that echoes in Kambar's words is what Kodagu requires in terms of its language. The marvelous way in which he links the co-existence of language and culture is what the 'tribe'(read Kodava community) should assimilate. It

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<sup>127</sup> P.T. Bopanna, *Rise and Fall of the Coorg Stage: Kodagu's Loss, Karnataka's Gain*, (Bangalore: Rolling Stone Publications, 2009), 83.

<sup>128</sup> Chandrashekhar Kambar, *Indianisation*, in H.S. Shivaprakash, ed., *Theatre Business and Management of Men: Indian Theatre in 2000* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2011), 23.

has been found that the mention of a Kodava script existed as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>129</sup> The first known work by a Kodava scholar is by Coravanda Appaiah in the year 1902, titled “*Kodavara Kulacharadi Tattvojjeevini*”, a compilation of the customs and traditions of the Kodavas.<sup>130</sup> Even though there have been attempts to create a separate script for Kodavattakk by Coravanda Appaiah in 1887 and later by Dr. I.M. Muthanna, it did not gain popularity. In 2003, a German language specialist, Grag M. Cox by name visited Kodagu and created a script which he called the ‘Coorgi-Cox Alphabet’<sup>131</sup>. There were attempts at creating a script for Tulu and Konkani languages, but were unsuccessful. It seems that the age and time for having created a script and used it extensively has passed for these languages and while Konkani adopted Devanagari script recently, Tulu continues to use Kannada script like Kodavattakk. Like Kambar says,

It is common for a language to evolve on the basis of a script. But an evolution of a script from a language would be quite uncommon.<sup>132</sup>

Only if the script of a language is used prolifically will the language sustain and develop itself. But in a predominantly hilly area like Kodagu, with poor communication facilities, in a scenario of wars and struggles, where the common man had to devote his time and energy for farming and cultivation, it is quite possible that preserving the Kodava script was the least of their concerns. However, since the natives did not indulge themselves in its usage, and due to the lack of sufficient or nil state patronage and due to the unavailability of printing, publishing and distribution facilities, Kodavattakk in its written form could not flourish as well as Kannada.

Yet another reason for the decay of the language could be the limited Kodava population as well as the dominating presence of Kannada. In an age when Kodavattakk would have been flourishing, Kannada began infiltrating into their everyday life with the

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<sup>129</sup> Reshma Ramesh, A Study on Kodava Culture - I, *Shakti*, 7 May 2011, 2.

During the 14<sup>th</sup> century, two dynasties (shasanagalu) of Palur and Bhagamandala revealed important evidence with respect to the Kodava script. The language and script of this era seem to be the root of the Kodavattakk. There is a mixture of Malayalam, Tamil and Vattalthu. Even the language seems to be a mixture of Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Tulu etc. Many scholars believe that this is where the root of the Kodava language lies. Reshma Ramesh, A Study on Kodava Culture - II, *Shakti*, 14 May 2011, 2.

<sup>130</sup> Dr. Rekha Vasant is of the opinion that certain passages in this book have been rendered in Kodavattakk using the Kannada script for the first time.

<sup>131</sup> See Illustration I

<sup>132</sup> Vijay Tendulkar, *Writing and Producing Plays*, in H.S. Shivaprakash, ed., *Theatre Business and Management of Men: Indian Theatre in 2000* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2011), 19.

occupation and subsequent rule of Kodagu, first by the Kannada speaking Haleri Rajas and then by the British administration who promoted English education among the masses while adopting continued usage of Kannada as the administrative language of the region. With this, Kannada thus became the primary language that was used for official and administrative purposes in Kodagu. Even Kodavas had to adopt this language for trade and business and for all practical purposes. Moreover, as is seen in other instances, these kings weren't interested in literature or writing themselves (except for the "Rajendra Naame" written by Dodda Veera Rajendra). Then again, after the annexation of Kodagu with Karnataka, Kannada gained a stronger foothold in Kodagu, slowly sidelining Kodavattakk. The saddest part is that the people of Kodagu do not seem to realize that language is meant not for communication alone but it also carries a Kodava identity and culture. It is thus no wonder that Kodavattakk has found a place in the UNESCO's list of languages that are facing extinction.

Today, times have changed. Apart from regional languages, students today are expected to have a sound knowledge of Hindi and English as well. The younger generation does not seem to have either the patience or the time to study another language and its script with the existing burden of studying the other more "relevant" languages and their scripts. Even Kodava newspapers are printed in the Kannada script. All these factors contribute to the continuing decay of the Kodava language. Kodavattakk now remains as a 'Linguistic island' surrounded by more prominent local languages like Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and English that endanger its existence.

## **THE REVIVAL**

The best way to attempt a revival would usually be to look at the reasons for decline and work out a solution that would aid in addressing the problems. Considering the large but serious number of reasons for decline of Kodava theatre, an attempt at its revival seems to be a Herculean task. To say that no theatre happened after the period of Haradas Appacha would also be untrue. Though during his lifetime, Appacha Kavi could not inspire his people in drama and theatre, his legacy was widely acknowledged and remembered by Kodavas as is evident from the events later. A year before his death, in 1943, students from Madikeri staged the *Yayati Nataka*, under the able guidance of

Vidwan I.M. Muthanna.<sup>133</sup> Vidwan I.M.Muthanna was instrumental in trying to revive the works of Appacha. In a letter written to Appacha, Muthanna mentions how he came across scripts of the *Subramanya Nataka* in Sharada Press in Mangalore and requested the author's permission to print and publish it<sup>134</sup>. In 1944, a memorial fund in honour of the Kavi was founded<sup>135</sup>. In December 1946, the Kavi's *Subramanya Nataka* was staged by the students at Madikeri, Murnad, Ammathi, Virajpet and Ponnampet to raise some money for the public funds<sup>136</sup>. In 1951, scholarships were instituted in the honour of the Kavi. In 1957, a road in Madikeri was named Appacha Kavi Road. In November 1963, the Kavi's works were translated into Kannada and were released from the Press by the Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Bangalore<sup>137</sup>. In 1967, the *Kavery Nataka* was translated and released for sale. In December 1968, the gala centenary celebrations in honour of the Kavi took place in Madikeri in which many writers from Karnataka participated<sup>138</sup>. In 1985, cassette tapes of Appacha Kavi's songs, (along with the Kodava folk songs sung by I.M. Muthanna) were widely distributed both inside and outside Kodagu. In 1986, the Kavi's handwritten short autobiography and other documents were deposited at the State Archives of the Vidhana Soudha in Bangalore. It is indeed unfortunate that the Kavi could not savour the success or recognition which was naturally due to him. But surely, these activities probably initiated theatre activity and enthusiasm in later generations of Kodavas. Thus we find the next ever theatre performance almost about half a century later in 1976 by Biddanda S. Chittiappa with his "BEL Kodava Sangha" in Bangalore.

