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Contribution Of Nath Yogi, Chakuliapanda, Pala And Dasakathia To The Society And Culture Of Orissa

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Abstract of the research paper titled "contribution of Nath Yogi, Chakuliapanda, pala and Dasakathia to the society and culture of Orissa."

INTRODUCTION- Orissan culture is a rich and prosperous since its time immemorial. The contribution of Nath yogi, Chakuliapanda, pala and Dasakathia is immense and insignificant and it tremendously thrived in the society in the pre Medieval period. It also significantly contributed to the growth of folk literature in Orissa. Through the folk literature the Nath Yogis, chakuliapandas, palakaras and Dasakathia players spread the message of humanity and brotherhood. This melodious and humorous songs drew the attention of the people and touched the heart of the people. It reflected the morals, ethical values and value education in the society in general and the growth of cultural heritage in particular. Their immense contribution enriched the cultural nuances and societal value system in Orissa. This tradition still persists across Orissa and mesmomorise the Oriya people. This traditional value system will percolate from generation to generation only thing is that due to the advent of westernization the people of Orissa were impacted and tended towards the alien culture which is trying to tarnish the old cultural practices and traditions in Orissa. Bu Orissan culture is so enriched which repulsed back the tide of the western culture.

MATIVATION/RATIOANLE- The rationale of this research topic contribution of Nath Yogi, Chakuliapanda, Pala and Dasakathia to Orissan Culture focuses the rich and abundant folk literature available in Orissa and its contribution to the growth of oriya literature. Besides that it also reflects our cultural values, morale, humanity and educational value system. It also establishes brotherhood and humanity in the society. The melodious and humorous songs in fact, has become very popular in Orissa.

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RELATAED LITERATURE- Balaram Das's J*agamohan Ramayan* provided one pillar, along with Sarala-Das's *Mahabharata,* upon which subsequent Odia literature was built. His *Laksmi Purana* is considered the first manifesto of women's liberation or feminism in Indian literature. His other major works are *Gita Abakasa, Bhava samudra, Gupta Gita, Vedanta Sara, Mriguni Stuti, Saptanga yogasara tika, Vedanta sara or Brahma tika, Baula gai gita, Kamala lochana chotisa, Kanta koili, Bedha parikrama, Brahma gita, Brahmanda bhugola, Vajra kavacha, Jnana chudamani, Virata gita, Ganesha vibhuti & Amarakosha Gita.* The most influential work of this period was however Atibadi Jagannath Das's *Bhagabata,* which had a great influence on the Odia people as a day-to-day philosophical guide, as well as a lasting one in Odia culture. His other works include *Gupta Bhagavat, Tula vina, Sola chapadi, Chari chapadi, Tola bena, Daru brahma gita, Diksa samyad, Artha koili, Muguni stuti, Annamaya kundali, Goloka sarodhara, Bhakti chandrika, Kali malika, Indra malika, Niladri vilasa, Nitya gupta chintamani, Sri Krishna bhakti kalpa lata* etc. Shishu Ananta Das wrote *Bhakti mukti daya gita, Sisu Deva gita, Artha tarani, Udebhakara, Tirabhakana,* a *Malika* and several bhajan poetries.Yashobanta Das was the composer of *Govinda Chandra* (a ballad or Gatha- Sangeeta), *Premabhakti, Brahma Gita, Shiva Swarodaya, Sasti mala, Brahma gita, Atma pariche gita, a Malika* and several bhajans. Mahapurusha Achyutananda composed *Harivamsa, Tattva bodhini, Sunya samhita, Jyoti samhita, Gopala Ujjvala, Baranasi Gita, Anakara Brahma Samhita, Abhayada Kavacha, Astagujari, Sarana panjara stotra, Vipra chalaka, Manamahima, Maalika.* Upendra Bhanja's works like *Baidehisha Bilasa, Koti Brahmanda Sundari* and *Labanyabati* are considered landmarks of Odia Literature.

OBJECTIVES- The objectives of this research paper is to find out the contribution of the Nath Yogi, Chakuliapanda, pala and Dasakathia to the society and culture of Orissa and in what way it reminds the morale, ethical and educational values to the people of Orissa.

DATA- Both Oral and secondary data could be interpreted and analysed in this research paper to substantiate the matter for deriving at the conclusion.

