

***Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora,
under the scope of the United Kingdom***

A Thesis submitted to the University of Hyderabad for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

DANCE

By

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Uppari Himabindu has carried out this research work embodied in the present thesis titled *Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora, under the scope of the United Kingdom* for the full period of time prescribed under Ph. D. ordinance of the University of Hyderabad.

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that I, Uppari Himabindu, have carried out the research embodied in the present thesis titled *Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora, under the scope of the United Kingdom* for the full period prescribed under the Ph. D. ordinance of the University of Hyderabad.

Declare that to the best of my knowledge, no part of this thesis was earlier submitted for the award of a research degree from any university. This thesis is the original work carried out by me and it is plagiarism free.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am exceptionally blessed to be a part of an extensive family and network of friends, a constellation of phenomenal people who have offered unconditional support throughout my doctoral journey.

First of all, I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Pasumarthi Ramalinga Sastry, whose encouragement and support have been the driving force behind this thesis. He has given me confidence to pursue this topic and his incredible help, patience and encouragement supported me in each stage of my thesis. His constructive suggestions and the critical viewpoints have given much clarity to my work.

I am intensely thankful to the supervisory committee members – Prof. Jonnalagadda Anuradha, Rajiv Velicheti, Associate Professor for their guidance and support throughout my research work.

I am thankful to Prof. M.S. Siva Raju and Prof. G. Aruna Bhikshu, for their insights during the course work.

I am also indebted to Dr. Pappu Venugopal Rao for his invaluable guidance and encouragement. His insights, valuable information and optimistic attitude have boosted my morale time and again. I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to him for reviewing my work.

My heartfelt thanks to Prof. Sudhakar from Folklore Studies, University of Hyderabad and Prof. Anantha Krishnan from Theatre Arts, University of Hyderabad, who have steered and encouraged me towards Diasporic studies.

I should be grateful to University Grants Commission, without which I would not have achieved the JRF and SRF fellowship, which has financially boosted my research field work. I am thankful to the Hyderabad Central University Library, British Library, London, School of Oriental Studies (SOAS) library, London, for their immense help in allowing me to collect material related to my research.

This thesis would not have been possible without the involvement of the United Kingdom dance artists and many other dancers who had spent their precious time in sharing their professional life stories and their associated works with me. I am in particular thankful to Shanta Rao, Pushkala Gopal, Bisakha Sarker, Anusha Subramanyam and Shobana Jeyasingh for their professional contribution in my research and permitting me for perceiving their rehearsals and allowing me to take their valuable interview.

I thank Akademi, Annapurna Indian Dance Company, Chaturang, Mudralaya, Beeja, Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company, Sanjeevini Datta (Director of Kadam), Piali Ray (Director of Sampad) for generously providing their archival audio-visual files and granting me permission to use related photographs in this thesis. I would like to acknowledge Mira Kaushik (Akademi Director) for her categorical support.

My heartfelt gratitude to the dancers Usha Ragavan, Geeta Upadyaya, Chitrlekha Bolar, Prakash Yadgudde, Kiran Ratna, Mavin Khoo, Geeta Sridhar, Ash Mukherjee, Sruthi Sriram, Seeta Patel, Santhosh Menon, Priya Sunder, Navya Rattehelli, Bhagya Lakshmi, Dr. Rajani, Shen Sembu, Prakash (Mridangist) who shared their time generously, responding to questions about their individual dance journeys in the United Kingdom.

I thank, P.T. Narendran, K. Mohanan, C. Renjith Babu, Parvathy Menon, Madhusudhanan, who had spent their valuable time in sharing their professional experiences in Diaspora.

I am grateful to K. Sudhakar Rao (Computer Programmer, University of Hyderabad) and Manjula Ponnappalli (Consultant – Music education) for encouraging me towards my research and helping me to collect the enormous material, their constructive suggestions on my writings on various occasions, equally helpful with all manner of typesetting and technical advice. I shall never forget their dedication and all those laborious working hours that they have spent for formatting my thesis. I also thank Archana Karry and Sowjanya Bhumi Reddy who helped me throughout the research.

My special thanks to Dr. Sridhar Pingali for adding his valuable inputs with proof reading of my thesis.

It gives me immense pleasure to thank my dear husband, Sudhakar Tirunagari for inspiring me to learn dance at the age of twenty, he unquestionably believed in me by supporting my desire to pursue this intellectual curiosity. To convert my dream into reality, he supported me in many ways for this entire period, whilst balancing his profession and family life. Without his encouragement, I would have never unearthed the bliss in the exertion.

I would like to thank my parents, Late Narasimhulu and Shantakumari for their encouragement and support. My mother has always offered motivation, love and care in my life. Special thanks also extended to all my family members for cheering me up throughout this journey.

I am obliged and gratified to the institution Kalakshetra and all my teachers, Janardhanan, Nandini Nagaraj, Shaly Vijayan, who taught me dance and cultured life values, without which I wouldn't have travelled this journey.

Finally I thank my dear friends Stev Brett, Michael Dutka and Mark for the help, love, care and offering me a home outside home.

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Phonetic Chart

देवनागरी	Transliteration	देवनागरी	Transliteration
अ	a	आ / ा	ā
इ / ि	i	ई / ी	ī
उ / ु	u	ऊ / ू	ū
ऋ / ृ	r̥	ॠ	r̄
लृ	l̥r̥	लृ	l̄r̄
ए / े	e	ऐ / ै	ai
ओ / ो	o	औ / ौ	au
ं	m̐	ः	h̐
क्	k	ख्	kh
ग्	g	घ्	gh
ङ्	ṅ	च्	c
छ्	ch	ज्	j
झ्	jh	ञ्	ñ
ट्	ṭ	ठ्	ṭh
ड्	ḍ	ड्	ḍh
ण्	ṇ	त्	t
थ्	th	द्	d
ध्	dh	न्	n
प्	p	फ्	ph
ब्	b	भ्	bh
म्	m	य्	y
र्	r	ल्	l
व्	v	श्	ś
ष्	ṣ	स्	s
ह्	h	ळ्	l̥
क्ष्	kṣ	ज्ञ्	jñ

Chapter - 1

Introduction

वेदायै वेद रूपायै वेदान्तायै नमो नमः

गुणदोषविवर्जिन्यै गुण दीप्त्यै नमो नमः

vēdāyai vēda rūpāyai vēdāntāyai namō namaḥ

guṇadōṣavivarjinyai guṇa dīptyai namō namaḥ

(Agastya kṛta Sarasvatī stōtram, Verse 11)

Meaning –

Salutations to Her who is Vēda herself (source of all knowledge), whose form represents the Vēda-s and whose essence is the culmination of all Vēda-s contained in the great Vēdānta. Salute her whose transcendental essence is free from (beyond) virtues and vices, yet whose form shines with all virtues.

1.1. Introduction:

This research explores **“Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora, under the scope of The United Kingdom”**. The three key aspects of this research on the topic are - practice, performance and perception aimed to reflect on current issues and questions related to cultural, political, aesthetic and technical matters. The special focus of this research is on, how Bharatanāṭyam has been presented in the United Kingdom and the study explores how Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United Kingdom has, as a traditional dance, given birth to different dimensions and further investigates the changes in the form and content of dance taking place across generations of dancers. Here, “Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora” implies the performance, practice and the perception of this dance form which takes a whole new dimension in the United Kingdom, which is a land more aware of and inclined towards theatre. This particular orientation adds to the interest in exploring Bharatanāṭyam in different dimensions and contexts.

The very initial stage of cultural identity of India and Indian arts in the United Kingdom took place due to the migration of people and their culture from India to the United Kingdom. The research goes forward with the aspects of exploring why and where and when migration took place.

The existence of the Bharatanāṭyam in the Diaspora and the shapes and transformations it has taken place is studied in detail to understand the authenticity and identity of Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United Kingdom.

Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom has given rise to multiple cultural activities in order to be applicable to different issues and contexts. Studying these enhances our understanding this art form in a vital ways. Therefore describing the modalities of learning, teaching, presentation and perception of this art form in the Diaspora, focusing the United Kingdom is the major objective of the research work.

Bharatanāṭyam, with other Indian Classical dance forms, entered Britain through international migration and has unfolded itself under the brand name ‘South Asian Dance’. Bharatanāṭyam, however, passes on national and cultural values across boundaries and remains strongly tied to them. It remains a symbol of global exoticism and enables the performers to explore unbroken traditions. Dancers and promoters make distinctions between the art and artist’s challenges to make sure that Western contemporary dance form has a global relevance. It makes a mark of one’s identity in the Diaspora and promotes further possibilities in the dance field culturally and politically.

Bharatanāṭyam in particular and South Asian dance in general have become prominent among the diverse types of artistry that have a voice in Britain. Over time, the dance world of Britain has seen a shift in orientation towards classical South Asian dance styles, which might be best, understood as a move away from perceiving these forms as immigrant art forms to perceiving them as British South Asian dance. In terms of training, this shift means that there is a growing infrastructural trend on a national level for the teaching of South Asian dance.

The scope of this study is limited to the years 1970 to 2012 and the time period in which the above aspects have been practiced and taken place with changes in the United Kingdom. Therefore through certain performances witnessed, as specific cases to understand how the above mentioned aspects are happening through the individual choreographic ideas, presentation skills, thought patterns in presenting this art form in different contexts and other documents are considered as data for the work.

While interacting with artists, and observing their works and performances in the United Kingdom, it is found that these emerging dance artists are continuously exploring, experimenting and pushing the boundaries of practices through their work and choreographies that have remained largely unexplored in literature, and thus need scholarly attention. It is noticed that Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United Kingdom as a traditional dance form itself gave birth to different dimensions. For the purpose of the thesis, this researcher discussed the works and choreographies created by Pushkala Gopal, Shanta Rao, Bisakha Sarker, Anusha Subramanyam and Shobhana Jeyasingh. By interview narratives, archival sources, and dance works analyses, this study leads us to new ways of understanding the Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora as a traditional dance

form, educational medium, creative body movement, therapy and kinesthetic medium / contemporary in the British context.

Therefore the dimensions of 'Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora' were categorized respectively based on the identity of the eminent artists interviewed. For example, Pushkala Gopal is known for Bharatanāṭyam in a traditional dance form approach, Bisakha Sarker and Shanta Rao are known for Educational medium approach, Bisakha Sarker is also known for Creative Body movement and therapy, Anusha Subramanyam is known for Therapy approach and Shobana Jeyasingh is known for kinesthetic medium approach. These observations of Bharatanāṭyam art form presented as a multidimensional approach fall in the period defined.

1.2. The reason for choosing the United Kingdom as the area of study

There are many areas in which India and the United Kingdom seek and share stronger cultural ties for mutual benefit. India is the second largest foreign investor in British economy. The awareness in the field of art and theatre has been a constant and enlightening feature of the United Kingdom's cultural scenario. The element of aesthetic experience showcased by the United Kingdom is the prime aspect for considering working on 'Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora under the scope of the United Kingdom'. It is observed that the United Kingdom has a larger perception of this form and encourages the vigorous efforts made by eminent artists to make it as a part of mainstream.

There is a considerable desire to include an art form like Bharatanāṭyam in public life and to offer a multidimensional approach which indirectly celebrates and

strengthens the bonds between these two nations. This becomes a key reason for pursuing this study in the United Kingdom.

The United Kingdom Government provides enormous opportunities to make this art form a medium for the social welfare and it has been appropriately utilized to reach out to citizens. This has been a remarkable quality of the artists which has been observed in the United Kingdom.

The mutual influences of the nations from the time of British rule in India till date has been a remarkable feature to prove the cultural, political and economic relationship. “The relationship between dance and colonial Tanjore looks large in both the European and Indian imagination. In European contexts, dancing in Tanjore has been commented upon since at least 1661, when the Icelandic sailor-soldier Jon Olafsson arrived at the city and wrote about *dēvadāsis* and *naṭṭuvanārs* during the rule of King Raghunatha nayaka (r. 1612-1634) in his memories”. Since then, the professional dancing women from Tanjore have almost universally been understood and visible in European writings as the most accomplished “nautch girls” of South India. *Dēvadāsi* dance, as we understand, emerges widely in today’s modern environment. This dance form was already participating in global circuits of culture in the early nineteenth century. That period was named by nationalist historians as the “golden age” of dance at Tanjore. “Tanjore Quartet” (1802-1864) composed of renowned artists i.e. Chinnayya, Ponnayya, Sivanandam and Vadivelu, who were contemporaneous with the transnational movement of dancers across the imperial axes. In 1838, a *dēvadāsi* troop from Tiruvendipuram near Pondicherry, were brought to Europe by French impresario E.C.Tardivel (Bor 2007). This was the very initial mark of Indian dance in Europe. The *dēvadāsi* and the celebrated *naṭṭuvanārs* of Serfoji’s

court who were billed as the Hindu slaves of the Gods performed on elite stages in London, Brighton, Brussels, Frankfurt, Munich, Berlin, and Vienna¹.

1.3. Culture, Language and Literature:

Indian culture, language and literature were admired along with the art forms of India in Europe. The long historical tradition of Indo-British cultural exchange made many British administrators grapple with Sānskṛt heritage of India. While India continues to fascinate the British and the Westerners with its brand of spirituality, Britain encourages and provides educational opportunities for many upcoming artists, writers, creative individuals belonging to the Indian subcontinent. The Indo-British cultural exchange has been happening for long years. The University of Oxford had established a Sānskṛt chair in the nineteenth century as part of its oriental education.

Few of the contemporary examples are –

1. The Beatles taking on Indian music and spirituality.
2. George Harrison became a disciple of a Hindu Guru and recorded his album ‘my sweet lord’ as a tribute to his Guru.
3. Boy George and many other European artists have taken up Indian music and spirituality as a great inspiration in their craft. “Tamasha”, which is one of the foremost touring theatre companies of Britain producing new plays, which is a prominent venture and has done many experiments in the west.

Tara Arts during last two decades has celebrated its existence with occasional productions moving to West End theatres². As Rukmini Devi an Indian theosophist,

¹ Daves Soneji. *Unfinished Gestures, Devadasis, Memory, and Modernity in South India*. The University of Chicago Press Chicago and London, 2010: 27-29.

² Sarva Daman Singh, Mahavir Singh, *Indian Abroad*, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies Kolkata: Hope India Publications Haryana, 2003: 127.

choreographer, Indian classical Bharatanāṭyam dancer, an animal rights welfare activist and founder of Kalakshetra foundation, Chennai say's " Knowledge can never be obtained without its effect on himself as a man, without its effect on his emotions, his attitude to life, and on his relationship to all³." Therefore the very essence of Indian art forms through the medium of language, literature, and culture is reflected in the strong ties with the West.

Based on all these aspects its core, the thesis endeavors to put these issues in perspective.