The trend in the decline of Kodava theatre follows the general trend found in theatre activity throughout India, with only minor exceptions. Lack of competition among theatre groups in Kodagu seems to be one peculiarity. Against so many odds in production, performance, finance and waning audience support, whatever theatre groups that tried to resurrect the theatre in Kodagu, stopped all their activities. It is quite disconcerting to note that the important and promising group "*Srishti Kodagu Ranga*" has also curtailed its activities since 2001. The only silver lining on the horizon is that there still exists, persons with the fire of theatre still raging in their minds occasionally.

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<sup>133</sup> I.M. Muthanna's collection of letters and correspondences with Haradas Appacha, (unpublished), 126

<sup>134</sup> See Illustration II

<sup>135</sup> See Illustration III

<sup>136</sup> See Illustration IV

<sup>137</sup> See Illustration V

<sup>138</sup> See Illustration VI , VII

And also the fact that playwriting is still popular in Kodava literary scene surely augurs well for theatre. A dedicated and sincere effort at inculcating the craft of theatre into the minds of surviving theatre activists would surely pave the way for a much needed resurrection of the theatre in Kodagu. Unlike Greek and other foreign theatres that have been found to be thriving mainly because of audience support, such is not the case in Kodagu. There is hardly any interest or passion in the people for theatre. Theatre today has to resort to extraordinary means to capture the attention of audiences towards it and to wean them away from the magnetic attraction of television and other forms of entertainment.

Thus, in tracing a history of Kodava theatre, we find that the reasons for the ambivalence in Kodava theatre are several. These reasons, however casual they sound, must be taken seriously in order to preserve this theatre heritage from extinction. True, Kodava theatre, starting from Haradas Appacha Kavi till the turn of the century has a hundred year long history. But, to restrict theatre to a show or two in a year can never be termed as revival. The ambivalences have to be weeded out and fresh interest must be infused in the minds of the people of Kodagu. New and meaningful theatre must emerge from the rubbles of the existing tradition, which, with the rich potential available needs to be nurtured and carefully channeled through research, development, consistency and sustainability.

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## ***CONCLUSION***



## CONCLUSION

The concluding chapter aims to look at possible methods and activities that could encourage and enrich the status of Kodava theatre for a better, enhanced and thriving cultural and theatrical scenario in Kodagu which would stand as testimony to the legacy of theatre that over a hundred years ago Haradas Appacha Kavi laid the foundation for.

But before that, one must dwell on an interesting quote that Vijay Tendulkar in his keynote address titled, “*Writing and Producing Plays*” to the collection of essays “*Theatre Business and the Management of Men*”, says. He observes,

I must state that I do not agree with the glorified picture of Indian drama and theatre of today drawn in that <sup>139</sup>‘note’. It should have been more realistic. To me, the theatre scene in the country, with special reference to the theatre in my language, does not look bright.... The theatre scene in the country, in general, looks unexciting. Nothing new has happened for a long time. New, not merely in the form of technique, but new in the core like *Aadhe Adhure* of Rakesh in the Hindi theatre, *Evam Indrajit* of Badal Sircar, *Tughlaq* of Karnad or *Chakravyuha* of Thiyam, *Oedipus* of Sombhu and Tripti Mitra or *Sakharam Binder* or *Ghasiram Kotwal*. Something that has the power to dazzle. To shock. To provoke. To charm. To make the viewer and critic sit up and take notice.<sup>140</sup>

In the words of the great theatre person Vijay Tendulkar himself, it is quite evident that the theatre scenario in the entire country is facing a sudden lull. While this claim can be used in the Kodava context too as a means of justification/excuse, what one should not forget here, is that the Kodava theatre scene, after the period of Appacha had its next feeble surge only decades later and today stands in a highly ambivalent position. One must wake up to the fact that the awareness of theatre is woefully lacking in Kodagu. The people must be trained to understand the concept of theatre, its efficacy, its importance, its reachability, its power etc.

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<sup>139</sup> In the year 2000, Sahitya Akademi organized a national seminar on contemporary Indian theatre involving leading playwrights, actors, directors and scholars of theatre. The book *Theatre Business and the Management of Men* comprises some of the presentations made on that occasion. The ‘Note’ refers to the one on the seminar circulated by the Akademi.

<sup>140</sup> Vijay Tendulkar, *Writing and Producing Plays* in H.S. Shivaprakash, ed., *Theatre Business and Management of Men: Indian Theatre in 2000* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2011), 19-20

If one looks at the works of Haradas Appacha Kavi critically, situating it in the socio political conditions of the period in which the poet operated, we can surmise that his four plays were, as Vijay Tendulkar says “something that has(d) the power to dazzle. To shock. To provoke. To charm. To make the viewer and critic sit up and take notice.” This naturally gives him the access to be enrolled in the list of great names that Vijay Tendulkar emphasizes. But unfortunately for him, he failed to be recognized during his times. His creative ability, for someone with just basic primary education to his academic credit, was not given the due it deserved.

It is interesting to note that the people of Kodagu preferred to call Appacha a “Kavi” or a poet. Here, one can draw parallels with the great Kalidasa who was also referred to as “Mahakavi”. What makes them similar is that Appacha, like Kalidasa, was popular for the plays and poems he composed. But the people referred to them as poets. What makes them unique is that they created poetic wonders within their play texts that stood out as separate entities, some that could be applied, out of the context of the play to all times. These poetic marvels that appear very generously throughout their plays rendered them the position of “Kavi” or “Mahakavi”.

### A POETIC MARVEL

For the readers of Appacha’s works, it would come as a literary marvel as the short poems and proverbs that he uses within the play text are filled with an “excitement” that forces one to dwell on them. Each line in these poems is enthused with creativity and a style, with emphasis on rhythm, alliteration and melody that makes it hard to forget. In each of his poems he mentions the *Raaga* and also an example from a popular song of the period. For example, ‘*Raag : Todi*; (To be sung like, ‘*Haridasi Haridasi Peetambara*’).<sup>141</sup> The song in paranthesis is usually one that is popular and a tune that can be easily grasped even by people who aren’t well versed in the technicalities of classical music as well. The musical aspects used by Appacha Kavi entail a separate research that is beyond the scope of this paper. In one of his prayers, he sings the praise of Goddess Saraswati.<sup>142</sup> As the prayer progresses he likens the Goddess to Kodava women, using Kodava names

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<sup>141</sup> Haradas Appacha, *Sri Kavery Nataka* in Haradas Appacha Kavira Naal Nataka (The four plays of Haradas Appacha), (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 1998), 77.