CONCLUSIONS- The Nath yogis, Palakaras, Chakuliapandas and Daskathia players played a significant role in Orissa by preserving the rich cultural heritage of our society

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and culture through their folk songs in humorous form which drew the attention of the people in general and enriched the oriya literature in particular. Till today it is found in nook and corner of Orissa following their traditional practice and maintaining their livelihood.

Key words-*Nath Yogis, Palakaras, Chakuliapanda, Dasakathia, Suanga, Chatri, Palia, Kathi, Gayaka, Dasas, Hatha Yoga, Sahaja Sidha, Rasayana, Panths, Sampradayas, Sadhus*

Chakulia panda is a sect of people from the Indian state of Odisha who are mostly found to live in the southern Odisha. The male members of this sect walk from door to door and recite religious poems, from early Odia literature and receive rice in return from the households and "suanga" (humorous plays). They are believed to be a "lower class" "dignified"brahmin. A Chakulia panda would be seen putting a mark of white sandalwood on the forehead, carrying a "chatri" (palm leaf umbrella), and walking with a bag of rice on his shoulder singing songs. Offering rice to Chakulia panda is considered holier as compared to hundred Brahmins. They are heard reciting "Rama, Parasurama, Dasarathanandana Rama, Janakanandini Sita" while visiting houses. He never asks for alms during the entire course of his visit and accepts whatever is offered. Slowly this cultural presentation is diminishing delimiting the visit of Chakulia panda to houses and of them losing their livelihood.

Folklore is the expressive body of culture shared by a particular group of people. It encompasses the traditions common to that culture, subculture or group. These include oral traditions such as tales, proverbs and jokes. They include material culture, ranging from traditional building styles to handmade toys common to the group. Folklore also includes customary lore, the forms and rituals of celebrations such as Christmas and weddings, folk dances and initiation rites. Each one of these, either singly or in combination, is considered a folklore artifact. Just as essential as the form, folklore also encompasses the transmission of these artifacts from one region to another or from

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one generation to the next. Folklore is not something one can typically gain in a formal school curriculum or study in the fine art. Instead, these traditions are passed along informally from one individual to another either through verbal instruction or demonstration.[1]

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A colourful and popular performance is rendered by two members, one signer (Gayaka) and the other accompanist (Palia). The very word (Dasakathia) is derived from the word Das which means worshipper and Kathi means two pieces of sticks which produce a very sweet sound. This performance is ritualistic and secular in nature. The performers each holding a pair of sticks begin their performance in chorus with invocatory verses composed by the local poets, each one striking his own sticks in perfect tune. The recitation of mythological themes in usually at the top of voice hypnotizes folk listeners. The dramatic performance includes verbose stanzas of various types including pauranic episodes mixed with manly vigour. Luxurious in dress and with

turban on head and wearing a long luish or silken coat, the two dasas create a visual attraction of the listeners by their gestures and postures. This vocal recital is based on

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some patterns of tunes of inherent southern rural character. The form of inimitable type of music is a distinctive contribution of Ganjam district of South Orissa. Accentuation of the languages, breaking of syllables with notes, rigid pronunciations indicate a clear fusion of southern patterns in Oriya. It is a spectacular art form of Orissa. Dasakathia Dance performances are exceptionally interesting dance forms of Orissa.[2]

Nathas are a Shaivism sub-tradition within Hinduism. A medieval era movement, it combined ideas from Buddhism, Shaivism and Yoga traditions in India The Naths have been a confederation of devotees who consider Adinatha, or Shiva, as their first lord or guru, with varying lists of additional lords. Of these, the 9th or 10th century Matsyendranath and the ideas and organization developed by Gorakshanath are particularly important. Nath tradition has extensive Shaivism-related theological literature of its own, most of which is traceable to 11th century or later. However, its roots are in far more ancient Siddha tradition. A notable aspect of Nath tradition practice have been its refinements and use of Yoga, particularly Hatha Yoga, to transform one's body into a *sahaja siddha* state of awakened self's identity with absolute reality. An accomplished guru, that is yoga and spiritual guide, is considered essential, and they have historically been known for their esoteric and heterodox practices. Their unconventional ways challenged all orthodox premises, exploring dark and shunned practices of society as a means to understanding theology and gaining inner powers. They formed monastic organisations, itinerant groups that walked great distances to sacred sites and festivals such as the Kumbh Mela as a part of their spiritual practice. The Nath also have a large settled householder tradition in parallel to its monastic groups. Some of them metamorphosed into warrior ascetics during the Islamic rule of the Indian subcontinent. The Nath tradition was influenced by other Indian traditions such as Advaita Vedanta monism, and in turn influenced it as well as movements within Vaishnavism, Shaktism and Bhakti movement saints such as Kabir and Namdev.[3]