1.4. Oriental Historical Background:

Many western dancers had an attraction with the East, particularly with India, who was termed "oriental" dancers. There are two types of artists, Westerners who came to India with a fascination for Indian dance and Indians who went to the West and propagated Indian classical dance. European and North American choreographers in late nineteenth century interpreted Eastern themes through a ballet *La bayadere* performed by oriental artist. This was a temple dance in the form of a ballet performed by a French choreographer Marius Petipa to the music of Ludwig Minkus in four acts and seven tableaux. This was acclaimed as a depiction of an Indian temple dancer's life. Pre-modern interpretive dancers such as Ruth St. Denis a pioneer of modern dance in America, introduced eastern ideas into the arts in the west, and Ragini Devi an American-born dancer, introduced India's classical dances to many in India. Esther Sherman, who began her career in the style of St. Denis 'oriental' dancer and relocated

³ Rukmini Devi Arundale, *Some Selected Speeches & Writings*, VOL 1. The Kalakshetra Foundation, Tiruvanmiyur, Chennai, 2003.

in India in 1930 and continued training in Indian classical art forms. She also spent time on performing and giving lectures on the Indian traditional dances. The ballerina and choreographer Anna Pavlova a Russian-born dancer, who introduced Indian classical dances to the West, played a major role in inspiring great pioneers of Indian art like Rukmini Devi and Uday Shankar. Uday Shankar an Indian dancer and choreographer, was internationally well known for his creative fusion dance style with the inclusion of Indian classical dance with European theatrical techniques. His style had the Indian classical, folk, and tribal dance elements, which later in in 1920s and 1930s he popularised in India, Europe, and the United States. He was a pioneer of modern Indian dance, in enhancing the creative platforms. Anna Pavlova created a series of ‘Oriental’ themed dances in twentieth century. Dancers based in India went to the West, and worked on Indian classical dance traditions. For instance, Uday Shankar, India’s first modern choreographer, discovered Indian dance while he was abroad. One of the first, and most successful choreographers to establish Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom was Ram Gopal, who was an Indian dancer and choreographer and performed mostly as a solo artist and toured extensively throughout his career. Ram Gopal was a key figure in the revival that drew international attention to the Indian dance forms. His choreography was based around the repertoire and movement vocabulary of Bharatanāṭyam and other Indian classical forms. With these significant transitions right from the age of Orientals, Indian artists and present practitioners with the different approaches with the art form Bharatanāṭyam give a unique perspective to carry on the research study.

1.5. Objectives:

The experiences of different artists, their approaches towards the art form have raised many questions. What is tradition? Does any artist carry the tradition and pass it on to the next generation or does tradition include innovations and creativity of the Gurus? The Gurus pass on to their disciples and they in turn pass it on to their disciples and so on. To be different, many artists choose to think out of the box and tread the path of presentation that could be related but different. The urge to present differently has remolded the artists to an extent where there is a constant question of what is the tradition and what is contemporary? Artists are achieving this by reaching the commoners when they venture out, and also trying to please the connoisseurs.

While studying the works of different artists in the United Kingdom, many questions arose.

- Is it possible to surge ahead believing in the Gurukula School of thoughts? Do we survive for existence or swim across the current trends to be different by attempting to make a mark for ourselves? How Bharatanāṭyam does plays an important role in fulfilling the cultural needs of Diaspora community in the United Kingdom for the artists who migrated from India?
- How do the global flows of ideas, people, technology and cultures configure traditional/classical Bharatanāṭyam and innovative / contemporary Bharatanāṭyam work in the United Kingdom?
- How does the artist's work on the Emergence of the South Asian dance profession, while exploring the current teaching and works of Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom, how about institutionalization within a Diaspora context and the identity of the work as well as the identity of the artists?

- How do the new dimensions get created and experienced in Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom?
- How are artist's works perceived largely in the United Kingdom?
- Is there authenticity in today's creative process of Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom? If there is authenticity, is that a factor in the mainstream performance?

Based on the above questions the research work continued towards exploring Bharatanāṭyam dance form in the Diaspora.

1.6. Hypothesis:

India for ages has spread her wings upon many lands, and Indian culture has deeply spread into many nations. The one aspect that attracted almost the entire East and the great part of the West India is the perception of Indian culture in Diaspora. It is indeed a fact that India still continues to get attracted towards Diaspora. But changes had to come, and therefore the minds have changed with the respective needs in the Diaspora.

In the present world, the ways to access learning, presenting and teaching Bharatanāṭyam has developed extensively with globalization. Sharing, teaching and learning an art form has become more and simpler with the latest development in the technology and media. This has resulted in fetching innumerable inputs and quick methods of seeking knowledge and learning Bharatanāṭyam.

The urge to give a special expression of Indian life and culture to their own communities and rest of the world is something which triggers the need and desire in an artist to establish the Indianness in Diaspora. The circumstances today forces us

initially as a human being and then as an artist to discover the oneness in the world. Having this as a prime concern, communicating with the world through Bharatanāṭyam has become a powerful medium. Therefore the human experience of sharing the spirit of one's own values of culture and tradition is the fundamental drive to learn, practice and present Bharatanāṭyam to fulfill the need of one's Indian identity.

The influence of technology and globalization on art has been widely observed today. This gives a deeper understanding of how influence of technology and globalization has become the current trends in practicing, presenting Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora. Today, the global ideas and the interdisciplinary approaches are shaping the Bharatanāṭyam art form more rapidly to create contemporary and collaborative works in the Diaspora. The occurring of such environment extends the horizons by exploring and understanding the new cultures, interactions which have caused changes inevitably in Bharatanāṭyam. This has drawn an analogy between Traditional Bharatanāṭyam and Contemporary Bharatanāṭyam with the classical and innovative ideas comprising in it.

The Indian classical dance forms in the United Kingdom including Bharatanāṭyam has emerged with the label "South Asian dance", keeping the wider perspective in the United Kingdom. The cultural, political, social and economical reasons are the major causes for this emergence. Various artists in the United Kingdom have extended their artistic contributions in the form of institutions, individual artists and teachers. The need to meet the expectations of the British Arts Council and other funding bodies to make art a vital element for the nation's welfare is the obvious feature observed in Diaspora in the United Kingdom. The continuous efforts of great artists from the oriental period to contemporary time prove their artistic and creative potential. This marks Bharatanāṭyam's importance in the present world.

Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom consists of various new dimensions in the artist's perspective and audience as well. The area of interests has created many dimensions to the Bharatanāṭyam art form in the United Kingdom, such as, Bharatanāṭyam as a pure traditional form, Bharatanāṭyam in education, Bharatanāṭyam in therapy, and Bharatanāṭyam in creating contemporary work. Having these dimensions in the artist's perspective has added an importance in the society to include Bharatanāṭyam as a vital medium for better quality of life. Since there is a constant encouragement from the Government, art especially Bharatanāṭyam has also become a convenient way for artists survival and way to express the artistic drive.

Creativity is an important feature of an Indian art form. The process of creating new works, dimensions, and perspective all together is only encountered with the deeper understanding of fundamentals in Bharatanāṭyam. The authenticity remains intact as far as the fundamentals are found in the new emerged traits. The need to innovate has begun with an intention of communicating with the true sense of philosophy, spirit and therefore the visual impact. Such new innovations in Bharatanāṭyam have become a necessity over a period of time to establish its position for a larger audience in Bharatanāṭyam mainstream performances in the United Kingdom.

1.7. Literary Review:

The study of literature in the Bharatanāṭyam art form, its history, revival, development and relationship with the world compiles and evaluates the available thesis that has been researched. The literature study has benefited for the positive perceptions, involvement and participation for the meaningful research. It highlights

the concepts and theories absorbed in India with an Indian perspective with an effective application to the real world situation creating a meaning in Diaspora.

1. Janet O'Shea, "At Home in the World: Bharatanatyam on the Global Stage", published by Wesleyan University press, Middletown, Connecticut, 2007:

This book is based purely on her seventeen years' experience in Bharatanāṭyam. The author primarily deals with the performing qualities in the Globalization age and considers Nation, region and tradition of an individual dancer. She also addressed the concerns related to women, like reinventing the feminine in Indian colonial politics. The author draws a contrast viewpoints, opinions and choreographic visions of twentieth century Bharatanāṭyam. She has even mentioned in her book about the Bharatanāṭyam dancers from 1930s to the present, with remarkable understandings of Bharatanāṭyam's identity and history. She portrays the diversity of Bharatanāṭyam as a vital character of dance form. She debates within the Bharatanāṭyam spear, encouraging critical thinking about the choreographic practice, and she raised issues concerned with choreographic choices, their politics and strategies of self-definition. Janet O'Shea writes in her book about Bharatanāṭyam - the mostly popular and widely performed dance style in India and around the world. Bharatanāṭyam has made the transition from temples and courts of Southern India to highly respected international plat forms. She has presented the choreographic transformations of Bharatanāṭyam to the urban concert stage in 1930s and 1940s. The reader can witness various National struggles over gender identities, regional issues in the author's narration. In this book the author marks a remarkable study of how a traditional form spreads into the world.

Janet O'Shea's book has given the thesis a scope to understand the Bharatanāṭyam art form internationally. Her detailed study about oriental dancers and their performances has provided a great content value in the second chapter of the present thesis. This helped in locating and contextualizing Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United Kingdom where the arrival of a group of Devadasis from Pondicherry in the year 1838. This gave the thesis a base to start with Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United Kingdom. This book has also provided inputs and understanding about the artists in the United Kingdom and their contemporary or classical works taking place. The Orientals fascination with the East is one of the aspects of the thesis which has gained information from this book of Jenet O'Shea. This book has given a better understanding about the Indian Bharatanāṭyam dancers who have contributed to make Bharatanāṭyam as an international art form.

2. Ketu H.Katrak, *Contemporary Indian Dance: New Creative Choreography in India and the Diaspora*, published by Palgrave Macmillan, United Kingdom, 2011:

This book discusses the topic in Indian dance literature and the transition of Bharatanāṭyam from Devadasi system to the innovations of Ram Gopal and Uday Shankar. Therefore Bharatanāṭyam became popular internationally as an art of modern Indian dancing. The separation of Kathak from the traditional nautch performance developed by madam Menaka is also covered in detail. Madam Menakas' whose real name was 'Leila Sokhey, and was recognised as a contributory figure in the revolution of the defamed North Indian "nautch" dance to respectable "Kathak" in the 1930s. The book contains seven chapters, which are as follows. In the introduction, she discussed the way of looking Contemporary Indian classical dance, Rasa a moving methodology in Contemporary dance.

In chapter one, she discussed the Contested Histories: “Revivals” of Classical Indian Dance and early pioneers of contemporary Indian Dance. She discussed the journey of Bharatanāṭyam dance form from Sadir to Bharatanāṭyam, the legacies of Uday Shankar, Ram Gopal, and Chandralekha, who were the early pioneers of modernising Indian dance. The information about history, revival and development of Indian classical dances has fetched considerable value to the thesis in the second chapter. The explanation of works of significance legacies has helped to analyse study and discuss effectively in the thesis.

In chapter two, Ketu Katrak explained about abstract dance with rasa. She has stated few artists like Astad Deboo and Shobana Jeyasing as examples for this category. This chapter has raised an observation of Chandralekha’s influence on Indian contemporary choreographers. Astad Deboo and Shobana jeyasing are few contemporary choreographers who made their own mark in the Diaspora with their contemporary works. Ketu Katrak explains the contemporary style as a mark beyond traditions in the Diaspora. Her study of contemporary dance, its evolution, importance and scope gives a complete understanding for the thesis to state the Bharatanāṭyam and Kathak as the vital forms in Contemporary dance works.

In chapter three, the author speaks about the “Beyond Tradition”: Contemporary Choreography by Traditional Indian Dance Masters and promising innovators. Few artists mentioned in this category of innovations based on Kathak and Bharatanāṭyam are Madhu Natraj, Aditi Mangaldas, Daksha Sheth for Kathak and Mallika Sarabhai, Navtej Singh Johar, Lata Pada for Bharatanāṭyam and Padmini Chettur for Contemporary. Ketu Katrak discusses Indian classical dance masters working in a contemporary idiom based on Bharatanāṭyam and Kathak. She even

discussed about the innovative Contemporary Indian budding artists towards Indian Contemporary Dance.

In chapter four, the author analyzes contemporary choreography both in movement and costume design influenced by transnational collaborations within the artists like Hari Krishnan (Toronto) and Anita Ratnam (Chennai). She states that multi-ethnic dance companies' produces exiting contemporary works such as Krishnan's InDANCE Company and Malaysia based Ramli Ibrahim's Sutra Dance Company. This aspect is relevant to the Shobana Jeyasing's case study analysis in the thesis as one of the aspects observed in the contemporary choreographers in Diaspora.

The chapter five, "Dancing in the Diaspora" explores the study of dance in the United States and Canada. This gave an overview to the thesis to relate the Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United Kingdom.

In the chapter six, the author discusses about the Indian Diasporic community in Britain. She draws an observation between second generation youth with first generation addressing the identity as significant contribution to contemporary Indian dance. As the part of this observation she has taken Kathak dancer Akram Khan's work as an example to Contemporary Indian Dance in Britain.

In the conclusion chapter the author brings out the observations for the future development of Contemporary Indian Dance with its dynamic and evolving form. Its transnational systems and collaborative work among the dancers, musicians and visual artists.

This thesis takes the inputs from the present book relating to the Diaspora with the traditional perspective and understanding the similarities in the study analysis. This

has served an appropriate work to the thesis to understand Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora. The ambition of the book *Contemporary Indian Dance: New Creative Choreography in India and the Diaspora* is its global reach, but with such a vast canvas the theme cannot go deeply into all the concerned dancers discussed.

3. Priya Srinivasan, *Sweating Saris: Indian Dance as Transnational Labor*, published by Temple University Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2012.

The author writes about South Asian Diaspora's cultural politics. The author's argument is an attention to Indian dance as the form of personified, gendered labor deeply transforms the understanding of the politics behind the Asian and American radicalisation, citizenship and migration from the 19th century to the present. This book observes the bodies of dancers not just as aesthetic and also as transnational migrant workers who otherwise negotiated citizenship and also gender issues. The author combines ethnography, critical race theory, history, performance and post-colonial studies amongst various other disciplines which explore the experience of Indian dance. The *Sweating Saris* of the artists stand in for unrecognized labor. The author highlighted the Indian women dancers as culture bearers of the Indian Nation. She projected to redesign the movements of 19th century transnational nautch Indian dancers to that of the early 20th century modern dancer Ruth St. Denis to South California's contemporary teenage dancers in proposing a transformative theory of dance, citizenship and gendered labor. *Sweating Saris* exemplifies with dancers focus in interpreting of immigration laws, cultural nationalism, orientalism, citizenship and contemporary identities. It not only gives voice to the transnational labor exchanges, it also offers a view of politics of ethnic categorisation within wider discourses on the US citizenship through its selected dancing bodies.