<sup>142</sup> Addanda C. Cariappa, *Amara Kavi Appacha*, (Virajpet: Appacha Kavi 125<sup>th</sup> Janmothsava Samithi, 1994), 1.

such as *Muddavva*, *Ponnavva*, *Gangavva* and *Dehavva* to refer to the Goddess, thus 'Kodavising' the Goddess. Most of his poems are based on Kodava lifestyle or are his own experiences in life. It is mentioned in his autobiography that during his service in the Mujrai section, he was wrongly accused of corruption and that hurt him deeply. He has addressed this in his poems, "A government service is meant for the knowledgeable and not for the ignorant."<sup>143</sup> In these words he conveys that if the power lands in the hands of the wrong people, they will ruin the country beyond repair. Elsewhere in his autobiography, he mentions his love for the sport of hunting. He was a sharp shooter and enjoyed the sport immensely. His love for hunting comes across in his plays where he addresses the pig directly, "Stay right there o pig! Today I shall take your life!" Moreover, the expressions of acknowledgement of the patronage he received for each of his plays was unique in the sense that he composed a short litany in flowery languages in his inimical poetic style with verses composed exclusively describing the greatness of not only the mentor but also his family name, his wife, children and his status, invoking the bountiful blessings of Goddess Kavery or Lord Igguthappa as the case may be, on the mentor and his family.

It is also on record that he had the ability to compose music or versify on the spot, to cater to all situations. This unique talent of the Kavi would have embellished his Harikatha performances which were very well appreciated by the people of Kodagu and elsewhere. The rhyming verses available in plenty in his plays and his later compositions of devotional songs bear ample testimony to the melodious intonation of his musical flight, constructive faculty of imagination and his powerful command of language, thereby affording him an indelible status as the greatest Harikatha performer of his times. Besides, Appacha in his earnest attempt to infuse literary qualities to the nascent written form of the Kodava language had extensively borrowed and adopted several Sanskrit words and usages to accommodate metre, rhyme and rhythm in his poetic renderings throughout his plays and in the composition of devotional songs, thereby enriching the Kodava language.

These examples of the powerful poetry never failed to catch the immediate attention of Appacha's audiences. He was referred to by the *Madras Mail* newspaper as

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid 21

the “Shakespeare of Kodagu”. On a closer examination, one sees that Shakespeare, unlike Haradas Appacha, did not have a philosophy that he attached to his plays. His plays were meant to be for the purpose of profit and entertainment alone. True, like Appacha, Shakespeare did create magic with his sonnets, but the depth into which Appacha descended in his search for truth, Shakespeare could not. The mention of this is available in George Orwell when he explains Tolstoy’s attack on Shakespeare. ‘Briefly, he accuses him of being a hasty, slovenly writer, a man of doubtful morals, and, above all, of not being a *thinker*.’<sup>144</sup>

George Orwell indeed tries to defend Shakespeare from Tolstoy’s onslaught in places, but what he stands by and what is evident in reference to Appacha is the fact that Shakespeare was not a *thinker*. In contrast, as we have established in earlier chapters, Haradas Appacha weighed every word before he penned it. Each of his plays has a philosophy for the world and a message for his audience. *Yayati Nataka* cautions the world against the perils of losing sight of spirituality while warning the Kodavas of the harmful consequences of their nonchalance towards tradition. *Savitri Nataka* epitomizes the power of the *pativrata dharma* that the world should take notice of and highlights the strength of prayer, devotion, and determination of the Kodava women. *Subramanya Nataka* upholds for the world, the might of intense love and establishes the creation of the Igguthappa hill in Kodagu. *Kavery Nataka* sends the message of being of immense service to the world in general and emphasizes and educates the Kodavas of their glorious past. Thus, each of his plays was a philosophical thought-capsule delivered in an entertaining style that forced one to sit up and think about life. For example, in one of his plays, he commands thus:

*Go, sink a well- or a pond*  
*Feed the needy*  
*Grant the requests for help*  
*But only after weighing their plight*  
*Do fast but once in eight days*  
*And be ever devout to the ones who created you.*<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> R. Sundararaju R, “Selections from George Orwell, (Madras:Orient Longman Ltd., 1973), 38-40.

<sup>145</sup> Addanda Cariappa, *Amara Kavi Appacha*, (Virajpet: Appacha Kavi 125<sup>th</sup> Janmothsava Samiti, 1994), 49.

Thus, today, if Tolstoy were alive, he would naturally render Appacha's works more thought provoking and more powerful than Shakespeare's. But of course, as is evident, Shakespeare shot to fame and still continues to be admired and researched upon by scholars the world over, while Appacha remains somewhere in the background, with not even a single piece of research dedicated to him. While the wide popularity of Shakespeare can be attributed to his use of the English language as a medium, the only mistake Appacha committed would be his choice of the Kodava language as a medium that limited his reach. Although Dr. I.M. Muthanna attempted a marvellous translation of his plays into Kannada, it could never quite gain the popularity that Shakespeare's plays effortlessly managed to acquire. Indeed, his choice of Kodavattakk has rendered him the title of "father of modern Kodava theatre", a bestowal, which during his lifetime, he was not able to savour. The father of modern Kodava theatre passed away silently into the crumbling pages of history, old, ailing and poor, in the hope for a better condition for theatre in Kodagu.

## SUGGESTIONS

This brings us to the condition of the theatre scene in contemporary Kodagu, which, as addressed in earlier chapters, unfortunately does not seem very promising. The hundred year old theatrical tradition that began with Haradas Appacha seems to have dissipated into a deplorable condition of producing just one play a year, even with all the advancement in technology and education. Some of the reasons for this have been identified and needs to be contemplated on in order to save a theatrical legacy from extinction.

Today, Kodagu stands in an ambivalent position politically as well. A section of the Kodavas is fighting for a separate Kodava state. In this regard, one would think that

- a. The pressure of state building would inevitably demand a strong cultural front that would be one of the prerequisites for conferring statehood. This would seem a welcome boon for the cultural scenario, including theatre in Kodagu.
- b. Another important prerequisite is the unique language of the Kodavas. If included in the Eighth Schedule of the constitution, the language will be enriched considerably. However, it must be remembered that one of the prerequisites mandated by the central government to include a language in the Eighth Schedule

is that it should be taught as a subject in schools. This demands a production of text books.

These two factors, i.e. the need for a strong cultural front and the enrichment of language through text books, must invariably contribute to a creation of a well structured and sustained movement that will help enrich the theatre scenario in Kodagu. It is true indeed, that there need not be a political condition such as the one in contemporary Kodagu for the authorities to promote theatre in Kodagu, but having identified the serious reasons for the present sad condition, theatre in Kodagu can hope to gain some momentum as a sub-product of the political upheaval. In this context too, one sees that while everyone talks about the urgent need to protect the Kodava language and culture from degradation, nobody does anything significant to prevent this impending deterioration. Thus it is important to transform words into actions and actions into results and results into research to sustain healthy theatre activities in Kodagu.

1. The revival and promotion of language is of primary concern which will indirectly help in more and more serious literary works and play scripts being produced. This requires the basics of Kodavattakk to be taught in schools using text books from a very early age. Today the state Government has sanctioned funds and issued print order for 12,000 Tulu textbooks each for class 6 and 7 for 2011-12.<sup>146</sup> In Kodagu however, while an attempt was made to introduce Kodava textbooks in schools, due to issues and bureaucratic politics, the venture was stalled. The issues need to be sorted out and a basic Kodavattakk text book must be created and circulated in schools.
2. Theatre must be taught in schools from an early age. This should be taught in such a manner that the students must inculcate an interest in theatre and theatre technicalities as well. This means that children should be educated about lighting, sounds, costumes, make up, stage properties, stage management, poster designing, and publicity besides acting, directing and playwriting. They should also be encouraged to bring out productions periodically as an all student initiative with guidance from their teachers. This will give them a holistic picture about the world of theatre and help channel their interests accordingly.