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The Sanskrit word nātha literally means "lord, protector, master". The related Sanskrit term Adi Natha means first or original Lord, and is a synonym for Shiva, the founder of the Nāthas. Initiation into the Nātha sampradaya includes receiving a name ending in -nath. The term ‘’Nath’’ is a neologism for the Shaivism tradition now known by that name. Before the 18th century they were called Jogi or Yogi. However, during the colonial rule, the term "Yogi or Jogi" was used with derision and classified by British India census as a “low status caste". In the 20th century, the community began to use the alternate term Nath instead in their public relations, while continuing to use their historical term of “yogi or jogi” to refer to each other within the community. The term Nath or Natha, with the meaning of

lord, is a term also found in Vaishnavism (Gopinath, Jagannath) and in Jainism (Adinatha, Parsvanatha). [4]

The term yogi or jogi is not limited to Natha sub-tradition, and has been widely used in Indian culture for anyone who is routinely devoted to yoga. Some memoirs by travelers such as those by the Italian traveler Varthema refer to the Nath Yogi people they met, phonetically as *Ioghes*. Nath are a sub-tradition within Shaivism, who trace their lineage to nine Nath gurus, starting with Shiva as the first, or ‘’Adinatha’’. The list of the remaining eight is somewhat inconsistent between the regions Nath sampradaya is found, but typically consists of c. 9th century Matsyendranatha and c. 12th century Gorakhshanatha along with six more. The other six vary between Buddhist texts such as *Abhyadattasri*, and Hindu texts such as *Varnaratnakara* and *Hathapradipika*. The most common remaining Nath gurus include Caurangi (Sarangadhara, Puran Bhagat), Jalandhara (Balnath, Hadipa), Carpatha, Kanhapa, Nagarjuna and Bhartrihari.[5]

The Nath tradition was not a new movement, but one evolutionary phase of a very old Siddha tradition of India. The Siddha tradition explored Yoga, with the premise that human existence is a psycho-chemical process that can be perfected by a right combination of psychological, alchemy and physical techniques, thereby empowering one to a state of highest spirituality, living in prime condition *ad libitum*, and dying when one so desires into a calm, blissful transcendental state. The

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term *siddha* means "perfect", and this premise was not limited to Siddha tradition but was shared by others such as the Rasayana school of Ayurveda.[6]

According to Mallinson, "the majority of the early textual and epigraphic references to Matsyendra and Goraksa are from the Deccan region and elsewhere in peninsular India; the others are from eastern India". The oldest iconography of Nath-like yogis is found in the Konkan region (near the coast of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka).[7] The Vijayanagara Empire artworks include them, as do texts from a region now known as Maharashtra, northern Karnataka and Kerala. The Chinese traveller, named Ma Huan, visited a part of the western coast of India, wrote a memoir, and he mentions the Nath Yogis. The oldest texts of the Nath tradition that describe pilgrimage sites include predominantly sites in the Deccan region and the eastern states of India, with hardly any mention of north, northwest or south India. This Community also can be found in some Parts of Rajasthan.