The chapter one offers a glimpse of laborious rigorous training in learning the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire. Chapter one is the base that discusses genealogical context is reason to understand Indian dance better as labor in the United States and Australia.

The chapter two describes about the Indian dancers who migrated to United States between 1880 and 1907. She talks about the dancer's presence on the stage disrupt North American view of Oriental dancing girl. She even discussed birth and death of a dancer's baby to enquire the possibilities of US citizenship offered in those days.

The chapter three, talks about Ruth St. Denis, one of the popular American modern dancers influenced by Indian women dancers in 1904. Her dance portrays interactions with Indian dancing women. Her choreographies are evident of kinaesthetic traces with bodily interaction within dancing women and different traces. US citizenship was easily available for the women who are independent wage earners through Indian and Asian dance practices.

The chapter four, talks about how Ruth St. Denis sustained her career as an Oriental dancer and the men who are reason behind it? It explores how US citizenship was issued temporarily by transnational Indian male performers with Indian women dancers who were unable to do. The author addresses orientalism and imperialism to make certain aspects visible in the archives to demonstrate the citizenship negotiation.

The chapter five is about changes that took place in mid-20th century for the citizenship of Indian dancers in the United States. The division of modern and ethnic dance brought out Indian dance as an ethnic minority form in the 1965 immigration act to immigrate from India and other countries.

The chapters six and seven talk about ethnography in performance by female dancers in California, which has exposed to the contradictions of minority citizenship. Bharatanāṭyam is observed as a dance practice in dialogue with Asian American ties of model minority. The author argues as a young Indian American dancer, who herself attempts her own labor as a solo performance as a betrayal of her efforts. This examines the multiple economies and bodies at work will sustain the performance of minority citizen on the US stage. This masks the transnational economies of labor required for ethnic difference and cultural citizenship maintenance.

This has given overview of political scenario of the aesthetic bodies of Indian women in Diaspora. This has also extended the thesis horizons in a larger perspective to understand the Bharatanāṭyam art form not just as an art, but also as a medium to identify one's citizenship as well.

4. Suparna Benerjee, *Emerging Contemporary Bharatanāṭyam Choreoscape in Britain: the City, Hybridity and Techno Culture*, submitted in the University of Roehampton in the year 2014.

The chapter one deals with hybridity, the city culture, heterotopias and performance and site specific dance spaces in the digital world. The contemporary Bharatanāṭyam and its practice in the Britain were brought out in relation with the globalization. Suparna has chosen Mayuri Boonham, Kamala Devam, Divya Kasturi, Seeta Patel, Ash Mukherjee, Nina Rajarani, Shamita Ray, Anusha Subramanyam and Subathra Subramaniam as her case studies to examine the new dance evolutions with their identities in the digital world. She included the perfection of the spectators by interacting in the field where construction of multiple identities is complex. The present thesis fetches the relativity to understand traditional Bharatanāṭyam and its place in

Diaspora in the United Kingdom taking example parallel with the hybridity and techno culture aspects of Superna's thesis.

The chapter two titled “(Mis-)Taken labels and multiplicity of identity” deals with the dancers, second and third generation learners and their identities. It throws light in understanding ‘South Asian’, ‘Asian’, ‘British’ and ‘BrAsian’ identities on the academic platforms. The challenges faced by these identities are explored in this chapter. The present thesis largely deals with the first generation Bharatanāṭyam artists their journey to reach wider community in Diaspora with the given opportunities and respective interests. Tracing traditional aspects in the Bharatanāṭyam art form to hybridity as an evolved form of Bharatanāṭyam in the contemporary style is the present thesis structure, where as Superna's study brings out the similar aspects as hybridity being the beginning stage and for the present it's a concluding stage.

The chapter three talks about “Porous borders: performing hybridity”. The author establishes the theory-practice relationship in the hybridity which encounters the cross-cultural issues of uncertainty and in-betweenness. She discussed concept of Bakhtin and works of Mayuri Boonham, Subathra Subramaniam, Shamita Ray and Anusha Subramanyam. Their works mentioned as choreographic devices to break the rigidity of the cultural form, race, and language. It gives an understanding in this thesis about how the hybrid functions with the notion of classical form as rigid demonstrations. Therefore the inclusion of contemporary style with elements of Bharatanāṭyam has evolved in the Diaspora extensively.

The chapter four and five, “City dances/dancing city” and “Performing the site: the senses and sensibilities” examines the Bharatanāṭyam dance practice in the contemporary world and its theoretical issues. The author deals with heterotopic spaces

revealed with hidden meanings to its overlook. The author argues that the senses are contrast and colliding factor for the different experiences of the dancers and viewers in a given space. The contemporary dance artists' places their bodies in the digital media contesting the conventional use of dancing bodies is the view of the author.

The present thesis is related to the third chapter where the discussion is about the unconventional performing spaces for the Bharatanāṭyam presentation. The hybridity aspect has been viewed in the present thesis as the spaces presenting Bharatanāṭyam with various purposes and goals such as Bharatanāṭyam being presented in the hospitals, refugee homes, schools, planetariums, and also public spaces. This similarity of hybridity in the heterotopic spaces brings out a clear understanding of the intentions in perceiving Bharatanāṭyam in the wider community in the Diaspora.

The chapter six "I and digi-I: reading the digital double" studies the contemporary Bharatanāṭyam choreographies in the digital world. The author analyses three dancers exploring the technology design in their choreography. The analysis of ethnography stimulates the correlation of Bharatanāṭyam and contemporary in the Diaspora. In the present thesis two of the case studies deals Bharatanāṭyam as a traditional, contemporary with the technology employed. Bisakha Sarker case study portrays the essence of traditional Bharatanāṭyam with its true spirit and philosophy with the help of technology. Whereas Shobana's work include Bharatanāṭyam and technology with dominant feature of modernization portrayed in the digital world.

The key finding in the literary works summarizes effective commonalities between the works whether they are favourable or not has added justifying content to the thesis. The books and articles referred have supported to bring a clarity and depth to the methodology, research proposal, evaluation and overview on the whole.

1.8. Methodology and Plan of the thesis :

The methodology for this research involves empirical research. The information gathered for the research is sourced from different sources i.e. libraries, interviews, professional journals, magazines, reviews and documentation collected with survey and assessment. A Questionnaire is developed to seek the maximum information focused on the experiences, motivation, desires and challenges of various Bharatanāṭyam artists in Diaspora in the United Kingdom. Based on the questionnaire a series of interviews were conducted in person, through email and telephonic conversation. Based on the above gathered information the analysis has been done. This empirical research methodology is best suitable for the topic chosen for the thesis.

In the study of Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom, primary attention is given to their dance styles with creative and experimental choreographic ideas and therefore analysed respectively. Importance was given to the concept of expanding the horizons which are stereotyped with practicing norms by extracting meaningful insights from the work which is a creative from a different culture. Information was collected from interviews, reviews, articles, dance company brochures, publicity material and websites.

The introduction and the conclusion form the first and last chapters. The core research is found in the three chapters in between them. The second chapter talks about a brief history and development of Bharatanāṭyam in India and contextualizing and locating the form, the history and development of Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora. It also talks about how Bharatanāṭyam plays an important role in fulfilling the cultural needs of Diaspora community of the sub-continent and explores the current teaching and institutionalization of Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora, in the United Kingdom.

The third chapter talks about ethnicity and its impact on Bharatanāṭyam and identifying the work in Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom.

The fourth chapter deals with the main argument of the thesis analyzing the works and choreographies of the case studies based on the life stories and experiments of Pushkala Gopal, Shanta Rao, Bisakha Sarker, Anusha Subramanyam and Shobhana Jeyasingh in the United Kingdom. The analysis of their works educates and creates an awareness of Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United Kingdom.

The Concluding chapter discusses the emerging artistic works, themes and choreographic intentions and patterns of the artists. It is expected to offer an important route to an understanding of cultural, political, aesthetic and technical aspects of Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora.

The conclusion is an open-ended one that invites further research exploration and study on the subject.

Chapter - 2

History and Development of Bharatanāṭyam in India and the United Kingdom

2.1. Objectives:

This chapter explores three main areas of study.

1. It deals with a brief history and development of Bharatanāṭyam in India. It also contextualizes and, locates the Bharatanāṭyam art form in the history and development of the Diaspora. The term Diaspora has been examined here with etymological meaning and its usage in the academics. Before discussing Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora, a brief history of Indians migration to the Britain, their religious tradition, culture, language and literature examined.

Contextualizing and locating Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora: The Western Oriental dancer's fascination towards India and their classical dance forms, and those Indian classical dancers' who took classical dance forms to the International arena are discussed.

2. (a) It examines how Bharatanāṭyam re-emerges with a new label South Asian dance in the United Kingdom.
- (b) Explores the current teaching and the work of the Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom.
- (c) Institutionalization within a Diaspora context and identifying the works of Bharatanāṭyam dancers.

3. How Bharatanāṭyam plays an important role in fulfilling the cultural need of Diaspora community of the sub-continent.

2.2. Brief History and development of Bharatanāṭyam in India:

Today Bharatanāṭyam has become the key word for sustenance of cultural forms of pre and post-colonial era. Bharatanāṭyam is a prominent dance form and is popular both in national and international settings. It follows two great treatises Nāṭyaśāstra and Abhinaya Darpaṇa.

Presently we find this classical dance form accepted worldwide by traditional as well as modern Indian population, because it has become a cultural identity for many of them. The form is mainly composed of Karṇāṭik music and is practiced and performed in the same manner barring a few experiments.

What is known as Bharatanāṭyam today was in existence by various other names prior to 1930. It was called Sadir, Dāsiattam and such other names. It was in 1932 renamed as Bharatanāṭyam and was given a refined and redefined form.

After its revival, Bharatanāṭyam dance form gained an esteemed place by late twentieth century. The increase in demand to learn Bharatanāṭyam surpassed the infrastructure to support the art and maintain its standards. At present, the learning process in this art form exceeds the actual performing scope.

The History of Bharatanāṭyam is incomplete without emphasizing the institutional support it has gained during the last sixty to seventy years. Bharatanāṭyam has moved away from Gurukula system. Schools, institutions and Universities have started teaching Bharatanāṭyam exclusively as a subject. Now Bharatanāṭyam artists

gain regional, National and International recognition and awards. There are many individuals who have taken Bharatanāṭyam as a profession. There are Universities offering courses with Masters and Ph.D's. There are many publications, workshops, seminars and conferences centred on Bharatanāṭyam. There are also books dealing with the biographies of eminent Bharatanāṭyam dancers. There are jugalbandī-s and multiple classical forms performing together. This research explores the Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora with this backdrop in mind.

Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora – implies the scope of Bharatanāṭyam, the performance, practice and the perception gives rise to a whole new dimension when it comes to presenting it in the United Kingdom, which is a land basically more aware of theatre and has indigenous approach towards theatre which adds to the interest in exploring Indian art forms in different dimensions and contexts.

The very initial stage of cultural identity of India and Indian arts in the United Kingdom took place due to the migration of people and their cultures. The research goes forward with the aspects of why migration took place, when and how.

2.3. Contextualizing and locating Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora:

2.3.1. Diaspora:

The word Diaspora is derived from the Greek verb *speiro* (to sow) and the Greek preposition *dia* (over). The term 'Dispersion' is a translation of Israel from sixth century B.C, when they were exiled to Babylonia, until the present time⁴. Diaspora, as the term means Dispersion, is often used today to describe any population which is considered 'transnational' – which means, originated in a land, other than which it

⁴ Cristina M. Gamez – Fernandez and Veena Dwivedi. *Shaping Indian Diaspora*. Published by Lexington Books, London SE114AB, 2015: iX – X.

currently resides, and whose social, economic and political networks across the borders of nations, states or across the globe. The word Diaspora has stemmed from academics using it to characterize transnational cultural groups and from intellectuals, activists and the population who have found in the expression of a positive way of constituting a 'hybrid' cultural and political identity.

All Diasporas have some common important characteristics. Diaspora is a result of both voluntary and imposed migration. Core members recognised their own groups in host countries. These groups got involved in organizations which were dedicated to protect the rights of the members and to encourage them to participate in the political, social, cultural and economic spheres. They were also required to keep in touch with their homelands and other dispersed groups of the same Nation. Each of these Diaspora's positions and their strategies towards host countries and homelands were and are influenced by their age, range of dispersal, size and status of the group and their connections to homelands. The economic and political roles of these Diasporas have become important due to globalization and increase of worldwide migration.

William Safran while writing in the inaugural issue of the journal, *Diaspora* observed that most scholarly discussions of ethnicity and immigration paid 'little attention to Diasporas'. *Diaspora* and origin (cognates) appeared as keywords only once or twice a year in the 1970s, and there has been a veritable explosion of interest in Diasporas since the late 1980s⁵.

With the increased use of the term *Diaspora*, its meaning has been validated by various intellectual, cultural and political plans in the service of which the term has

⁵ Rogers Brubaker. The 'diaspora' 'diaspora', *Ethnic and Racial studies*, Vol.28 No, 1 January 2005: 1.

been enlisted. This has resulted in an expansion of the meanings of the term in semantic, theoretical and disciplinary space.

Amongst these Diasporas, Indian Diaspora is a very well-known, praised and respected community all over the world. It has made its mark in various fields all over the world. It has won universal respect and admiration due to their sheer hard work, professionalism, loyalty to their host country and fundamental spiritual, ethno – cultural values, very strong social and family traditions. Even today highly skilled Indian professionals, intellectuals and entrepreneurs are migrating to the Western countries. They are playing a key role in the development of the economy of their host countries. Indian Diaspora, as inheritors of the traditions of world's oldest continuous civilization is able to make their strong and permanent mark in diverse fields. Indian Diaspora is considered precious by their host countries because Indians still preserve their fundamental spiritual values, they are hard-working and they have a deep sense of commitment to professionalism⁶.

2.3.2. Indians in Britain - Brief History

The study of the Indians settled in Britain reflects a vital bond of exchange between Indians and the British. During the British rule in India a large scale emigration process was set into motion. As a result of this emigration, several million Indians were exported as cheap labour for plantation in various British colonies ranging from the Far East, African continent to the West Indies. Thus Indian Diaspora spread across the world. This resulted in making a noticeable imprint of the colonial bondage on Indo-British relations. These ties changed in 1947, when the British withdraw their

⁶ Sarva Daman Singh, Mahavir Singh. Indians Abroad. Published by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata. Hope India Publications, Haryana, 2003: 9-10.

power from India. However a new and unexpected factor has emerged in Indo-British relations. That is the remarkable rise of Indian immigrants settled in Britain since 1947.