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<sup>146</sup> Raviprasad Kamila, "Tulu textbooks to be available by April end", *The Hindu*, 5 April 2011

3. From the primary level, such theatre activities must be encouraged even on a higher platform. The program of initial primary teacher education should emphasize the relationship between theory and practice. Thus theatre competitions must be held on a regular periodic basis and awards must be granted separately in each of the different aspects of theatre such as script, direction, acting, lights, sounds, make up etc. Awards could be instituted in the names of the great personalities of Kodagu who have contributed extensively in the field of culture, like Haradas Appacha, I.M. Muthanna, Nadikeriyanda Chinnappa, Cheppudira Sisters etc.<sup>147</sup> The awards may also be sponsored by the family members of these personalities under their family name.
4. It is seen that a lot of plays have been, and continue to be written in Kodavattakk. But as A.C. Cariappa says, most of these plays are not stageable. This is probably because the playwright does not possess the technical know-how of theatre and thus, owing to a lack of visualizing the play on stage, write scripts that are sometimes impossible to stage. In such a situation, there needs to be a panel of theatre-educated persons, who, after reading these plays, must try and make it stage-worthy, in discussion with the playwrights. This will ensure a development of literature and theatre side by side.
5. The problem of funding for a theatre production is still a major problem. It is unwise to expect patronages for this purpose to come by easily. In this context, the idea of 'Poor Theatre', as envisaged by world famous theatre icons like Badal Sircar could be emulated. The attention of concerned theatre activists in Kodagu needs to be drawn towards this form of theatre too.
6. Mass media like radio and television must be employed in nurturing interest in theatre. Trained theatre personnel must be engaged to conduct radio plays periodically. Creation of a theatrical ambience through voice and sounds alone is indeed a fascinating challenge for creative minds. Moreover radio play competitions must be encouraged. Such competitions are seen in Kerala and enjoy a wide audience and participation. This must be promoted in Kodagu as well. The

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<sup>147</sup> I.M. Muthanna greatly tried to revive the drama and theatre of Coorg and has many books to his credit on Kodagu history and Kodava culture; Nadikeriyanda Chinnappa, the author of Pattole Palame, 1924, collected all the folk songs and traditional practices of the Kodavas into one huge volume; The Cheppudira sisters were famous Bharatnatyam dancers.

winners and participants must be rewarded handsomely in order to encourage stronger and healthier participation.

7. Literary criticism is currently lacking in Kodava language. Meaningful criticism by experts in their respective fields like poetry, short story, novels and dramas should be taught at least in the undergraduate level, so that meaningful criticism of periodic Kodava literary outputs, help both the writers and the readers in understanding the “quality” of Kodava literature being produced.
8. Kodagu has a local television channel that broadcasts local news and events. Such channels must be encouraged to record theatre productions and broadcast them on a weekly basis. The benefits of this method are twofold. One, it dissipates theatre into the living room of every household, and two, by the process of recording, it ensures the documentation of these plays for future references. This kind of documentation in audio and video modes aid in research activities.
9. The powers of the World Wide Web must be harnessed towards building a bridge of communication between Kodava speaking communities all over the world who are interested in contributing to Kodava theatre and culture. The Kodava Sahitya Academy at Madikeri should develop a website of its own. If the construction of a website is difficult, there is always the option of blogs which come free of cost and can be accessed without any hassle. Kodava speaking communities from all over the world can submit their works/plays (transliterated, due to lack of a script, either in Kannada or even English) and a panel of editors of sound knowledge of Kodavattakk, Kannada and English languages can upload it to a common blog or website.

## **CONCLUSION**

These are indeed suggestions that will require a proper route of funding for its implementation. However, one sees that there is immense interest and funding organized for the annual hockey matches conducted by Kodava families. This only proves that if there is a collective will on the part of the Kodavas towards the protection of culture and arts, the same enthusiasm they show in the field of sports can also be shown towards arts.

But indeed, Kodavas are a class apart. Some of their customs and practices are unique and do not conform to the conventions commonly practiced in the rest of the



country. An example is the traditional costumes that they wear even today, at least on festive occasions.<sup>148</sup> Kodava men wear a long coat (*kupya*) secured with a red, gold-embroidered sash (*cele*) into which is tucked a dagger (*pice kathi*). Kodava women wear their saris in a distinctive style with the pleats tucked in at the back of the waist. Brahmin priests do not officiate at Kodava rituals or ceremonies. Even in hockey games, Kodava women participate in the sport along with the male members in the same team. The fact that, traditionally, the wife of a deceased Kodava man kindles her husband's funeral pyre and vice versa is a striking example of customs and traditions that differ widely from those of the neighbouring areas. The Kodavas are ancestor worshippers and do not claim to have a religion. Thus one sees that the ways of the Kodavas are distinctively different from the rest and entails a detailed social and cultural anthropological study which is currently beyond the scope of this paper. An unraveling of these mysteries will greatly aid research activities in all fields of Kodava society and culture.

Research, as is emphasized earlier, is still lacking momentum in Kodagu, especially in the field of theatre. However, recently about a month ago, Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy published a collection of devotional songs in both Kannda and Kodavataakk, and a Harikatha composed by Haradas Appacha in the year 1936, titled "*Bhaktaratnakara Keertana*" collected by I. Ramesh Uthappa from a manuscript that had been recently unearthed. This book was published only this year. The poet mentions in the foreword to this book how, during his lifetime, he had to struggle to find funds to publish the book in which he failed miserably.<sup>149</sup> Probably if this volume had come to light then (in 1936), since it seems to be the only material available in which his poetic talents in Kannada were displayed, it could have catapulted Appacha to fame, at least with the great names in Kannada literature and poetry. The fact that it took about 75 years to finally be discovered and published is a message in itself that it is time to set the ambivalences aside and encourage serious research and discussions. It only proves that there is indeed a lot of material that needs to be uncovered and researched upon. More importantly, it also proves that there are many members from the Kodava community who are seriously interested in reviving the age old traditions and literature of Kodagu.

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<sup>148</sup> Nadikerianda Chinnappa, *Pattole Palame: Kodava Culture- Folksongs and Traditions*, trans. Boverianda Nanjamma and Chinnappa (New Delhi: Rupa & Co, 2003), xxix

<sup>149</sup> I. Ramesh Uthappa, *Bhaktaratnakara Keerthana*, (Madikeri: Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, 2011), 8-9.

With the added benefits of scientific and theoretical methodology, it would pave the way for further studies and greater recognition of the talents. This will bring Kodagu on a national and international platform and help raise the Kodava stage, contributing to the writing of Indian theatre historiography, on a dais in par with that of mainstream theatres.