Gorakhshanatha is traditionally credited with founding the tradition of renunciate ascetics, but the earliest textual references about the Nath ascetic order as an organized entity (sampradaya), that have survived into the modern era, are from the 17th century. Before the 17th century, while a mention of the Nath sampradaya as a monastic institution is missing, extensive isolated mentions about the Nath Shaiva people are found in inscriptions, texts and temple iconography from earlier centuries.[8]

In the Deccan region, only since the 18th century according to Mallison, Dattatreya has been traditionally included as a Nath guru as a part of Vishnu-

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Shiva syncretism. According to others, Dattatreya has been the revered as the Adi-Guru (First Teacher) of the Adinath Sampradaya of the Nathas, the first "Lord of Yoga" with mastery of Tantra (techniques). The number of Nath gurus also varies between texts, ranging from 4, 9, 18, 25 and so on. The earliest known text that mentions nine Nath gurus is the 15th century Telugu text *Navanatha Charitra*. Individually, the names of Nath Gurus appear in much older texts. The mention of Nath gurus as siddhas in Buddhist texts found in Tibet and the Himalayan regions led early scholars to propose that Naths may have Buddhist origins, but the Nath doctrines and theology is unlike mainstream Buddhism. In the Tibetan tradition, Matsyendranath of Hinduism is identified with "Lui-pa", one referred to as the first of "Buddhist Siddhacharyas". In Nepal, he is a form of Buddhist Avalokiteshvara.[9]

According to Deshpande, the Natha Sampradaya, is a development of the earlier Siddha or Avadhuta Sampradaya, an ancient lineage of spiritual masters. They may be linked to Kapalikas or Kalamukhas given they share their unorthodox lifestyle, though neither the doctrines nor the evidence that links them has been uncovered. The Nath Yogis were admired by Bhakti movement saint Kabir. The Nath Sampradaya is traditionally divided into twelve streams or *Panths*. According to David Gordon White, these *panth*s were not really a subdivision of a monolithic order, but rather an amalgamation of separate groups descended from either Matsyendranath, Gorakshanath or one of their students. However, there have always been many more Natha sects than will conveniently fit into the twelve formal *panths*.[10]

The Nath tradition has two branches, one consisting of sadhus (celibate monks) and other married householder laypeople. The householders are significantly more in number than monks and have the characteristics of an endogamous caste. Both Nath sadhus and householders are found in Nepal and India, but more so in regions such as West Bengal, Nepal, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and Karnataka. The ascetics created an oversight organization called the *Barah Panthi* Yogi Mahasabha in 1906, which is based out of the Hindu sacred town of Haridwar. According to an estimate by Bouillier in 2008, there are about 10,000 ascetics (predominantly males) in the Nath ascetic order, distributed in about 500 monasteries across India but mostly in northern and western regions of India, along with a much

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larger householder Nath tradition. The oldest known monastery of the Naths that continues to be in use, is near Mangalore, in Karnataka. This monastery (Kadri matha) houses Shaiva iconography as well as three Buddhist bronzes from the 10th century.[11]

A notable feature of the monks is that most of them are itinerant, moving from one monastery or location to another, never staying in the same place for long. Many form a floating group of wanderers, where they participate in festivals together, share work and thus form a collective identity. They gather in certain places cyclically, particularly on festivals such as Navratri, Maha Shivaratri and Kumbh Mela. Many walk very long distances over a period of months from one sacred location to another, across India, in their spiritual pursuits.

The Nath monks wear loin cloths and *dhotis*, little else. Typically they also cover themselves with ashes, tie up their hair in dreadlocks, and when they stop walking, they keep a sacred fire called dhuni. These ritual dressing, covering body with ash, and the body art are, however, uncommon with the householders. Both the Nath monks and householders wear a woolen thread around their necks with a small horn, rudraksha bead and a ring attached to the thread. This is called *Singnad Janeu*. The small horn is important to their religious practice, is blown during certain festivals, rituals and before they eat. Many Nath monks and a few householders also wear notable earrings.[12]

According to James Mallinson, the ritual covering of ash, necklace and tripundra tilaka was likely missing in the past, and it may have emerged in the modern era. Those Nath ascetics who do tantra, include smoking bhang (cannabis) as a part of their practice. The tradition is traditionally known for hatha yoga and tantra, but in contemporary times, the assiduous practice of hatha yoga and tantra is uncommon among the Naths. In some monasteries, the ritual worship is to goddesses and to their gurus such as Adinatha (Shiva), Matsyendranatha and Gorakhshanatha, particularly through bhajan and kirtans. They greet each other with *ades* (pronounced: "aadees").[13]

The Yogis and Shaiva sampradayas such as Nath metamorphosed into a warrior ascetic group in the late medieval era, with one group calling itself *sastra-dharis* (keepers of scriptures) and the other *astra-dharis* (keepers of weapons). The latter group grew and became particularly prominent during the Islamic invasions and Hindu-

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Muslim wars in South Asia, from about the 14th to 18th century. According to Romila Thapar, along with Shakta Hindus, subtraditions within the "Natha Jogis were known to take to arms".[14]

The establishment of the Naths as a distinct historical sect purportedly began around the 8th or 9th century with a simple fisherman, Matsyendranath (sometimes called Minanath, who may be identified with or called the father of Matsyendranath in some sources).