Indians in the United Kingdom are distinguished in many ways from the rest of Indian Diaspora dispersed around the world. That is because the Diaspora in the United Kingdom is of more recent origin which effectively began in 1950s. Most of the Indian Diaspora in the United Kingdom made up of voluntary or economic migrants. The major parts of those migrants are from two provinces of the post-colonial India, namely Sikhs of Punjab and Hindus of Gujarat⁷.

Early Indians came to Britain mostly to satisfy the labour needs of industries. But gradually they ventured into many other opportunities in the economy. Those who have professional qualifications, specially trained doctors, have become a visible part of Britain's National Health Service. Some professionals became teachers or found jobs as managers, clerical and administrative staff. However, it is mainly the medical profession that gave the immigrant Indians a special recognition in Britain.

2.3.3. The Religious Tradition in Diaspora:

Indians commitment to their religious life distinguishes them from the Western population, who are generally indifferent towards religion. Indians life is bound to their families and religions. All ceremonies, both personal and social, are connected to religion. The rituals related to birth, marriage, and death are performed as per their religious beliefs and carried out as such.

⁷ Sarva Daman Singh, Mahavir Singh. Indians Abroad. Published by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata. Hope India Publications, Haryana, 2003: 112-113.

There are two important Indian religious groups in Britain. They are Gujarati Hindus and Sikhs and also a very small proportion of Punjabi Hindus. The Hindu community could manage to establish more than a hundred temples across British cities. Temples serve as community centres. Usually Hindus go to the temple not only for meditation but also for community gossip and relaxation. Apart from temples, home is also a centre of worship⁸.

2.3.4. Culture, Language and Literature:

The history of Indo-British cultural exchange dates back to the time when British administrators struggled with Sānskṛt heritage of India. Even to this day, India continues to fascinate the British and the Westerners with brand of spirituality. Britain offers an outstanding atmosphere for education and a measured pace for budding creative writers from the Indian subcontinent. The University of Oxford had also established Sānskṛt chair in the nineteenth century as a part of its oriental education. Thus from the past three centuries, there have been many fusions and experiments in Indo-British cultural exchange⁹.

2.3.5. Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora under the scope of the United Kingdom:

Bharatanāṭyam is a resolutely global form; it has circulated internationally at least since 1838 though it was not called by this name. As O Shea says, “South Asian dance has had a longer history in the United Kingdom, there too”, it experienced both a flow and a restructuring in the 1970s¹⁰.

⁸ Sarva Daman Singh, Mahavir Singh. *Indians Abroad*. Published by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata. Hope India Publications, Haryana, 2003: 124-125.

⁹ Sarva Daman Singh, Mahavir Singh. *Indian Abroad*. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies Kolkata. Hope India Publications Haryana, 2003: 124-127.

¹⁰ Janet O’Shea. *At Home in the World, Bharatanāṭyam on the Global Stage*. Wesleyan University Press Middletown, Connecticut, 2007: xi – 3.

EGYPTIAN HALL, FICCADILLY.

M. TARDIVEL most respectfully begs leave to inform the Nobility, Gentry and the Public,
that this will positively be the

Last Week of the Bayaderes
Exhibiting, previous to their departure for the Provinces.



*In consequence of the increasing number of Juvenile Visitors,
the Proprietor has been induced to fix the price of Admission
to the Stalls, Seats, and Gallery, at ONE SHILLING.*

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TOILET OF VISHNU!

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PAS MELANCOLIQUE!

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THE

FORMATION of the DOVE!

The attention of the Public is called to this extraordinary Dance.—A perfect representation of a
Dove sitting on a Palm Tree is created from a simple Scarf, 35-feet Long.
During the intervals of exhibiting, they will promenade, and converse with any Lady or Gentleman
who may understand their Language.

The Rooms are heated. Description of the Bayaderes to be purchased at the Doors, price 6d.
All Applications respecting the Performances of the Bayaderes for Private Parties to be addressed
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S. G. Felt brother, * Garrick Printing Office, " 31, Bow Street Covent Garden.

2.3.5.1. Advertisement for a performance by the Dēvadāsi-s of Pondicherry, Egyptian Hall, London 1838¹¹

¹¹ Janet O'Shea. At Home in the World, Bharatanāṭyam on the Global Stage. Wesleyan University Press
Middletown, Connecticut, 2007:6.

In 1838, the Dēvadāsi-s of Pondicherry danced before audience in London and Paris. This was one of the first international appearances of Sadir, Bharatanāṭyam's predecessor. The subsequent process through which performers and promoters refigured South Indian solo dance as Bharatanāṭyam was international in scope and influence. Once the dance form established as a regular practice for performance rather than court, ritual, and salon form, Bharatanāṭyam travels accelerated. Thus, Bharatanāṭyam itself gained a specific place in Diaspora as well as being an important practice for South Asian Diaspora communities.

Bharatanāṭyam underwent transformations in the revival. These transformations placed Bharatanāṭyam within a global dance environment. Indian cultural traditions and social practices also underwent the reformation. All these changes affected dance and the institutions that supported it. The performers who recomposed Bharatanāṭyam in the 1930s were busy with the concerns of the colonial social reform movements of the nineteenth century. The modernization of Karṇāṭik music also had an effect on Bharatanāṭyam.

A long period of Western fascination with India resulted in Bharatanāṭyam entering the urban concert stage. For example, European promoters sponsored performances by Dēvadāsi-s of Pondicherry in London and Paris in 1838. In the late nineteenth century, European and North American choreographers tried to interpret the 'Eastern Themes' in their own way. For example, the Orientalist ballet *La bayadere* (The Temple Dancer) is a ballet originally staged by a French choreographer Marius Petipa. It claims to portray the life of an Indian temple dancer. It was first presented by the Imperial Ballet at the Imperial Bolshoi Kamenny Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia

in 1877¹². Ruth St. Denis, a pioneer of modern dance in America and a pre-modernist interpretative dancer, introduced this tradition of bringing eastern ideas into the art in the twentieth century.



2.3.5.2. Photo: Ruth St. Denis

This attraction focused not only on Indians generally but also on its dance forms. This interest later on fueled the Bharatanāṭyam revival. In 1926, Ruth St. Denis performed Nautch Dances in India and raised the interest of urban middle-class audiences. Ragini Devi an American-born dancer, who introduced India's classical,

¹² Janet O'Shea. *At Home in the World, Bharatanāṭyam on the Global Stage*. Wesleyan University Press Middletown, Connecticut, 2007: 7.

dances to many in India. Ragini Devi was born as Esther Sherman and began her career as a St. Denis-style 'oriental' dancer but relocated to India in 1930 in order to train in classical Indian dance forms. She spent the following years performing and lecturing on the merits of India's traditional dances.



2.3.5.3. Photo: Ragini Devi

The ballerina and choreographer Anna Pavlova a Russian Ballerina, one of the first dancers from the Imperial Russian Ballet to dance in Western Europe created a series of 'Oriental' themed dances and subsequently travelled to India to find the dances on which her sketches were based. She was disappointed to find the non-

existence of solo female forms but revealed a means of resolving the situation when she met Rukmini Devi, a South Indian Brāhmin theosophist. Pavlova's suggestion to Rukmini Devi to find her own dance form initiated a historic move when she later returned to India and sought out Dēvadāsi-s dance.



2.3.5.4 Photo: Anna Pavlova



2.3.5.5 Photo: Rukmini Devi

However, European and North American modernists used the images they created of the 'mystical East' to demonstrate their own singularity, their strategies synchronised with the Bharatanāṭyam revival. Pre-modern and early modern dancers alongside ballet revivalists such as Pavlova reclaimed dance that was defamed in Europe, as in India, as idle entertainment associated with prostitution. Bharatanāṭyam dancers, like Western dance modernists, strove to legalise dance, describing it as a 'high', autonomous art that expressed creativity and engaged with serious intellectual and philosophical concerns. Dancers in India, as in the West, authenticated their

performance practice by emphasizing the originality of their work while also drawing on historical sources for their inquiries¹³.

The period of transition known as the Bharatanāṭyam revival was inspired by international interest, some of which came from Diaspora dancers and some from European and North American performers interested in Indian arts. Locally based Indian dancers also mainstreamed India's classical dance traditions from their experiences overseas. For instance, Uday Shankar, India's first modern choreographer, discovered Indian dance while living abroad. While studying painting in London, he met the ballerina and choreographer Anna Pavlova, who had created a series of Indian-themed dances. Shankar's collaboration with Pavlova in the early 1920s sparked an interest in delving more deeply into the Indian imagery that the ballerina explored in her choreography¹⁴.

In the post-revival period Bharatanāṭyam's popularity grew in countries like the United Kingdom, Canada and United States. This is because the dancers brought new choreography and also teaching methods. Ram Gopal is one of the first and most successful choreographers to establish Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom. He was a key figure of the revival that drew international attention to the dance form. His choreography was woven around the collection and movement vocabulary of Bharatanāṭyam and other Indian classical forms. Ram Gopal was a versatile dancer, an imaginative choreographer, and above all a visionary. His life-long mission was to explain the meaning of Indian dance traditions, in the best possible manner, to the

¹³ Janet O'Shea. *At Home in the World, Bharatanāṭyam on the Global Stage*. Wesleyan University Press Middletown, Connecticut, 2007: 32-34.

¹⁴ Janet O'Shea. *Bharatanatyam in Diaspora*. Nartanam. A Quarterly Journal of Indian Dance. Vol. X No.4, October 2010 – December 2010.

West. He was, to a great extent, responsible to bring about a change in the Westerners' understanding of Indian classical dance. He spoke about the content of his dance before the performance. That made the audience to understand the dance performance in a better way. His efforts created a welcoming environment for the three classical forms - Bharatanāṭyam, Kathakālī and Kathak in the West. He was by himself a great and inspiring dancer and performed authentic Indian classical dances¹⁵.

Like Uday Shankar, Ram Gopal tried to find out connections with ballet, teaming up with Alicia Markova, one of the most distinguished ballerinas of his time. In contrast to how South-Asian dance has been received abroad at a later date, Ram Gopal's choreography played to sell-out audience in London's popular West End theatres.

¹⁵ Janet O'Shea. *At Home in the World, Bharatanāṭyam on the Global Stage*. Wesleyan University Press Middletown, Connecticut, 2007: 144-146.



2.3.5.6. Photo: Uday Shankar



2.3.5.7. Photo: Ram Gopal

Ram Gopal brought his company to London's Aldwych Theatre in 1939. People flocked to the theatre and the run had to be extended. They were drawn not only by Ram Gopal's singular beauty and talent, but by the work itself. There had been some western versions of Indian or oriental, dance-mystical undulations with incense-and the individual creative dance crafted by the equally brilliant Uday Shankar some years before¹⁶.

In the seventy year history of classical South Asian Dance in Britain, the first noted performances were given in London by Uday Shankar in 1930s¹⁷. Uday Shankar created a place of honour for Indian dance abroad. He was not only responsible for putting it on the world dance framework, but also gave a strong confidence to artists back in India to experiment with the dance forms. Thus he can be compared to Anna Pavlova, Ruth St. Denis and Diaghilev in bringing the classical dance to suit the new age modern world.

The greatness of Uday Shankar lies in integrating all these distinct disciplines. The creative inventiveness that one can find in his ballets and imaginative solos gave birth to modern dance traditions in India. He termed his dance 'Creative Dance' – on par with other classical types and both paid equal attention to scientific training combined with innovative excellence.

Today Bharatanāṭyam in particular and South Asian Dance in general is gaining a place of prominence amongst other diverse types of artistry that have voice in Britain.

¹⁶ Nassem Khan. Ram Gopal. October 13, 2003.

¹⁷ Vena Ramphal and edited by Avathi Meduri. Re-Invoking Rukmini Devi: Questions from a Dance Maker in Britain. Rukmini Devi Arundale (1904-1986) a Visionary Architect of Indian Culture and the Performing Arts. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, 2005: 249.

During this time the dance world of Britain has seen a change of inclination towards classical South Asian dance styles. Instead of seeing these dance forms as immigrant art forms they were perceived as British South Asian Dance. In 1999 a South Asian Dance faculty to teach Bharatanāṭyam and Kathak was founded within the Imperial society for Teachers of Dancing¹⁸.

The twentieth century saw noticeable changes in the classical South Asian dance we know as Bharatanāṭyam. In first half of the century it was renamed and was brought to the urban concert stage and gained national renown. In the second half of the Century its profile spread as an internationally practiced art form. Several people and institutions were involved in the first phase of this history; among them Rukmini Devi is the key figure¹⁹.

Classical dance form Bharatanāṭyam was presented as an Indian national form in the international cultural exchange programs that India negotiated with the West in the 1960s. T. Balasaraswathi (1918-1984), who belonged to the hereditary traditions of temple and court dancing, and Rukmini Devi Arundale (1904-1986), the celebrated non-hereditary revivalist of twentieth-century Bharatanāṭyam, were treated as the primary dancers, feted with numerous national awards, and presented as hereditary and non-hereditary traditional dancers on the international stage of the 1960s²⁰.

¹⁸ Indian Classical Dance. <http://www.istd.org/classical-indian-dance/>

¹⁹ Vena Ramphal and edited by Avathi Meduri. *Re-Invoking Rukmini Devi: Questions from a Dance Maker in Britain. Rukmini Devi Arundale (1904-1986) a Visionary Architect of Indian Culture and the Performing Arts*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, 2005: 249.

²⁰ Avanthi Medhuri. *The Transfiguration of Indian /Asian Dance in the United Kingdom: Contemporary Bharatanatyam in Global Contexts*. Published by University of Hawai'i press. *Asian Theatre Journal*, Volume 25, Number 2, fall 2008: 299.



2.3.5.8. Photo: Balasaraswathi

While the younger dancers transformed within the parameters of the received classical tradition as explained by both T. Balasaraswati and Rukmini Devi Arundale, they were different from their elders in terms of the youthful energy and multicultural style with which they performed on the world stage. Taking the international dance world by storm, these two dancers encouraged a new generation of Bharatanāṭyam dancers and established new global networks of communication and exchange between India and the West in the 1980s, one prominent for solo dance and another for dance dramas.

There are many prominent Gurus who have influenced the nature and stature of Bharatanāṭyam in every other country. Some of those who have left an indelible mark are Rukmini Devi Arundale and Balasaraswathi in the previous generation. V.P. Dhananyajans, Padmasubramanyam, Chitra Visveswaran, Sudharani Raghupathy, C.V. Chandrashekar and are the senior Gurus in the present generation.

Alarmel Valli and Malavika Sarukkai, Leela Samson, Mallika Sarabhai, Anita Ratnam, Priyadarsini Govind, and Rama Vaidyanathan are the eminent artists, replaced their antecedents and were profiled as international artists in the festival of Indian celebrations. These eminent dancers contributed a new addition to the cultural exchange.