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# *ILLUSTRATIONS*

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ILLUSTRATION I

**The Coorgi-Cox alphabet**

A	ᳵ	Dh	᳚	M	᳛	V	᳜
E	ᳶ	F	᳛	N	᳝	W	᳞
I	᳷	G	᳜	P	᳟	Y	᳠
O	᳸	Gh	᳝	R	᳡	Z	᳢
U	᳹	H	᳞	Rh	᳣	ae	᳤
B	ᳺ	J	᳟	S	᳥	ai	᳦
Bh	᳻	K	᳠	Sh	᳧	oi	᳨
Ch	᳼	Kh	᳡	T	ᳩ		
D	᳽	L	᳢	Th	ᳪ	¢	(double vowel)

COORGI COX ALPHABET

ILLUSTRATION II

J. M. Muthanna,  
C/o Sri Krishna Bhawan,  
Mangalore - 18-7-1942.

ನನ್ನನ್ನು ಕಿರಿಯರಾದ  
ಪರಮಾನು ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಣನಿಗೆ.

ನಾನು ತಮ್ಮನಿಗೆ ಪೂಜಿಸುವೆನು. (ವಿಚಿತ್ರವಾದ ಕುಟುಂಬವನ್ನು  
 ಸಿಂಹು ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಣನು ಸಂಬಂಧವಾಗಿ ನಾನು ಇಷ್ಟು ಕಾಲವು ದಿನ ಇಷ್ಟೇನಿ. ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ  
 ವಿರೂ ನಾನು ವರಮಾಸು ವಿರೂವಿರೂಲಯವೆಂಬ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತ  
 ಕೂಡ ವಿರೂವನು ತ್ರಿಶೂಲಿಯನ್ನು ಬಿಡುವ ಈಗ ಅಸ್ತುಕನಾಗಿ ನೀವಿಂತ  
 ನಾನೇನಿ. ಕೊಡಗಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಣನು ಬಾಡೀಗೃಹವು ವ್ಯಸಂಗವನ್ನು  
 ಕೊಂಡಿರುವೆನು ನಾನೇ ಮೊದಲನೆಯವರು ತಮ್ಮನಿಗೆ ತ್ರಿಶೂಲ ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣವಾಗಿ  
 ನಾನು ನಿಮ್ಮ ಸಿಂಹಕೂಟ ನಾಟಕ ಪ್ರದರ್ಶನಕ್ಕೆ ನನ್ನ ಸಿಂಹು ಮಂಜುಷ್ಠಿ  
 ಸಿಂಹು ತ್ರಿಶೂಲವಾಗಿವೆ. ತಮ್ಮ ಕವಿಕೃತಿ, ಶ್ಲೋಕ, ವಿಷ್ಣು ಮತ್ತು ಶಿಶು  
 ಗಳು ಅಮೋಘವಾಗಿವೆ, ವಿರೂವನು ಕಲ್ಯಾಣನು ನಾನು ಅಸ್ತುಕನಾಗಿ  
 ಸ್ವಾಗತವನ್ನು ಬಿಡುವ ವಿಷಯವಾಗಿ ಸಿಂಹುವೆ ಗಂಡುಕಾಲ ಮಹಾತಿವಿಸು.  
 ನಿಮ್ಮ ವಿಷಯವಾಗಿ ಅದೇ ನನ್ನ ಮೊದಲ ಬಾಡೀವಾಗಿವೆ. ಗಾಳಿಯ ವಲಾ  
 ಲು ಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಿಯರು ವಿಸ್ತಾರಿಸಿದಾಗ ಈವರ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಮೆಚ್ಚುಗೆಯನ್ನು ವ್ಯಕ್ತಪಡಿಸಿದರು.  
 ಈ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ತಮ್ಮನಿಗೆ ಅಧ್ಯಯನವಾಗಿ ಬಿಡುವ ಈ  
 ಸಿಂಹು ವಿಷಯವನ್ನು ಹೇಳಲು ಶಿಷ್ಟವಾಗಿವೆ. ಮೊದಲಿ, ಶನಿವಾರ ದಿನ ನಾಯಕ  
 ಕಾಲ ನಗರದಲ್ಲಿ ತಿರುಗಾಡತೆಂದು ಪೋಷಣೆ ಈ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕವಾಗಿ ರೂಪಿಸಿಯ  
 ಲ್ಲವು ಶಾರದಾ ವಾಚನಾನಾಯಕ ನನ್ನ ಸ್ವಾಭಾವಿಕ. ಅದೇ ಮೊದಲಿನಿಂದ  
 ಕೊಡು ಈ ಮುಖ್ಯವೆಂದು ನನ್ನ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷೆಯೆಂದು ಸಿಕ್ಕಿ ಬಿಟ್ಟು ನಾನು ಜಾಗೆ ಸಿ  
 ಕ್ಕಿಗೆ ಸುತ್ತವೆಯೆಂದು ತಿಳಿಸು ಸಿಂಹು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯವು ಮುಖ್ಯವೆಂದು  
 ಕಡಿಮೆ ಜಾಗರಣೆ ಸಿಕ್ಕಿ ಬಿಟ್ಟು ನನ್ನ ನೋಡಿ ವಿಸು. ಅದೇನು ಬಿಡುವೆ  
 ಸು ನೋಡಿದಾಗ ಅವರ ತಾವು ರಾಜ್ಯವು ಸ್ವಲ್ಪವು ನಾಟಕವೆಂದೆ ಮು  
 ಸ್ವಲ್ಪವೆಂದು ತಿಳಿಸಿ. ಅದನ್ನು ನೋಡಿ ನನ್ನಿಗೆ ಅಧ್ಯಯನವಾಯಿತು.  
 ಅದೇನು ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ಜಾಗರಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಜಾಗೆ ಸಿಂಹು  
 ಮೂಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕಲ್ಪಿಸಿದೆಯೆಂದು ಅಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸಗಾರರನ್ನು ವಿಚಾರಿಸಿದನು.  
 ನೀವು ಅದೇನೋ ಸಿರ್ವರ ಪೂಜೆ ನಡೆಯುವ ಬರವಣಿಯನ್ನು ನಂಬಿ  
 ಕೆತ್ತಿಗೆ ಅವರಿಂದ ಈ ಪೂಜೆ ನಡೆಯುವೆ ನೀವು ನಿರಾಶರಾದಿರೆಯೆ  
 ವನು ಈ ವಾಚನಾನಾಯಕ ಮೊದಲಿನಿಂದ ಕಡಿಮೆ ತಿಳಿದುಕೊಂಡನು.  
 ಜೋಗೂ ತಾವು ಸಿಕ್ಕುವುದಾದರೆ ನಾನೇ ಅವನ್ನು ನನ್ನ  
 ಲ್ಲವು ಸಿಂಬಿಟ್ಟು ಹಣವನ್ನು ಅದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ವೆಚ್ಚಮಾಡಿ ಈ ಪ್ರಕಾರವನ್ನು  
 ಸೂಕ್ತಕಲು ಅದೇನಿರಬೇಕೆ. ನಯಮಾಡಿ ಬಿಡು. ಅಂದಾಸ್ತುತಿಗಿಂತ  
 ನಮೂ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಯ ತ್ರಿಶೂಲವಾಗಿವೆ. ಅವುಗಳನ್ನು ನಾವು ಉಳಿಸಿಕೊಟ್ಟು  
 ಕೊಡು ನಾನು ಸಂಬಂಧವೆನಿ. ಶಿವಾಗಲಿ ನಾನು ಈ ಮುಖ್ಯವೆಂದು  
 ಕವರಿಗೆ ಈ ಮುಖ್ಯವು ಬಿಡುವ ಜಾಗೆಯನ್ನು ನಡಿ ಸಿಕ್ಕಿ ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಕೊಡು  
 ಯಲು ಕೊಟ್ಟೆನಿ. ತಮ್ಮನಿಗೆ ಈ ವಿಷಯ ತಿಳಿಸಬೇಕೆಂದು ಅವರಿ  
 ಗೂ ಕೊಟ್ಟೆನಿ. ತಾವು ಅದೇನಿರಬೇಕೆಂದು ವಿಚಾರಿಸಿ ಬಾವಿಸುತ್ತೆನಿ.  
 ನಾನು ಇಷ್ಟು ಇನ್ನೊಬ್ಬರಂತೆ ವಾರಗಳ ಕಾಲ ಇರುವೆನಿ. ತಮ್ಮ  
 ಕೃತಿ ಕಾಯುತ್ತಿರುತ್ತೆನಿ. ತಮ್ಮಗೆ ನನ್ನ ಅಪಕಲ್ಪವರ್ಧವಾದ  
 ಪ್ರಸಂಗಗಳಿಂದ ನಾನು ಈ ಕೃತವನ್ನು ಮುಗಿಸುತ್ತೆನಿ.