Gorakshanath is considered a *Maha-yogi* (or great yogi) in the Hindu tradition. Within the Nath tradition, he has been a revered figure, with Nath hagiography describing him as a superhuman who appeared on earth several times. The matha and the city of Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh is named after him. The Gurkhas of Nepal and Indian Gorkha take their name after him, as does Gorkha, a historical district of Nepal. The monastery and the temple in Gorakhpur perform various cultural and social activities and serves as the cultural hub of the city. The monastery also publishes texts on the philosophy of Gorakhnath. Gorakshanath did not emphasize a specific metaphysical theory or a particular Truth, but emphasized that the search for Truth and spiritual life is valuable and a normal goal of man. Gorakshanath championed Yoga, spiritual discipline and an ethical life of self-determination as a means to reaching siddha state, samadhi and one's own spiritual truths. Gorakshanath, his ideas and yogis have been highly popular in rural India, with monasteries and temples dedicated to him found in many states of India, particularly in eponymous city of Gorakhpur. Among urban elites, the movement founded by Gorakhnath has been ridiculed.[15]

According to Muller-Ortega (1989: p. 37), the primary aim of the ancient Nath Siddhas was to achieve liberation or *jivan-mukti* while alive, and ultimately "paramukti" which it defined as the state of liberation in the current life and into a divine state upon death. According to a recent Nath Guru, Mahendranath, another aim was to avoid reincarnation. In *The Magick Path of Tantra*, he wrote about several of the aims of the Naths;" [16] Our aims in life are to enjoy peace, freedom, and happiness in this life, but also to avoid rebirth onto this Earth plane. All this depends not on divine benevolence, but on the way we ourselves think and act."

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The earliest texts on Hatha yoga of the Naths, such as Vivekamartanda and Gorakhshasataka, are from Maharashtra, and these manuscripts are likely from the 13th century. These Nath texts, however, have an overlap with the 13th century Jnanadeva commentary on the Hindu scripture Bhagavada Gita, called the Jnanesvari. This may be because of mutual influence, as both the texts integrate the teachings of Yoga and Vedanta schools of Hinduism in a similar way. Numerous technical treatises in the Hindu tradition, composed in Sanskrit about Hatha Yoga, are attributed to Gorakshanath. The Natha Sampradaya is an initiatory Guru-shishya tradition.

The Hatha Yoga ideas that developed in the Nath tradition influenced and were adopted by Advaita Vedanta, though some esoteric practices such as kechari-mudra were omitted. Their yoga ideas were also influential on Vaishnavism traditions such as the Ramanandis, as well as Sufi fakirs in the Indian subcontinent. The Naths recruited devotees into their fold irrespective of their religion or caste, converting Muslim yogins to their fold. The Nath tradition was also influenced by Bhakti movement saints such as Kabir, Namdev and Jnanadeva. In this way the Nath yogis spread the message of brotherhood, harmony and co-existence in Odisha.

Pala is a unique form of balladry in Odisha (formerly known as Orissa), which artistically combines elements of theatre, classical Odissi music, highly refined Oriya and Sanskrit poetry, wit, and humor. The literal meaning of pala is turn. It is more sophisticated than the other Oriya ballad tradition, Daskathia. The origin of Pala dates back to the Mughal periods where there were efforts to bring harmony between the Hindus and Muslims. The Pala troupes worshipped 'Satyapir' - Satyanarayan of the Hindus and Pir of the Muslims thus, it lead to peaceful coexistence of both the religions in the Odisha. Though, the form originated in Bengal but it flourished better in Odisha. Pala is presented in three ways. The names can be mentioned as baithaki or 'seated', in which the performers sit on the ground

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throughout. The other one is thia or 'standing'. This is more popular and aesthetically more satisfying, in which they stand. Badi is a kind of thia in which two groups vie for excellence. This is the most entertaining, as there is an element of competition. [17]