Bharatanāṭyam is performed in various prestigious art venues in France, Italy, United Kingdom and United States of America. The Indian festivals were significant, in that they stretched on already existing international networks of communication, forged not just between India and the West but also between India and its Diaspora living in Britain and the United States since 1960s. Anthony Giddens explains, “Globalization can be defined as the strengthening of worldwide social relations who link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice-versa”²¹.

The renewal of art form established Bharatanāṭyam as an independent recital dance form. It freed the dance practice from the control of the ritual activity connected with temples and courts and positioned Bharatanāṭyam as an urban, global art cut across by the concerns of local regional, and national identities. The legacy of this period that established Bharatanāṭyam in its modern form of today extended into the following decades.

²¹ Nicholas C. Georgantzas, Evangelos Katsamak and Dominik Solowing. Giddens’ globalization: Exploring dynamic implications. System dynamic Conferences, 2009: 2.

The years of difficulties in renewal, investments, and contradictions added some changes to twentieth century Bharatanāṭyam. The later versions of the form came forth out of those changes that had begun during the revival.

Many immigrants belonging to upper-class with science and technical degrees migrated to countries such as United Kingdom, North America and Canada. They worked in technical fields like computing and engineering. Most of them were men and brought their wives along. Some of these women were exposed to the art form. These women established Bharatanāṭyam schools in the United Kingdom, North America, Canada, Australia etc. In the process, they also spread the Tamil and Sāṅskṛt history of Bharatanāṭyam to the Diaspora²².

Most of the Britain based Indian artists are born and brought up in London and their ancestors were Indians. These artists relationship with Bharatanāṭyam in India changed its direction because of the geographical and cultural distance and their interest is influenced by their positioning in time and space.

This fact resulted in a split between traditional Bharatanāṭyam and contemporary Bharatanāṭyam in Britain today. This entire contrast is one of the essential elements in discourses on Bharatanāṭyam in Britain. The traditional form carries the weight of its unitary Indian tradition and is considered ‘authentic’ but it lacks heritage. The contemporary form, on the other hand, breaks free from tradition allowing the blooming the dancer’s creativity and individual freedom. This entire conflict between tradition and creativity depends on the view that traditional

²² Shrikant Subramaniam. British Bharatanatyam: What’s in a name? Nartaki. February 6, 2002: 2.

Bharatanāṭyam is unchanging, and a mere repetition of different forms learnt from the Guru. The logical deduction must be that the ‘traditional’ dancer is a mere source of learnt material, a passive Oriental. This view of Bharatanāṭyam is more and more challenged in the discourse and practice of a number of artists in Britain. However, the possibility of contemporary Bharatanāṭyam work in bringing the tradition and innovation together remains unquestioned.

Twentieth century Bharatanāṭyam showed interest in a complex history of political debates. Important social and political issues faced by urban, middle-class Indians and South Asian Diaspora in the twentieth century were portrayed in these performances. Large-scale discourses regulated Bharatanāṭyam and even performers raised political questions together with artistic ones. Such concerns suffocated dance practice but did not fully dictate it. This trap of social debate informed twentieth-century Bharatanāṭyam on the politics that surrounded it. It also enabled its practitioners to represent their own views on the form.

Bharatanāṭyam goes beyond national and cultural boundaries and at the same time remains strictly tied to them. It spreads throughout globally but operates as a symbol of its own charm. Though some performers still describe the art form as part of a secure, unbroken tradition, most performers show contrasting versions of the dance form in their performance. Promoters strive hard to make sure that Western contemporary dance forms make room for it on the global stage. It is a source of identity for Diaspora communities. It gives them an opportunity to refigure the dance form and thereby to enquire their social, cultural and political situation.

2.3.6. Bharatanāṭyam re-emerges with a new name: South Asian dance genre in the United Kingdom:

While interviewing many artists and practitioners about their opinions and views of the term South Asian dance and its emergence in the United Kingdom. Before the analysis of their views, here are the reasons for emergence of the new label “South Asian dance” in the United Kingdom.

The phrase ‘South Asia’ was first coined in 1940s by the United States of America’s, Department of State after the emergence of the independent India²³. Geographically ‘South Asia’ comprises India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Sikkim, and Maldives. The International migration of South Asians has brought several cultural values and social symbols within the mainstream of British culture. The coming together of different groups of people, who are designated as ‘South Asians’ through varied roots has exposed its controversial nature in a multicultural city such as London. According to Alessandra Iyer’s edited book named *South Asian Dance*, the issues related to South Asian identity have received academic attention by arts scholars. The transformation of South Asian dance has been clearly visible for scholars and critics during the past three decades by means of scholarly writings and dance critiques on practice in the Britain (David, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010; Grau, 1997, 2001a, 2007; Grau & Prickett, 2002; Iyer, 1997, Lopez y Royo, 2004; Prickett, 2004, 2007, 2013; Meduri, 2008a, 2008b, 2011). Further examination of the works of these scholars especially their theoretical arguments that are pertinent to

²³ Avanthi Medhuri. *The Transfiguration of Indian /Asian Dance in the United Kingdom: Contemporary Bharatanatyam in Global Contexts*. Published by University of Hawai’i press. *Asian Theatre Journal*, Volume 25, Number 2, fall 2008: 302.

discuss the label of South Asian dance and ‘South Asian-ness’ and other issues of identity is merited.

Apart from the research articles, there were many reports written on South Asian Dance. In Britain these concentrated on the contribution of British Asian artists and funding bodies. For example, art consultant Naseem Khan’s commissioned report ‘The Arts Britain Ignores’ in 1976 on the arts of the ethnic minority groups has given a very clear picture of several hidden - facts about South Asian people. In the late twentieth century moment of growing globalization, India emerged as a World power. Indian dance forms, like Bharatanāṭyam, Kathak, Ōḍissi and Kathakālī which were in the protectionist custody of the Indian nation-state had been hurriedly renamed as South Asian dance genres in the United Kingdom. There are many, like art officers working in the employ of the British Arts Council, well-meaning academics, and venue managers and funding agencies, who are involved in the historic renaming of Indian forms as South Asian forms. It is a well-known fact that ‘South Asia’ does not allude to a single country or nation-state. The term South Asia is used as a vague phrase to name and identify a group of Asian nations – India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Maldives and so on. Hence forth Indian dance forms had dual names, one local (Indian) and the other global (South Asian). The South Asian label was also an emergent funding term by the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1980s. It has influenced the prevailing institutions like Akademi, Kadam, Sampad in promoting Indian classical dances, namely Bharatanāṭyam, Kathak and Ōḍissi.

The general culture and academic encapsulation of Bharatanāṭyam in the new name of South Asian dance was helpful for the British South Asian Diaspora - because it gave a greater scope to the Indian label and brought to sight the diverse dance

performance, and theatre practices of the Indian/Asian Diaspora living in Britain since 1960s. But still specialization can be seen to be problematic. From the point of view of a local Indian, the new term dislodged Bharatanāṭyam from its socio – historical bond in Indian culture, history, and politics. It was relocated within a broader, standardising category known as South Asia.

Bharatanāṭyam dancers who migrated to the United Kingdom in the late 1970s had to change their existing Indian dance forms as South Asian dance. Some renowned scholars like Alessandra Royo Lopex (1997), Ann David (2005), and Stacey Prickett (2004) have tried to prove that South Asia is not a new name. They have argued that Indian dance forms including Bharatanāṭyam were always known as South Asian Dance in Britain. Actually, this name was one among the many names used to describe Indian dance forms. They were also known as ethnic, oriental, exotic, Asian dance forms in the 1970s. Mira Kaushik the director of the Akademi, proposed that the term ‘South Asian Dance’ was used for Bharatanāṭyam by the Akademi. Initially, Akademi was founded with an aim to promote the excellence of Indian classical dance forms in Britain. In 1979, when it was started, the institute was called the National Academy of Indian Dance. In 1988 the term ‘National’ was removed and in 1997 it was replaced with Akademi (South Asian Dance in the United Kingdom). Other organisations such as Kadam and Sampad started to use the term in the late 1990s. All these institutions were primarily funded by the Arts Council of Britain²⁴.

²⁴ Avanthi Medhuri. *The Transfiguration of Indian /Asian Dance in the United Kingdom: Contemporary Bharatanatyam in Global Contexts*. Published by University of Hawai'i press. *Asian Theatre Journal*, Volume 25, Number 2, fall 2008: 300-307.

To communicate the usefulness of the term ‘South Asian Dance’, Akademi organized a conference in London in 2004 titled ‘No Man’s Land: Exploring South Asian-ness’ in the United Kingdom. Andree Grau, a dance scholar, took this opportunity to present a paper entitled ‘Sheltering Sky: Negotiating Identity through South Asian-ness.’ In her paper Grau declares, “Dancers and art officers coined the label ‘South Asian Dance’ and foregrounds similarities” (Grau 2004). The magnitude of Bharatanāṭyam has stretched because of the term the South Asian.

The scope of developing Bharatanāṭyam was elevated because of the South Asian term. That is broad, generic and homogenous enough to iron out delicate differences in the Bāṇi-s (style), and enables the fusion, regulation and counterbalancing of Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom amongst the South Asian Diaspora community.

The term South Asian dance in Britain has drawn many views and perspectives among the artists, students, audience, academicians etc... The following are few of their views which are studied for observations. These views are classified into 4 categories and they are –

1. With a neutral sense: The term South Asian dance conveys a neutral state as it is wider in portraying the values and aesthetics of a dance form. The name doesn’t matter as far as the spirit of art form remains the same.
2. With a favorable sense: South Asian dance has opened many doors to showcase and travel widely with its emergence of new label. This has enabled many artists to explore additional possibilities.

3. With a negative sense: It creates unclear or non-specific emphasis of an art coming from India or rather South India and creates a confusion of combination of different Asian dance form.
4. With a priority of purpose and possibilities: The label facilitates many opportunities with a political reasoning which illustrates the role that academic institutions, funding bodies, companies and people play to challenge beliefs and priorities.

These views reflect different opinions with political reasons, artistic needs, deep rooted origins and hybridity of the artists resulting in shaping how one understands the label.

2.4. The importance of Bharatanāṭyam in fulfilling the cultural needs of Diaspora community of the sub-continent:

Bharatanāṭyam is a national dance form like Kathak, Ōḍissi, and Kūcipūḍi. It aptly encodes Indian myth, history, language, art and social behaviour. It has become a main link to Indian culture and a vital academic tool in immigrant communities, especially for women. Immigrants were mystified with the cultural mixing of different racial groups through marriage, living together, sexual relations or reproduction due to which the loss of “pure” culture was eminent. All these anxieties can be silenced when the community’s women, the symbol of Indian nation, perform and stage immigrant “nostalgia” on their own bodies.

The process of teaching Bharatanāṭyam then becomes an attempt to instill model Indian culture on ethnic Indian women. This model Indian culture disconnects itself from mainstream British culture. Its audience takes pride of an uninterrupted two-

thousand-year-old tradition, which is not linked to the United Kingdom culture in anyway. To put it clearly, the community places itself somewhere between its own Oriental's imagination and the struggle for cultural citizenship in the United Kingdom.

In order to maintain the ongoing performance of distinct cultural practices that are ancient, spiritual, and traditional, Indian Diaspora communities assists to maintain the breach between modern and traditional dance in the United Kingdom. With such an attempt, they help to maintain split between mainstream and minority communities and the myth of Britishness.

2.4.1 The importance of social class as a parameter for South Asian dance:

A number of studies have exposed that the parameters of social classes and castes had been important for the revival of dance in India in 1930s. Many researchers found that there were significant within the British context of the late twentieth century, that certain genres of art were associated with the middle and upper classes and received a greater attention and a greater access to resources than others associated with a community practice. The research has noted that the dance activities within the community received no public funding and little public recognition. But they have a significant influence on the everyday lives of individuals of both South Asian and non-South Asian origins and categorically make their life richer and more pleasant.

In the United Kingdom, most of Tamil temples and community centres have been promoting Bharatanāṭyam to a great extent. For both Tamil and Sri Lankan Diaspora communities, Bharatanāṭyam is staged as a cultural accomplishment in the temples. Regular Bharatanāṭyam classes are offered by many temples for Tamilians and Sri Lankans. A Bharatanāṭyam performance in the temple acts as a cultural identity

marker and a symbol of Tamil nationality. Bharatanāṭyam is practiced as a regional form in temples of the United Kingdom and as a pan-Indian form at the community centres²⁵.

In mainstream schools if the head teacher is sympathetic towards community languages, then a slot given to teach community languages. The slot is usually after the school hours or through lunch hour. The local educational authority or the community employs a part-time teacher to teach such classes. Beyond school, few higher educational institutions offer Asian languages courses. In universities, students can pursue research in South Asian literature or linguistic studies. But, the option for Asian languages is available only at Oxford and Cambridge. The widest choice of the courses is provided by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.

Identity is a term which shows history, origin and the time to time differences related to oneself. The main reason for using the resources of history, language and culture is that there is a need to protect the existence of identity. The observation in this context is that Sri Lankan Tamils or Gujarati communities in the United Kingdom practice an art form to keep up their cultural identities. In the process they sustain their cultural identity and also pass it on to the next generation in the Diaspora community. As there are such needs and priorities, classical dancers play a key role in the community services.

²⁵ Ann R. David. Religious Dogmas or Political Agenda? Bharatanatyam and its Re-emergence in British Tamil temples. January 2008.

2.4.2 Art form and its role in Diaspora Community:

The medium of making the art form an important role in fulfilling the cultural needs of Diaspora community through Bharatanāṭyam differs with various mediums, for example:

- Performance - South Asian dance communities consider ‘Arangēṭram’ as a symbol of celebrating children’s training in the art form. They have adopted this as a land mark of achieving their cultural identity in the Diaspora community. (Detailed description about Arangēṭram is discussed in chapter 4 - Pushkala Gopal’s work).
- Educational programs and workshops - The mutual sharing of our cultural identities in educational institutions and art avenues plays a major role in fulfilling the cultural needs of the Diaspora community.
- Teaching – The aim of expressing the cultural identities through teaching the basic concepts of Indian art form like Indian mythology, gestures and their meaning, texts and their meaning, music, and technicalities of dance are surpassed with the goal of understanding an art not nearly as a subject but also in a spiritual context. Therefore, the need for cultural identity through teaching plays a vital role in Diaspora community.

2.5. Exploring the current teaching and Institutionalization of Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United Kingdom:

The different classical styles of South Asian Dance have an uneven amount of exposure in the United Kingdom. Out of the nine classical styles, Bharatanāṭyam, Kathak and Ōḍissi have been extensively broadcast throughout the United Kingdom. Kūcipūḍi also has a presence, but a smaller impression compared to other three. These

three styles are well-established and well known throughout the South Asian communities residing in the United Kingdom. However, while practitioners of MōhinĀṭṭam, Maṇipūri, Kathakālī, Sattriya and Chhau do exist in the United Kingdom, opportunities to view or to learn these styles are relatively very rare²⁶.