ಇತಿ ತಮ್ಮ ವಿಶ್ವಾಸ,  
 ವಿಚಿತ್ರ ಮುದ್ದು ಮೂಕರ್ಷಿ.  
 18/7/42.

MUTHANNA'S LETTER TO APPACHA REGARDING THE SUBRAMANYA  
 NATAKA

ILLUSTRATION III

ನೋಟೀಸ್.

ಈ ದಿನ ರಾತ್ರಿ 8 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ ನೀರಾ ಜಪೇಟಿ  
ಹೈಸ್ಕೂಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ 1945  
'ಅಪ್ಪಚ್ಚ ಕವಿ ಸ್ಮಾರಕ ನಿಧಿ'  
ಇದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ 9 ವರ್ಷದ ಬಾಲಕಿಯರಿಂದ  
ಭರತ ನಾಟ್ಯ ಪ್ರದರ್ಶಿಸಲ್ಪಡುವುದು.  
ಸರ್ವರೂ ಬಂದು ಪ್ರೋತ್ಸಾಹಿಸಬೇಕಾಗಿ ವಿನಂತಿ.

ವಿದ್ವಾನ್ ಮುತ್ತಣ್ಣನವರಿಂದ  
ಹರದಾಸ ಅಪ್ಪಚ್ಚ ಕವಿಗಳ  
ಮೂರು ನಾಟಕಗಳ ಭಾಷಾಂತರ  
ಯಯಾತಿರಾಜ ಮತ್ತು ಸುಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯ  
(ಕವಿ ಚರಿತ್ರೆ ನಾಟಕ ಪ್ರಸ್ತಾವನೆ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ಸಹಿತ)  
ಮಾರಾಟಕ್ಕೆ ಸಿದ್ಧವಾಗಿವೆ

ಪುಟಗಳು 485. ಬೆಲೆ 6-50, ಮಾತ್ರ  
ಪ್ರತಿಗಳು ಈ ಕೆಳಗಿನವರಲ್ಲಿ ದೊರಕುತ್ತವೆ:-  
---"ಶಕ್ತಿ" ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ.  
ಮಡಿಕೇರಿ, ಕೊಡಗು.

ನೋಟೀಸ್.

ಈ ದಿನ ರಾತ್ರಿ 8 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ ನೀರಾ ಜಪೇಟಿ  
ಹೈಸ್ಕೂಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ  
'ಅಪ್ಪಚ್ಚ ಕವಿ ಸ್ಮಾರಕ ನಿಧಿ'  
ಇದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ 9 ವರ್ಷದ ಬಾಲಕಿಯರಿಂದ  
ಭರತ ನಾಟ್ಯ ಪ್ರದರ್ಶಿಸಲ್ಪಡುವುದು.  
ಸರ್ವರೂ ಬಂದು ಪ್ರೋತ್ಸಾಹಿಸಬೇಕಾಗಿ ವಿನಂತಿ.

ನಾಡಿಗೆರೆ ಕೃಷ್ಣರಾಯರು ಕಮ್ಮ  
ವಿಮೋದ ನೆಕಲಿಗಳಿಂದ ಸ್ಥಳೀಕ  
ರನ್ನು ಆನಂದಗೊಳಿಸಿ ಪಡೆ.

HARADAS APPACHA MEMORIAL FUND ADVERTISEMENT

ILLUSTRATION 1V

(ಕೋಡೆಂಡ) ಸ್ವಾರಸ ನಿದಿ. E. ಎ *Napoleon - 18<sup>th</sup>*  
 (ಪನ್ (ಕೋಡಗು ವಿದ್ಯಾವಿಧಿ) )  
 ABCDE  
**ಸುಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯ ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ನಾಟಕ**  
 (ಸೆಂಟ್ರಲ್ ಹೈಸ್ಕೂಲ್ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಯಿಂದ)  
**12-12-46** ನೇ ಗುರುವಾರ  
 ಸಾಯಂಕಾಲ 6-30 ಘಂಟೆಗೆ  
 ಮೂರ್ನಾಡು ಶಾಲಾ ಹಾಲಿನಲ್ಲಿ  
 ಟಿಕೇಟು ರೂ. 1-0-0

ರೂ. ೨. ರೂ. ೧. ಆಣೆ. ೦-೮-೦.

