**Title Options:**

***DASHAVATAR – NOT THE LORD, ITS DRAMA.***

***DASHAVATAR – A 1000-YEAR-OLD TRADITION.***

***DASHAVATAR – A FOLK THEATRE FROM SOUTHERN MAHARASHTRA***

**Introductory definition of artform:**

Hindu scriptures are very rich in fiction and dramas. The story of Lord Vishnu’s ten incarnations wins them all. Dashavatar, a traditional theatre from Southern Maharashtra, unwinds the tales of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu as the core theme, along with songs and dance. The Marathi play generally gets arranged on temple ground, entertaining the audience all night. The actual beginning of this mythological play is unknown; however, few rural cultures believe in its existence for centuries.

Maharashtra is already known for its love of drama, but particularly Dashavatar is performed in rural areas of the Sindhudurg, Kokan and Goa regions. Makeup, songs and storyline have intense importance in Dashavatar, but technological props like light effects, sound effects or sets are given little importance in performance. Artists work hard to do their own makeup to showcase their immense talent in picturise Hindu deities like Lord Ganesha’s trunk or the four hands of Lord Vishnu and the four faces of Lord Brahma. Apart from stylized make-up, the Dashavatar performers wear masks of wood or hard paper.

A typical Dashavatar play starts with Lord Ganesha and Goddess Saraswati Prayer followed by mythological tales about Lord Vishnu's ten incarnations – Matsya (the fish), Kurma (the tortoise), Varaha (the boar), Narasimha (the lion-man), Vamana (a young Brahmin), Parashurama, Rama, Krishna (or Balarama), Buddha and Kalki. The last two avatars are skipped at some places concluding the Drama of Shri Krishna’s story.

If you want to experience Dashvatar yourself, you have to visit Sindhadurg, Kokan or Goa region in October month, soon after the paddy harvest. Dashavatar actors tour this area almost for 10 to 12 weeks. Drama companies (*theatre or NATAK companies*) seeks help from Temples and annual fairs (JATRA) for village deity to perform this art. Once annual fairs are over, Dashavatar artists go back to their villages and continue their agriculture work, practising new orles and dialogues and getting ready for next season to perform in front of a worthy Marathi audience.

**Tags**:

#dashavatar #sindhdurga #kokan #goa #culture #maharashtra #drama #marathi #natak #marathinatak