The foremost cities in the United Kingdom offer the widest opportunities to take consistent training in Bharatanāṭyam. Various teachers in all three styles operate regular weekly classes throughout London, Manchester, Birmingham and Leicester as well as many other regions in the United Kingdom. Many of these Bharatanāṭyam or Kathak teachers in the United Kingdom are now following the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) standards, which is one of the world's leading dance examinations syllabus for the respective styles and provide their students with opportunities to take examinations for the appropriate ISTD grade. The ISTD Bharatanāṭyam syllabus adopted in the United Kingdom is based on the dance training education that Rukmini Devi articulated for Kalakshetra Bharatanāṭyam in the 1930s and 1950s²⁷.

By looking into the etymological meaning for Diaspora, its origin and the existence of the art form 'Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora' particularly in the United Kingdom took the step to commence. South Asian dance Bharatanāṭyam has had a recorded presence in Britain since at least the 1930s. The 1970s saw a strong presence of South Asian dancers in Britain and in the last years the profession of South Asian dance has grown exponentially. Bharatanāṭyam is now a vital and vitalizing part of

²⁶ Pranav Yajnik. South Asian Classical Dance in the United Kingdom. March 26, 2012.

²⁷ Avanthi Medhuri. Labels, Histories, Politics: South Asian Dance on the Global Stage. *Dance Research*, Vol. 26, no. 2 (winter), 20008: 234.

British dance. Over this time, various modes of funding, partnerships and courses have sought to address the training needs of the growing sector. The study provides an overview of the current infrastructure of South Asian dance in Britain, listing the key dance agencies, institutions, individual artists and their activities.

London is a privileged home for South Asian dances, although Bharatanāṭyam dance happens throughout the country. The present research investigated the phenomena in a number of locations in the United Kingdom, but London has a privileged situation. There are approximately sixty dance schools in the London area alone-compared to another sixty for the whole of the rest of the country²⁸.

2.5.1. The emergence of a South Asian dance profession:

It was observed that in general, female performers were the South Asian dancers in the United Kingdom, but were not making a living out of their dance practice. A transformation however started to take place in the late twentieth century, wherein, though the category remained dominated by women, a number of men stated establishing a very strong presence and providing role models for future generation of dancers. Whilst in the past, dance was seen as something supplementary to other professional practices such as medicine, law or accountancy, this has been changed now, and a new dedicated generation of dancers is emerging. The dancers, Pushkala Gopal, Bisakha Sarker, Shanta Rao, Anusha Subramanyam, Shobana Jeyasingh and many others bestow all their time to dance and earn a living from it and are becoming increasingly successful in their enterprise. Here, it is also worth noting, that they are often annoyed at those who do not commit themselves full-time to dance.

²⁸ Andree Grau. South Asian Dance in Britain: Negotiating Cultural Identity through Dance (SADiB). Roehampton University of Surrey. July 1999 – July 2001: 6.

2.5.2. Institutionalisation and Ideological discourses:

In Britain, South Asian dance has become institutionalised in a way similar to their counterparts in India. Different types of institutes have been promoting diverse ideological discourses and visions of history. It can be observed that two main trends, wherein one presents the classical dance traditions as part of an unbroken lineage over two thousand years old, whilst the other interprets the heritage not as a continuous line, but acknowledges ruptures, parallel histories, and reconstructions.

2.5.3. Institutionalisation within a Diaspora context:

Whilst in India, formal training outside the traditional *Guruśiṣya parampara* (teacher-student-tradition) set exists; it is paralleled in Britain by a variety of Institutions that promote dance and music, such as the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, the Tamil schools. Institutionalisation within a broader British context has taken place, especially the addition by the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) of the two South Asian classical forms, Bharatanāṭyam and Kathak to its portfolio of dance syllabi in 1998. Although it is too soon to measure the impact this will have on the dance forms, since they are promoting certain styles within the two genres to the exclusion of others this may impoverish the forms. The research also noted a sense of resentment among teachers who choose to work outside of the ISTD system at the idea of being told what to do or how to teach²⁹.

2.5.4. Identity and ownership of repertoire:

Issues of identity are linked to issues of ownership of repertoire, which in turn, is usually linked to access the resources. As more non-South Asian dancers are

²⁹ Andree Grau. South Asian Dance in Britain: Negotiating Cultural Identity through Dance (SADiB). Roehampton University of Surrey. July 1999 – July 2001: 7.

becoming professionals of South Asian dances, their participation within the art form is being challenged by some. On one hand unacquainted audiences often equate authenticity with skin colour rather than with dance expertise. On the other hand, within a field where resources are limited, some professionals see the integration of white practitioners within a genre, traditionally non-white, as a continuation of imperialist tendencies. To be precise, the ISTD examination system has been set up by non-Asians, which is a cause of concern for some, although the fact that they had been instigated by Akademi, an organisation which promotes South Asian dance and has a British Asian director; and that the syllabi are taught primarily by British Asian and Indian teachers are mitigating factors. An internal debate suggests that perfectly adequate examination systems, validated by Indian organisations, existed already in the country and some see with suspicion this alliance with an imperial institution³⁰.

2.5.5. Funding:

When it comes to funding, dance is undoubtedly the Cinderella of the art in the United Kingdom. It is much neglected and South Asian dance gets less than 2% of the overall allocation. The research shows that South Asian dancers as well as other contemporary dancers have to create and sell their work simultaneously. Many South Asian dancers feel discriminated against by the funding bodies. They feel that their colleagues within more mainstream genres do not comply with artistic directives to the same degree. They agree that hybridity as a racial mixing is seen as identical to challenging and innovatory and hence worthy of funding. The classical idioms receive

³⁰ Andree Grau. *South Asian Dance in Britain: Negotiating Cultural Identity through Dance (SADiB)*. Roehampton University of Surrey. July 1999 – July 2001: 8.

little funding. But this is not the case with the Western theatre dance and their classical works like ballet, all of which receive largest share of allocation³¹.

2.5.6. Arts Council England:

This is an agency of the United Kingdom, which gives access to, participation in and progression in dance for all. At the centre of the national network for community dance, the foundation for community dance exhibits the diversity of dance in United Kingdom. It was established in 1986 to raise the profile and be the national voice for community dance. It works on the theme “development of dance for all”. Arts Council England campaign is an agency which takes action by representing the concerns interests and practice of community dance at all levels. This agency acts as a catalyst for the development of partnership between practitioners, funders and also for the communities by conducting events, seminars, conferences, providing an advisory service, and sponsoring two regular animated journals and Network News. Arts Council of England offers minute information, debate and dialogue about current issues in dance and arts. The network of its members is large, and it includes dancers, animators, artists, dance venue managers and administrators, colleges, universities training establishments, funding bodies and local authorities.

2.5.7. British Institutions and South Asian dance:

The varied and sometimes contradictory visions of South Asian Dance in Britain that have been examined so far can also be looked at institutional levels of Akademi: South Asian Dance in Britain and the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

³¹ Andree Grau. South Asian Dance in Britain: Negotiating Cultural Identity through Dance (SADiB). Roehampton University of Surrey. July 1999 – July 2001: 8-9.

The local and global critiques of South Asian Dance states that, the term South Asian refers to transnational migration and hybridized the historical identity of Indian Bharatanāṭyam in 1980s. This was because of the association of local Indian and Global South Asian labels. This transformation was accomplished not only through the association of local/global terms but also through the foundation of local/global institutions such as Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, which opened its wing in the United Kingdom in 1972. But this single institution was not able to cope with the enormous task of internationalizing Indian dance in the United Kingdom. So Tara Rajkumar, a well-known dancer and choreographer came from India in the late 1970s. He established a second local/global institution known as the National Academy for Indian Dance (NAID) in 1979. Later NAID changed its name to Akademi: South Asian Dance in the United Kingdom in the late 1990s. It was the second international institution, itself inscribed of Indian Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom in 1980s. Bhavan's goal was to protect the tradition of Indian art and culture in the United Kingdom and hand it over to the future generations. But the Akademi strategically placed Indian dance on the multicultural map of Great Britain through cultural translation. Akademi wanted to enlarge received aesthetic definitions of the traditional and classical art forms.

Akademi dexterously bridges the classical and the contemporary dance forms. Guessing the requirement of transition of tradition and innovation, Akademi changed dance into a greater social performance. Those performances reflected the best creative traditions and tensions of living in a multicultural metropolis like London. This is an adventure of the body and the spirit for the Akademi. Thus it shows us that we can

display our cultural differences and share in a wider solidarity of historic and cultural commitment, only through acts of cultural translation.

In the year 2000, Akademi spectacularly presented Indian dance as South Asian dance on the London scene. Hence it enlarged the impact of the Indian dance on British audience. This was the third stage where Akademi sponsored large-scale site-specific productions, which were staged in South Bank, Somerset House, and Trafalgar Square.

Akademi's extravaganzas altered the profile of Indian/South Asian dance. It did not project dance forms as traditional, ritual or cultural forms. It presented it as something exceedingly variable, interdisciplinary recreations. It combined folk with Bollywood style of dancing and classical with the contemporary. This kind of interdisciplinary vision sponsored by Akademi inspired dancers and choreographers to work freely with dance vocabularies and imagine site specific works³².

2.5.8. List of the Dance Institutions, Companies, Organisations & individuals in the United Kingdom:

During the field work conducted, it was found that there are many institutions, companies and some individual related to teaching and performance of Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom. Some of the prominent and major institutions, organisations, companies and individuals are listed below. This researcher visited some of the institutions and dance companies and had extensive discussions with them regarding their role in promoting, preserving, performing and propagating Bharatanāṭyam and conducted their interviews which will be discussing in the next chapter.

³² Andree Grau. South Asian Dance in Britain: Negotiating Cultural Identity through Dance (SADiB). Roehampton University of Surrey. July 1999 – July 2001: 51-53.

S.No	Name of the Institution	Founder	Address
1.	“Alamail Palim Dance Company”	Alamail Palim	189, Sedlescombe Rd North St. Leonards-on-Sea East Sussex TN377ER Ph: (44-1424) - 421004 e-mail: alamail888@yahoo.co.uk
2.	"Ankura Dance Academy"	Lakshmi Srinivasan	# 10 Campion Close, Cheylesmore Coventry, CV3 5EN Ph: +44 - (0) 7712232664 e-mail: lakshmi.badri2010@gmail.com / ankuradance@gmail.com
3.	"Annapurna Indian Dance Company "	Shantha Rao	12 Stafford Square, Halifax Yorkshire HX3 OAU Ph: (44 - 1422) - 365103 e-mail: dance_2001_2002@yahoo.com
4.	"Akademi (South Asian Dance in the United Kingdom)"	Meera Misra Kaushik	Hampstead Town Hall 213 Haverstock Hill London NW3 4QP Ph: 020 7691 3210 e-mail: info@akademi.co.uk / mira@akademi.co.uk
5.	“ASH Dance Theatre” Temple Dance for the 21 st Century”	Ash Mukherjee	Ashterix4@gmail.com
6.	“Awtani Immigration Solicitors “	Sushma Awtani Guru: Prakash Yadagudde	The Media Centre, 19 Bolsover Street London W1W 5NA Ph: 07930 925393 Daytime: 020 7665 4200

			e-mail: sushma.awtani@hotmail.com
7.	"Academy for Performing Arts"	Bhagya Lakshmi Thyagarajan	24 Lancast, London Ph: 07970705158
8.	"Beeja"	Anusha Subramanyam	25 Umfreville Road London N4 1RY Ph: (44 -20) - 83723268 e-mail: info@beeja.com, anusha@beeja.com website: www.beeja.com
9.	"Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan"	Prakash Yadagudde	Institute of Indian Culture 4A, Castletown Road West Kensington London W149HE Ph: (44 -20) - 73813086 / 73814608 Fax: (44 -20) - 73818758 e-mail: info@bhavan.net
10.	"Centre for Indian Classical Dance"	Nilima Devi	48 - 50 Churchill Street Leicester LE21FH Ph: (44-116) - 2552862 e-mail: info@cid.org.uk / ndevi@cid.org.uk
11.	"Chitraleka Dance Company"	Chitraleka Bolar and Sharad Bolar	Apartment 1, Bournville House 45, Woodbrooke Grove Birmingham B31 2FG Ph: (44 - 121) - 478 3384 (H), 414 4163 (O) e-mail: info@chitraleka.co.uk / chitraleka.bolar@googlemail.com sharad.bolar@gmail.com
12.	"Devika Dance Theatre"	Devika Rao	The Dance Studio Leeds, Mabgate Mills, Macaulay Street, Leeds, West

			Yorkshire LS97DZ
13.	"Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance" (ISTD)		South Asian Dance Faculty Imperial House 22/26, Paul Street London EC2A4QE Ph: (44 -20) - 73771577 e-mail: admin@istd.org
14.	"India Dance Wales"	Kiran Ratna	Highmead House, 52 Mill Road Lisvane, Cardiff, CF14 0XS Ph: +44(0)29 20465404 e-mail: admin@indiadancewales.com
15.	"India Performing Arts"		Flat 1, 54 Kensington Court London W85DE Ph: (44-207) - 9374952 e-mail: Anitapsharma@hotmail.com
16.	"Jasmine Simhalan Company"	Jasmine Simhalan	London Kalari Sangham dancedesign, part of Mediamilieu 94, Highbury Hill London N5 1AT Ph: (44 - 20) - 7226 3502 Fax: (44 - 87) - 0705 8793 e-mail: dancedesign@mediamilieu.plus.com kalari@mediamilieu.plus.com
17.	"Kalasagara Academy of Fine Arts"	Usha Raghavan	12 Park Drive North Harrow HA2 7 LT Ph: (020) - 8728 3693 e-mail: u_raghavan@yahoo.com website: www.usharaghavan.com
18.	"Kala Sangam"	Geetha Upadhyaya	St Peters House 1 Forster Square