77 ಸಹಾಯಾರ್ಥ ಪ್ರದರ್ಶನ  
 ABCDE  
**ಸುಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯ ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ನಾಟಕ**  
 (ಸೆಂಟ್ರಲ್ ಹೈಸ್ಕೂಲ್ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಯಿಂದ)  
**17-12-46** ಮಂಗಳವಾರ  
 ಸಾಯಂಕಾಲ 6-30 ಘಂಟೆಗೆ  
 ವಿರಾಜಪೇಟೆ ಶಾಲಾ ಹಾಲಿನಲ್ಲಿ  
 ಟಿಕೇಟು ರೂ. 2-0-0

ಪರದಾಸ ಅಪ್ರತಿಭಾವಿಗಳ ಸ್ವಾರಸೋತ್ಸವ

ಫೆಬ್ರವರಿ ೧೯೪೭ನೇ ಭಾನುವಾರ ಅಪರಾಹ್ನ ೩-೩೦ ಘಂಟೆಗೆ -  
 ೨೦ ಘಂಟೆ ರಿಂದ ೩-೩೦ ರ ವರೆಗೆ - ಪ್ರಾರ್ಥನೆ  
 ೩-೩೦ ರಿಂದ ೬-೩೦ ಸ್ವಾಗತ ಭಾವಣಾ ರಾ|| ಬಿ. ಕೆ. ಬಿ. ಉತ್ತಮ, ಬಿ. ಎ. ಸ್ವಾರಸ ನಿರೂಪಣೆ  
 ೬-೩೦ ರಿಂದ ೮-೩೦ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರ ಭಾವಣಾ ಕ್ರೀಡೆ ಕೋ. ಶಿವಭಾಮಾ ಕಾರಂತರವರು  
 ೮-೩೦ ರಿಂದ ೧೦-೩೦ ಭಾವಣಾ ಕ್ರೀಡೆ ಅ. ಸ. ಕೃಷ್ಣ ರಾಯರು  
 ೧೦-೩೦ ರಿಂದ ೧೨-೩೦ ಕ್ರೀಡೆ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರವರಿಗೆ ಕಾವ್ಯ ಮಂಚಯ ವಿದ್ಯಾನ್ ಬಿ. ಎಂ. ಮುಕ್ತಾಕ್ಷರವರು  
 ೧೨-೩೦ ರಿಂದ ೧-೩೦ ವಿನೋದಗಳು ಕ್ರೀಡಾ ನಾಡೀಗರ ಕೃಷ್ಣ ರಾಯರು  
 ೧-೩೦ ರಿಂದ ೬-೩೦ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರ ಉಪಸಂಹಾರ ಭಾವಣಾ  
 ೬-೩೦ ರಿಂದ ೮-೩೦ ಮಂಜನಾರಣ

೧ ಸಹಾಯಾರ್ಥ ಪ್ರದರ್ಶನ  
 ABCDE  
**ಸುಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯ ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ನಾಟಕ**  
 (ಸೆಂಟ್ರಲ್ ಹೈಸ್ಕೂಲ್ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಯಿಂದ)  
**14-12-46** ನೇ ಶನಿವಾರ  
 ಸಾಯಂಕಾಲ 6-30 ಘಂಟೆಗೆ  
 ಅಮ್ಮತ್ತಿ ಶಾಲಾ ಹಾಲಿನಲ್ಲಿ  
 ಟಿಕೇಟು ರೂ. 1-0-0

58

SUBRAMANYA NATAKA NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT IN MURNAD, VIRAJPET AND AMMATHI TOWNS



ILLUSTRATION V

76 "ಕೊಡಗು" ಮಣಿಕೋಶಿ - ನವೆಂಬರ್ 1963.

ಅಪ್ಪಚ್ಚ ಕವಿಯ ನಾಟಕಗಳ ಪ್ರಕಟನೋತ್ಸವ.

ಕೊಡಗಿನ ಕವಿ ಶ್ರೀ ಹರದಾಸ ಅಪ್ಪಚ್ಚ ಕವಿಯವರು ಕೊಡಗು ಭಾಷೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬರೆದಿರುವ 'ಸಾವಿತ್ರಿ', 'ಯಯಾತಿ ರಾಜ' ಮತ್ತು 'ಸುಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯ ಸ್ವಾಮಿ' ನಾಟಕಗಳನ್ನು ಇನ್ನೊಂದು ಭಾಷೆಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಕೊಡಗಿನ ಶ್ರೀಗಣಪತಿ ಮುತ್ತುಣ್ಣನವರು ಕನ್ನಡ ಭಾಷೆಗೆ ಭಾಷಾಂತರಿಸಿದರು. ಆ ನಾಟಕ ಸಂಗ್ರಹದ ಪ್ರಕಟನೆ ಸಮಾರಂಭವು ತಾ. ಅನೇ ಶುಕ್ರವಾರ ಸಂಜೆ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನ ಶ್ರೀ ಜಯಜಾ ಮಠದ ಮುಖ್ಯ ಮಂಟಪದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತ ಕಾಲೇಜಿನಲ್ಲಿ ನಡೆಯಿತು. ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಗೃಹ ಸಚಿವರಾದ ಶ್ರೀ ಆರ್. ವಿ. ಪಾಟೀಲ

ಲರು ನಾಟಕ ಸಂಗ್ರಹವನ್ನು ಉದ್ಘಾಟಿಸಿದರು. ಕನ್ನಡ ಸಾಹಿತ್ಯ ಪರಿಷತ್ತಿನ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರಾದ ಶ್ರೀ ಬಿ. ಶಿವಮೂರ್ತಿಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಿಗಳು ಸಮಾರಂಭದ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷತೆ ವಹಿಸಿದ್ದರು.

ಕುಮಾರಿ ಸಿ. ಕೆ. ವದ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಗಡಿಗರಿಂದ ದೇವತಾ ಪ್ರಾರ್ಥನೆಯೊಂದಿಗೆ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳು ಆರಂಭವಾದವು. ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತ ಕಾಲೇಜಿನ ಮುಖ್ಯಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ಸ್ವಾಗತ ಭಾಷಣ ಮಾಡಿದ ನಂತರ ವಿವಾನ್ ಶ್ರೀ ಎಚ್. ಎನ್. ರಾಮಚಂದ್ರಪ್ಪ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಗಡಿಗರಿಂದ ಸ್ವಾಗತ ಸಂಗ್ರಹ ಖಚೋರಿ ನಡೆಯಿತು.

ಗೃಹ ಸಚಿವ ಶ್ರೀ ಪಾಟೀಲರು ಪುಸ್ತಕವನ್ನು ಉದ್ಘಾಟಿಸುತ್ತಾ ಹರದಾಸ ಅಪ್ಪಚ್ಚ ಕವಿಯವರು ನಾಡು ನುಡಿಯ ಅಭಿಮಾನ, ಸಾಹಿತ್ಯ ಭಿರುಚಿಯನ್ನು ಪ್ರಸಾರಿಸಿದರು. ಕವಿಯು ಇನ್ನೂ ಎರಡು ನಾಟಕಗಳನ್ನು ಬರೆದಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಅಪ್ಪಚ್ಚ ಕವಿಯವರು ಹರದಾಸ ಅಪ್ಪಚ್ಚ ಕವಿಯವರು ಕೊಡಗು ಭಾಷೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬರೆದಿರುವ 'ಸಾವಿತ್ರಿ', 'ಯಯಾತಿ ರಾಜ' ಮತ್ತು 'ಸುಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯ ಸ್ವಾಮಿ' ನಾಟಕಗಳನ್ನು ಇನ್ನೊಂದು ಭಾಷೆಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಕೊಡಗಿನ ಶ್ರೀಗಣಪತಿ ಮುತ್ತುಣ್ಣನವರು ಕನ್ನಡ ಭಾಷೆಗೆ ಭಾಷಾಂತರಿಸಿದರು. ಆ ನಾಟಕ ಸಂಗ್ರಹದ ಪ್ರಕಟನೆ ಸಮಾರಂಭವು ತಾ. ಅನೇ ಶುಕ್ರವಾರ ಸಂಜೆ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನ ಶ್ರೀ ಜಯಜಾ ಮಠದ ಮುಖ್ಯ ಮಂಟಪದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತ ಕಾಲೇಜಿನಲ್ಲಿ ನಡೆಯಿತು. ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಗೃಹ ಸಚಿವರಾದ ಶ್ರೀ ಆರ್. ವಿ. ಪಾಟೀಲ