Usually, there are six to seven performers in a group, which cannot present Pala traditionally with fewer than four members. The gana, also known as gayaka (main singer) sings the lead, the bana or 'drummer' plays the mridangam drums and the palias or 'Pala-player' are two to five associate singers, of whom the leader is called sri-palia and who strike large cymbals called kartal. The palia's role is, more or less, like that of a chorus. They sing the refrain together with the gana and echo the last few words of other sung lines. The sri-palia is of great importance as he frequently interacts with the gana and punctuates the show with comedy. A loud percussion ensemble comprising mridanga and cymbals precedes the singing, to let the prospective audience know that the Pala is starting soon and to serve as aesthetic prelude or or purvaranga.

In rural areas, the performance begins after 8:30 in the evening. At the end of the prelude, the gana enters the arena, usually level ground spread with a large cotton carpet. He begins with an invocation eulogizing the presiding deity, Satyapir, worshipped by both Hindus and Muslims. This can be traced back to the Mughal period when there were conscious efforts to bring about amity between the two faiths. After the invocation, the proper presentation commences.

In Pala and in Daskathia, the gana structures the ballad himself, but the style differs. The major portion of Pala ballads comprises stanzas of ornate Oriya poetry written by eminent poets from the seventeenth to mid-twentieth centuries. These poems and kavyas that is long narrative verses were meant not only to be read but also sung in the traditional Chhanda classical form. While composing a particular ballad, the gana follows the same pattern as of classical Oriya kavya, which narrates the birth of the hero and heroine. After this, different cantos depict their growing up through infancy, adolescence, and youth. They meet and fall in love. Finally they

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marry. One or more cantos describe the beauty of the hero and, specially, the heroine at each stage of growing up. The picture of the youthful heroine's beauty from head to toe occurs in great detail with wonderful similes.[18]

Pala has the same structure. The gana does not himself compose the descriptions of the aspects of beauty but takes them directly from kavyas. For instance, if the Pala compiler wants to relate the beauty of the young heroine's eyes, he can extract different relevant stanzas from kavyas written in Oriya or Sanskrit and attribute them all to his heroine. Thus, borrowing from various poets, the account of the heroine's beautiful eyes may go on for hours. The gana not only sings these stanzas in appropriate Chhanda style, but also translates the meaning of the highly difficult lines in simple language. Thus, Pala popularizes sophisticated poetry among common people. If the gana is not talented enough to structure a ballad, he may requisition the services of a suitable literary person to compile it for him. But he must have an extraordinary memory to remember the countless stanzas and a high degree of literary sensibility so that he can properly explain the meaning as well as poetic merit to listeners. The gana who agrees to participate in a badi Pala has indeed a phenomenal memory and ready wit, because the other gana may challenge him on any aspect of the story.

The gana is also an excellent actor with multifaceted talents. While singing or explicating he brings in drama to heighten the appeal. He then uses his chamara or fly whisk to suggest different properties. At one time, it indicates the god Indra’s thunderbolt, at another, it may delineate the lyrical movement of waves or the contour of a graceful creeper. The gana usually wears a costume similar to the formal dress of erstwhile royal nobility. The others in the group wear clothes not so splendid. To be a good gana, one has to devote years of study and practice. It is a full-time job.

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The demand decreased, but they held sporadic Palas till the mid-1960s. Those who perform Pala now show not even a shadow of the real art. They are at best amateurs, far from the excellence of a Pala professional. Unfortunately, after the advent of media, this fascinating and dignified performing art is gradually disappearing. There are very few persons who prefer Pala to a film or television.

The Nath yogis, Palakaras, Chakuliapandas and Daskathia players played a significant role in Orissa by preserving the rich cultural heritage of our society and culture through their folk songs in humorous form which drew the attention of the people in general and enriched the oriya literature in particular. Till today it is found in nook and corner of Orissa following their traditional practice and maintaining their livelihood. But with the advent of the western culture and taste of the people towards film and entertainment the cultural heritage of Odisha is at a great stake. It is also found that gradually these cultural nuances are losing its ground in the society. People now days are inclining towards western songs, films, dresses and exotic foods in stead of preserving our cultural heritage and practices.

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