			Bradford, BD1 4TY Ph: 01274 303340 e-mail: info@kalasangam.org
19.	"Kalaimanram"	Radhini Sivadharan	Classes at: Miltonkeynes, Harrow, Edgware Ph: 02084322956 / 07930284266 e-mail: kalaimanram@hotmail.co.uk
20.	"Kalalaya Bharata Natyam School"	Arthi Ravishankar	117, Station Crescent Ashford TW15 3HN, Surrey Mobile: 07595331529 e-mail: arthi.ravishankar@gmail.com
21.	"Kadam Asian Dance and Music"		1 Lurke Street Bedford MK40 3TN Ph: 01234 316028 / 09790 526 8887 e-mail: KADAMDANCE@aol.com website: http://www.kadam.org.uk
22.	"Kalakunj, Centre for Performing Arts"	Ananya Chatterjee	3 Lancaster Close Reading, Berkshire RG1 5HB Ph: 0118 975 9337 e-mail: anachat_1999@yahoo.com
23.	"Kshetra Dance Company"	Santosh Menon	Cr02xu London Ph: 07519125049
24.	"Mrityika Arts"	Basanti Chatterjee	66, Bridgeacre Gardens Coventry CV32NN Ph: +44 (0) 24 7645 3389 e-mail: basanti.chatterjee@ntlworld.com
25.	"Milapfest Arts School"	Contact: Shyla Lakshminarayan a	The Cornerstone Building, Creative Campus, Liverpool Hope University,

			17 Shaw Street, Liverpool L6 1HP Ph: 0151 291 3949 e-mail: artschool@milapfest.com
26.	"Mavin Khoo Dance"	Mavin Khoo	5 Causten Rd London N65ES Ph: (44 - 20) - 83484628 e-mail: mavinkhoodance@yahoo.co.uk
27.	"Mudralaya"	Pushkala Gopal	20 Brisbane Road Ilford, Essex IG1 4SR Mobile: 07950 550 550 e-mail: pushkala.gopal@gmail.com
28.	"Marylebone Dance Studios"	Mavin Khoo / Magdalen Gorringer	The Tabernacle Theatre, Powis Square London W11 2AY Contact: Katie Coe Ph: (44 - 20) - 7565 7806 12 Lisson Grove London NW1 6TS Contact: Kerri Andrews Ph: (44 - 20) - 7258 0767
29.	"Mavin Khoo Dance"	Mavin Khoo / Magdalen Gorringer	12 Lisson Grove London NW1 6TS Contact: Kerri Andrews Ph: (44 - 20) - 7257 0767
30.	"Nandavana Dance Group"	Chamundeeswar i Kuppuswamy	Dance class: The Circle 33, Rockingham Lane Sheffield S1 4FW Mobile: 07868780356 e-mail: chamu@justice.com
31.	"Narthana Kalalaya"	Pathmini Gunaseelan	4, Lorne Road Walthamstow, London E177PX Ph: (44-20) - 7993 4578

32.	"Nartana Alaya"	Indra Thiagarajah	12 Glendarvon Street Putney, London SW151JS Ph: (44-208) - 7888302
33.	"Nava Kala Dance Academy"	Sunita Golvala	211, Ranelagh Court Regency Walk, Shirley Croydon, Surrey CR07UW Ph: (44-208) - 87770186
34.	"Narthaki"	Geetha Sridhar	19, Rowley Hall Drive Rowley Park Stafford ST179FF Ph: (44 - 1785) - 225405 Fax: (44 - 1785) - 225405 e-mail: Mksridhar@btinternet.com Geetha.Sri@btinternet.com
35.	"Natyanjali Dance school"	Divya Ramkumar	103 Walpole Road Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3 TH e-mail: Divyanatyanjali@gmail.com
36.	"Nritya Kala Academy"		12, Wighton Mews, Isleworth, Middlesex London TW74DZ Mobile: 07881404043 e-mail: shaleeni.sharma@gmail.com
37.	"Nupur Arts Academy"	Smita Vadnerkar	Leicester Ph: 07801 365 779 e-mail: smita@nupurarts.org.uk / info@nupurarts.org.uk
38.	"Rachana Dance Academy"	Sheela Kakkad	13, Meadfield, Edgeware Middlesex HA88XH Ph: (44 -20) – 89584728 e-mail: sheelakak@hotmail.com
39.	"Sanskriti School of Dance"	Krishna Zivraj- Nair	10, Elder Close, Sawston Cambridge CB22 3BB, United

			Kingdom Ph: 077 11 598 424 e-mail: kzivraj@gmail.com
40.	"Sampad-South Asian Arts"	Piali Ray	C/o MAC, Cannon Hill Park Birmingham B129QH Ph: (44-121) - 4463260 e-mail: info@sampad.org.uk / piali@sampad.org.uk
41.	"Swati Dance Company"	Swati Raut	Foxglove, Wood Lane Parbold, Lancashire WN87TH Ph: 01257 464 481 e-mail: info@swatidance.com
42.	"Sankalpam"	Stella Subbiah	10, Thorndale Av. New South Gate London N111ET Mobile: 07976669039 e-mail: stellasubbiah@hotmail.com
43.	"Sāṅskṛtī" (South Asian Natya Sangeeta Kriya Iti)	Shruti Sriram	20 Brisbane Road Ilford, Essex IG1 4SR Ph: + 44(0) 7896 878 077 / +44(0)208 554 4054 e-mail: shruti.sriram@gmail.com
44.	"SpaTikam"	Jasmine Simhalan	21B, Howard road London SE25 5BU Ph: (44 - 208) - 6562107 e-mail: jsimhalan@hotmail.com
45.	"Suchitdance"	Chitra Sundaram	69, St. John's Wood Court St. John's Wood Rd London NW88QS Ph: (44 - 20) - 72865271 Fax: (44 - 20) - 72865271 e-mail: suchitdance@yahoo.com
46.	"Srishti - Nina"	Nina Rajarani	161 Uxbridge Road, Hatch End

	Rajarani Dance Creations"		Harrow, Middlesex HA5 4EA e mail: srishti@srishti.co.uk / ninarajarani@srishti.co.uk
47.	"Samudra"	Bhavani Shankar, Thanuja B Shankar	16, Highgrove Park Grassendale, Liverpool L199EQ Ph: (44-151) - 4274920 e-mail: KMOHANAN@aol.com
48.	"Upasana"	Deepa Ganesh	15, Osborne Street Didsbury, Manchester M20 2QZ. Ph: (44 -161) - 4455811 e-mail: upasana_uk@hotmail.com website: www.upasana-arts.com
49.	"Upahaar School of Dance"	Shalini Shivashankar	80 Chiltern Road Sutton, Surrey SM2 5QY, United Kingdom Ph: +44 7811823684 e-mail: shalini@upahaar.co.uk / upahaar.dance@gmail.com
50.	"Kalasagara United Kingdom"	Usha Raghavan, Srinidhi Raghavan	452 Rayners Lane Pinner HA5 5DX Mobile: 07899 844869 e-mail: usharaghavan2006@gmail.com website: www.usharaghavan.com
51.	"Warisan"	Bavaani Nanthabalan, Mavin Koo	9, Rosemary Avenue London N32QP Ph: (44-208) - 3493248
52.	"Vijayanarthanala"	Vijayambigai Indra Kumar	23, East Avenue Manor Park, London E126SG Ph: (44-208) - 84712039
53.		Allessandra Iyer	11, Eden House Leigh Road, London NS1SR Ph: (44-207) - 7049048

			e-mail: alessandra.lopez@blueyonder.co.uk
54.		Aparna Kaustubh Dighe	17, Gilbert Boulevard, Arnold Nottingham NG5 7NA Ph: 07737897720 e-mail: aparnakaustubh2001@yahoo.co.uk
55.		Archana Senathirajah Guru: Thankam ani Kutty	45, Oakwood Drive Fulwood, Preston PR23LY, Lancashire, England Ph: (44-1772) - 864932 e-mail: a_senathirajah@yahoo.co.uk
56.		Avanthi Meduri	Roehampton University School of Arts-Dance Programs Froebel College Roehampton Lane London SW15 5PJ Ph: (44 - 20) - 8392 3000 Fax: (44 - 20) - 8392 3688 e-mail: meduriavanthi@rediffmail.com avanthi@hotmail.com
57.		Divya Kasturi	2, Lister Close Stevenage, United Kingdom e-mail: kdivya.2013@rediffmail.com
58.		Mayuri Boonham	e-mail: mayuriboonham@hotmail.com
59.		Madhuri Rajesh	120, Dawson Avenue Barking, Essex IG11 9QQ Ph: (44) - 07734201918 e-mail: madhuriraj@yahoo.com

60.	Sankalpam Co- Founder & Co- Artistic	Mira Balchandran- Gokul	House No.2, Southport Dist. Gen. Hospital, Town Lane Kew, Southport PR86PN Ph: (44-1704) - 547471 Extn.4472 e-mail: krish_gokul@hotmail.com
61.		Prakash Yadagudde	Ph: 020 7381 3086 e-mail: prakash.yadagudde@bhavan.net
62.		Ragasudha Vinjamuri	13 Guinevere court, King George Crescent Lancelot Road, Wembley HA0 2FH Ph: (44 - 20) - 878 22227 e-mail: ragas_v@yahoo.co.in
63.		Rashmi Sudhir	10, The Paddock, Baildon West Yorkshire BD17 7LL Ph: 07980861123 e-mail: rskdance@hotmail.com
64.		Roopashree NS	7, Appledore Close Victoria Dock Hull HU9 1PZ Ph: 07593582323 email: roopa1236@gmail.com / roopa_ns@yahoo.com
65.	“Sadhana”	Subathra Subramaniam	e-mail: subathrasubramaniam@hotmail.com
66.		Sangeetha Balasingam Guru: Pushkala Gopal	17 Kingsmere Road Wimbledon, London SW19 6PY Ph: (44 - 208) - 7856540 e-mail: sangeethabalasingam@gmail.com
67.		Sarra Whicheloe	2 Knowle Cottages, Knowle Lane Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8JL Ph: 01483268014

			e-mail: info@yogabody.org.uk
68.		Seeta Patel	07850840984
69.		Priya Sundar	10, West end croft, Burgh by Sands, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA56BT Ph: 012285762997 Mobile: 07929923747
70.		Dr. Vasumathi Prasad	226 New Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8TQ Ph: 0117940710 Mobile: 07582868171
71.		Payal Garg	4, Tiffancy Court, Redcliffe Mead Lane, Bristol, BS16FD, United Kingdom



★ List of Dance Institutions / Companies / Organisations in the United Kingdom

2.5.8.1. The United Kingdom Map

There are some major Organizations, which need special attention-

SADAA:

South Asian Dance Alliance (SADAA) is an alliance of the country's leading South Asian Dance development agencies. It was formed to provide a visionary development path for South Asian Dance in the United Kingdom and internationally through strategic initiatives. Akademi from London, Sampad from Birmingham and Kadam from Bedford joined together to create SADAA. They have come together to work with a specific plan for the development of the profile of South Asian Dance in all its forms.

SADAA aims to:

- Support the development of performers and choreographers
- Increase opportunities for the presentation of performances
- Develop audiences
- Offer training and advice to enable artists to develop their work in education, health and other community settings and increase their portfolio career prospects
- Develop and promote critical discourse

Advocate for South Asian Dance speaking with a unified voice that is informed by the knowledge and experience of individual SADAA members.

The current members of SADAA are:

Akademi	-	London
Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan	-	London
Chaturangan	-	Liverpool

Centre for Indian Classical Dance (CICD)	-	Leicester
Kadam	-	Luton
Kala Sangam	-	Bradford
Milapfest	-	Liverpool
Sampad	-	Birmingham
SAA-uk	-	Leeds ³³

Milapfest:

“Milap” is a beautiful SĀNSKRIT word which means “to meet each other in friendship.” Milapfest is run by national charity “Milap Festival Trust”, which was established in 1985 with an aim to promote cross-cultural programmes which can surpass the limits of race, language and religion.

Milapfest is a United Kingdom’s South Asian Arts Development Trust. It works to encourage and gives assistance to the performance, development and appreciation of Indian arts internationally.

Milapfest began as a festival in Liverpool in 1985. Its first weekend festival was hosted by Pandit Shivkumar Sharma (Indian classical musician and a renowned ‘Santūr’ player) and Ustad Zakir Hussain (Indian Tabla player, musical producer, film actor and composer). As years passed, the organisation has grown enormously. Now it thrives to work in making a different society through the medium of arts. This trust also promotes and supports the performance, development and appreciation of Indian arts internationally.

³³ Available at <http://southasiandance.org.uk/>

Milap Festival Trust aims to promote the following:

- To promote excellence in the practice and promotion of Indian arts
- To support artistes' development through commissions, performances and training
- To bring people together from a variety of backgrounds in a celebration of arts and culture
- To make Indian arts a mainstream form, accessible and open to all
- To celebrate the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom through the arts.

Milap Festival Trust is run by a board of trustees and a team of dedicated staff who is passionate about the arts and are qualified or professionally trained in a variety of applicable disciplines³⁴.

2.5.9. Universities in the United Kingdom, which have Indian arts:

1. University of Surrey (Unis)
2. Roehampton University of Surrey (RUS)³⁵

Shobana Jeyasingh in the syllabus: Shobana Jeyasingh's work dominates the South Asian dance considered as further and higher education syllabus. The debate between 'classical' and 'contemporary' versions of South Asian dance is ongoing, with the latter focused solely on work within Britain. Her work is frequently discussed in student's admission interviews as well as Jayasingh's choreography and it is a subject for analysis, in a range of Roehampton's theoretical modules.

³⁴ Available at <http://www.milapfest.com/>

³⁵ Ann David. Where have all the courses gone...? Pulse winter, 2003: 8.

Contemporary version of South Asian dance instead of the traditional Bharatanāṭyam mārgam for example. Still, this ‘choice’ has broader implications and reasons. Jayasingh has said that Bharatanāṭyam her idiom of primary training, is her point of choreographic departure. Jeyasingh’s significant blend and reworking of Indian classical and western contemporary dance enables the analytic and historical roots of Bharatanāṭyam as the starting base for students.

Jeyasingh’s contribution in higher education programs within a mainstream art and education space plays a vital role. In addition to resource packs, many other commentators provided investigative tools to unpick her work in multiple layers. At the South Asian Aesthetics Unwrapped conference, Jeyasingh spoke of

1. Crossing boundaries.
2. Resisting the label of exotic to reveal in a hybridity of east and west.
3. Challenging stagnant visions of tradition and classicism.
4. Her work offers possibilities for analysis of transcultural values, embodying the creations of a post-modern, cosmopolitan migrant, whose dances emerge from aesthetic choice based on artistic rather than intellectual criteria.

Therefore Shobana Jeyasing and her work play an important role in making Bharatanāṭyam as a mainstream art form with a blend of contemporary dance with technology³⁶.

³⁶ Stacey Prickett. Degrees of Change. Pulse winter, 2003: 10-11.

2.5.10. Various Platforms for academic scoring, and gaining certified standards in the field of Bharatanāṭyam:

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Exams:

The first examinations for Bharatanāṭyam and Kathak to be conducted in Britain were almost certainly those set up by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in London in 1985. Since then, they have been conducted at the Bhavan every year for seventeen years. The Bhavan drew up its initial syllabus based on those used in various colleges and universities in both Britain and India.