Nov. 1963. 77

ಕೊಡಗಿನ ಅಪ್ಪಚ್ಚ ಕವಿಯ ಮೂರು ನಾಟಕಗಳ ಉದ್ಘಾಟನೆ ತಾ|| ೮-೧೧-೬೩ ರಂದು ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ನಡೆದ ದೃಶ್ಯ. ಇದರಲ್ಲಿ ಉದ್ಘಾಟಕರಾದ ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಗೃಹಮಂತ್ರಿ ಶ್ರೀ ಆರ್. ಎಂ. ಪಾಟೀಲರು, ಉತ್ಸವದ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರಾದ ಶ್ರೀ ಬಿ. ಶಿವಮೂರ್ತಿಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಿಗಳು, ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕರಾದ ಶ್ರೀ ಎನ್. ಶಂಕರ್ಪ್ಪನವರು ಮೊದಲಾದವರನ್ನು ಕಾಣಬಹುದು.



ILLUSTRATION VII

ಅಪ್ಪಚ್ಚ ಕವಿ ಶತಮಾನಾಬ್ಧಿ ಸ್ಮಾರಕ  
ಪ್ರಬಂಧ ಸ್ಪರ್ಧೆ

ವಿಷಯ:- "ಅಪ್ಪಚ್ಚ ಕವಿ ಮತ್ತು ಅವರ ಕೃತಿಗಳು"  
(ಸುಮಾರು 4,000 ಶಬ್ದಗಳಷ್ಟು)

೧ ನೇ ಬಹುಮಾನ ರೂ. ೧೦೦/= ೨ ನೇ ಬಹುಮಾನ ರೂ. ೫೦/=  
(೩ ನೇ ಬಹುಮಾನ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಪ್ರಬಂಧಗಳಿದ್ದರೆ ಮಾತ್ರ)

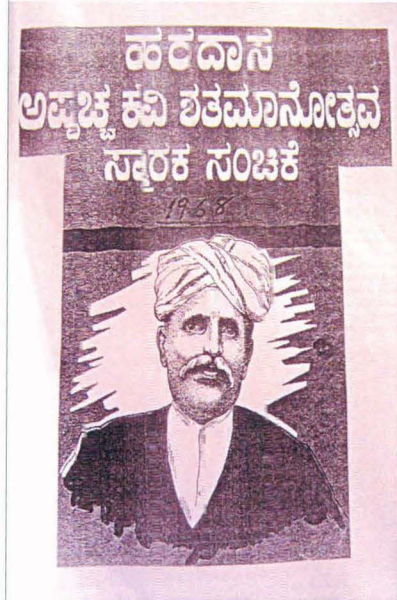
ಆಧಾರ ಗ್ರಂಥಗಳು:-

ಅಪ್ಪಚ್ಚ ಕವಿಯ ನಾಲ್ಕು ನಾಟಕಗಳು.

ಕವಿಯ ಮೂರು ನಾಟಕಗಳು-ವಿದ್ವಾನ್ ಮುತ್ತಣ್ಣ  
ಬರುವ ಜುಲೈ ತಾ|| ೨೦ರ ಒಳಗಾಗಿ ಪ್ರಬಂಧಗಳನ್ನು ಈ ವಿಳಾಸಕ್ಕೆ ಕಳುಹಿಸುವುದು

ಶಕ್ತಿ  
Publishes on  
5/4/1968

"M"  
C/o Editor "Shakthi"  
Mercara - coorg



Appacha Kavi Centenary Celebration Committee.

Chairman: R. B. P. A. CHENGAPPA,  
Secy: K. P. CHINNAPPA,  
Secretary: N. G. UTHAYYA.

KODAVA SAMAJ  
MERCARA.

Date 16th March 1968

To

Dr. I. M. Muthanna  
1154 Howe Street,  
Van Coury B.C.  
Canada.

Dear Sir,

In connection with the Centenary celebration of Haradas Appacha Kavi, it is decided to bring out a Souvenir to highlight his life and creative activities. Hence I request you kindly to contribute an article in Kannada (as short as possible) on the following subject or any other aspect of his life or work and send it to the below mentioned address by 15-4-1968 the latest. Hope you will kindly co-operate. Please also send a copy of your first card size photo.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

for the Editorial Committee.

Subject: Appacha Kavi.

Dr. N. G. Uthayya  
Secretary.

APPACHA KAVI CENTENARY CELEBRATION

ILLUSTRATION VIII



ಹ ರ ದಾ ಸ ಅ ಪ್ಪ ಚ್ಚ ಕ ವಿ  
'ಯಯಾತಿರಾಜ' ಪಾತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ

HARADAS APPACHA AS 'YAYATI'

ILLUSTRATION IX



A COORG WITH HIS SONS AND GRANDSONS.

A COORG WITH HIS SONS AND GRANDSONS

## ILLUSTRATION X



**OLD TIMERS:** Members of the delegation from Coorg which met the Viceroy in Bangalore in November 1895.  
Standing (left to right): Kodendera Kuttaiya, Apparanda Bopanna, Coravanda Nanjappa, Coluvanda Appanna, Kutteitira Chengappa.  
Sitting (left to right): Cheppudira Thimmayya, Apparanda Mandanna, Maneyapanda Belliappa, Biddanda-Bopanna, Biddanda Mandanna

## COORG ELDERS

ILLUSTRATION XI



COORG ELDERS

ILLUSTRATION XII



Traditional and Modern Coorgs - from a family album (Courtesy: P.G.Belliappa)

TRADITIONAL AND MODERN COORGS



ILLUSTRATION XIII



Westernised Coorgs with three ladies in traditional dress  
(Courtesy: Lt. Col. C. B. Cariappa)

WESTERNISED COORGS WITH THREE LADIES IN TRADITIONAL DRESS

ILLUSTRATION XIV



All Coorg XI cricket team  
Compiler seated on the ground, extreme left (early 1900's)

**ALL COORG XI CRICKET TEAM**

ILLUSTRATION XV



HARADAS APPACHA KAVI

(1865-1944)

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