The ISTD Exams:

The introduction of the South Asian Dance Faculty to the Imperial Society for Training in Dance (ISTD) in the last couple of years turned the spotlight on issues of training standards in South Asian dance in the United Kingdom. Groups teaching South Asian dance in Britain have sought to establish ways to both motivate students as well as assess their level of achievement.

The most recent additions are the ISTD examinations for Bharatanāṭyam and Kathak, drawn up an extended period of research coordinated by Akademi and supported by the Arts Council of England. The researchers conducted a broad survey of teaching practice and drew on training guidelines used both in Britain and India. Advised by a series of discussions and meetings among several of the senior figures in the world of South Asian dance in Britain, the eventual syllabi were drawn up with six grades; each grade requires “a progressively greater degree of experience, technique and repertoire” according to the ISTD website. The South Asian dance faculty at ISTD envisages that “more advanced examinations up to a professional performing and teaching standard will be added to the range as the take-up increases”, and

“examinations in other South Asian dance genres may be added in the future, if there is demand”. The examiners are British-based and the ISTD Syllabus points out that the emphasis is upon recognising that the student is “in an environment which may not necessarily complement his or her experience” of training in a South Asian dance form³⁷.

The Oriental Fine Arts Academy, London (OFAAL) examination:

The hugely popular Oriental Fine Arts Academy, London (OFAAL) examinations were set up twelve years ago by musician and teacher Ambika Tharmotharam. Tharmotharam and her associates drew up their syllabus in a manner similar to the Bhavan-by considering the syllabi of a number of colleges such as the Madras Music College and adapting them to suit the needs of students in the United Kingdom. Thus a syllabus that would normally take five to six years in India or Sri Lanka was adapted to be completed over eight years in Britain, allowing for the reduced time that students here are often able to devote to training. At the completion of eight years, the student is expected to be able to perform a complete mārṅam and receives the title ‘Natya Kalajyothi’. At inception, they were offered to a very small group of students; and it has spread across Europe. Similar to Bhavan, the OFAAL examinations have both a practical and theoretical element and the theory paper can be submitted in either English or Tamil. They are open to anyone interested.

The Sangit Preparatory Exams:

In 1987, the Pandit Ram Sahil Sangit Vidyalaya established the Sangit Preparatory examinations. The Sangit Preparatory examinations are accredited by United Kingdom standards. The syllabi for these were put together in consultation with

³⁷ Available at <http://www.istd.org/about-us/>

experienced examiners from India, and they were designed “to ensure that they had a purity with graded systems in the United Kingdom and hence purity within the national framework of qualifications. The Sangit Preparatory examinations focus equally on dance and music, on the principle that, at least within the Indian tradition, “any distinction made between these two art forms is artificial. Several hundred students each year across the United Kingdom, Continental Europe, the States and Canada take these examinations, which are available twice a year and are open to anyone. An additional advantage for those who are taking these examinations within the United Kingdom is that, the syllabi for the Sangit Preparatory also cover the examination elements required for GCSE and ‘A’ Level, so that the apprentices can use their training in Indian music, Bharatanāṭyam or Katak to cover part of their GCSE and ‘A’ Level in music or dance.

Trinity College, London (proposed) Exams:

In addition to the above mentioned examination systems, Trinity College, London is also working together with several South Asian arts organizations in the United Kingdom to develop a nationally recognized qualification for a range of Indian art forms³⁸.

The merits in each of the systems:

1. The Bhavan exposes students to a number of high-level artists, which is a great opportunity for a young dancer.
2. The sentiment of the Sangit Preparatory examinations as articulated on their website, Sahai.org, is laudable: that “because the learning of music and dance is a development of the students’ art, there will be a pass/fail mark”; those exams

³⁸ Magdalen Gorringer. *Passing Matters*. Pulse winter, 2003: 12-13.

“have been devised to cultivate the candidate’s desire to learn and not to highlight failure”.

3. The option to offer the OFAAL examinations in Tamil, makes a strong and positive statement about the role the arts undoubtedly have in nurturing and developing a sense of pride in cultural identity.
4. The ISTD’s stress on body conditioning should make for healthier and safe practice.

Observations and analysis:

Each examination system has its supporters and detractors. Proponent of the ISTD exam feels that the emphasis on body conditioning which is valued especially because of the cold climate is more than the theory. On the other hand, those who have been involved with other examination systems for years are not convinced that the ISTD makes a substantial difference to what is already there, though few of them feel that the ISTD is a step backwards, claiming to do more than it delivers and is essentially more about training teachers rather than performers.

Ultimately the choice is subjective weighing up the relative advantages of each offering. Clearly there is an advantage of having an internationally recognised qualification, but arguably each of these exam structures offers a qualification, each in its own right. The output of the final test must be the quality of dancer it produces with particular qualities of the teacher involved determining this outcome more than anything else. Nevertheless, clear and comprehensive guidelines for a course of study are always useful, and it is invaluable in helping teachers structure, their training and impart a sense of motivation and satisfaction to students.

The above mentioned choices are subjected to the convenience and needs of respective artists who are seeking for qualification.

This chapter reveals a brief history of the development of Bharatanāṭyam in India with transition from Sadir to Bharatanāṭyam. With the gradual travel of Sadir to Bharatanāṭyam and Bharatanāṭyam being located in Diaspora this research studies and explores the location of art form in Diaspora. The etymological meaning of the term Diaspora, how Indian immigration happened since the beginning and the cultural exchange took place between East and West are examined. Contribution of early Indian artists in the United Kingdom which created a remarkable impact of Indian art forms in the Britain is studied. The continuation of Bharatanāṭyam's arrival in the United Kingdom to locating its establishment in the United Kingdom with the accomplished recognition of gaining a label of South Asian Dance form Bharatanāṭyam gives a complete picture. Mutual sharing of cultural identities with different mediums of performances, teaching, educational programs and having cultural celebration festivals by using temples, religious conventional centres as prime venues for the art form teaching, performances and presentations is highlighted. The expansion in the field made Bharatanāṭyam play a major role in fulfilling the cultural needs of Diaspora. The study identifies the prominent Institutions, Organisations, Art schools, Companies, Universities and Individual artists who have contributed to Bharatanāṭyam gaining a remarkable position in the United Kingdom.

Chapter - 3

Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora

3.1. Ethnicity & its impact on Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora:

Ethnicity is the term that denotes a group of people with a common set of cultural markers such as language, custom, religion and tradition. The ethnic minorities are distinctively populated in the society and their culture is identified from their existing societies³⁹.

India is a country composed with various ethnic groups. This ethnic diversity reflects in the British Indian community in larger percentage than any others. The British Indians are mostly the Punjabis representing two thirds of direct migrants from the South Asia to the United Kingdom. In addition to the Indian Punjabis, the Pakistani Punjabis numbering over two million are the largest Punjabi community outside South Asia. Another larger subgroup of British Indian population is the British Gujaratis who form the largest overseas Gujarati population in the world. The United Kingdom also has half a million Bengali population though they do not originate from what is now considered India but from Bangladesh. Alongside Punjabis, Gujaratis and Bengalis there are also significant numbers of Tamils from India and SriLanka as well as Parsis⁴⁰.

Bharatanāṭyam being a prominent landmark of identity in Diaspora context, its ethnicity has an impact in return on the dance form as well. The following points

³⁹ Dominic Hingorani. *British Asian Theatre: Dramaturgy, Process and Performance*. Published by Palgrave Macmillan, 2010: 8.

⁴⁰ Sarva Daman Singh, Mahavir Singh. *Indians Abroad*. Published by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata. Hope India Publications, Haryana, 2003: 112-113.

portray the ethnicity of the dance form followed by the impact of ethnicity and experiments in Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora.

3.1.1. Identity – Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora:

Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom does not only reflect the classical dance itself. Along with it, several other major components reflected in Bharatanāṭyam further establish the Indian ethnicity and identity such as –

- **Costume** - Bharatanāṭyam costume has its own ethnicity in these various aspects like texture of the costume which is usually the silk, the way it is draped for both men and women and jewellery which embellishes the very aesthetic presence of an artist on the stage.
- **Makeup** - Make up plays a major role in Bharatanāṭyam. Eyes are drawn thick, Bindī, Ornamental accessories like Jasmine flowers, Altha (Red liquid to decorate the hand and feet).
- **Music** - Bharatanāṭyam has always been composed in Karnāṭik music (South Indian Classical music) from the ancient times. Compositions like Alāriṭṭu (an invocatory dance), Varṇam (a combination of lyrics, foot work and expression), Tillāna (a fast paced composition usually presented as a conclusion) portrays a larger picture of Bharatanāṭyam-s ethnicity.
- **Stage and Space** - Placement of the Idol of Lord of dance (Naṭarāja) as a symbol of auspiciousness and tradition, placement of live musicians, traditional stage decoration with oil lamp and flowers. The usage of space in ethnic Bharatanāṭyam has transitioned from temple sanctum sanctorum to proscenium stage.

- Performance rituals – Rituals plays a prominent role in Indian life style. Bharatanāṭyam performance consist such rituals like lighting of the lamp as a symbol of auspicious beginning, offering salutations to the Guru (personification of knowledge), salutations to Rasikās (audience who witness).
- Concept and theme – Mythology, traditional interpretation of social concepts, traditional compositions.
- Guruśiṣya Parampara – Student teacher relationship, celebration of debut performance, offerings to the teacher as mark of respect.

3.1.2. Ethnicity and Experiments in Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora:

The following are the parallel relative observations to the above points in regarding the experiments in Bharatanāṭyam and its impact on its ethnicity.

- Costume: The significant modifications in the Bharatanāṭyam costume presentation focuses on the relation between ethnicity and experimental requirement. Therefore the reasons for the modifications give not only an understanding of the project requirements but leaving an exotic mark with in the communities and mainstream performances, i.e. the transition of gradual modifications in Bharatanāṭyam costumes in Diaspora has been a significant observation. Few of the dancers who created this trend, begin with Uday Shankar, Ram Gopal to the present contemporary Bharatanāṭyam artists like Shobana Jeyasingh, Anusha Subramanyam, Ash Mukharjee, and Nina Rajarani. The photographs show the drastic variations in Bharatanāṭyam costumes experimented with by Uday Shankar and Ram Gopal in 1930s. The Bharatanāṭyam dancers costume has been varying to allow more and more innovations and exoticism to accommodate many aspects like –

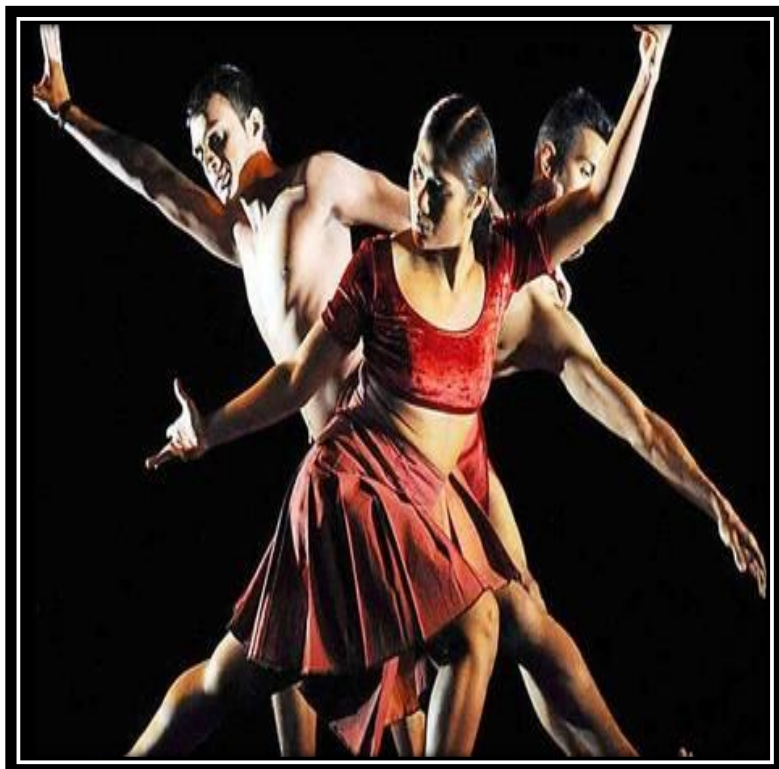
- (a) To make it more understandable for the Diaspora audience.
- (b) To allow more comfort for movement.
- (c) To have better relevance to the character presented.



3.1.2.1. Photo: Pandit Uday Shankar and his partner



3.1.2.2. Photo: Ram Gopal



**3.1.2.3. Photo: Shobana Jeyasigh Troup from the production
'Configurations'**

In the above picture the costume experimentation was done for a production ‘Configurations’ produced in 2012 by Shobana Jeyasingh. The drastic change in the perception of a classical art form is obvious in the way it has been presented especially the costumes to match the contemporary context.



3.1.2.4. Photo: Anusha Subramanyam depicting an experimental movement from the production ‘Na Asat’ (2010): Photo Courtesy: Vipul Sangoi

The above picture portrays the usage of Bharatanāṭyam elements for a contemporary concept extracted from Rīgvēda. This is also done with experimentation in the costumes and exemplifies the new layer of the contemporary world.



3.1.2.5. Photo: Ash Mukherjee presenting Bharatanāṭyam to contemporary context named as ‘The Man in the Mirror Move Michael Jackson’

The above picture of artist Ash Mukharjee has been taken from a television reality show ‘Dance Showreel’ telecast in 2011 semi-finals depicting Bharatanāṭyam dance movements as an experiment to the concept called “The Man in the Mirror Move Michael Jackson”. Here is an observation which has influence and similarity to Ram Gopal’s style of costumes.



3.1.2.6. Photo: Nina Rajarani Group presenting Bharatanāṭyam experimenting to the theme on Football sport

The above picture has been taken from a production (Bend It) of Nina Rajarani at Move It 2011, documented by Retox Magazine. It is an experimental creation of Football and Bharatanāṭyam together with Srishti at London's Olympia held in March 2011. To make it more relevant to the Football theme, costume has been chosen in such a way to go with the movements of Bharatanāṭyam.

The above mentioned explanations are the examples of the transitions of costumes experiments in the Diaspora. However there are similar experiments in India as well. In so far as the costume experiments are relevant to the concept, and context there will be considerable connection with the audience.

- Make up: Make up and jewellery in contemporary Bharatanāṭyam is minimal compared to the ethnic Bharatanāṭyam presentation. Therefore that itself has an

impact on the ethnicity of Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora. Some of the above pictures give the examples.

- **Music:** To avoid a hassle free presentation live orchestra has been replaced with recorded music quite a long time back not only in Diaspora but in India as well. Usage of various non ethnic instruments and non-ethnic music in order to experiment and adapt to the availability has its own an impact. This is discussed in detail in chapter four.
- **Stage and space:** Stage and space in contemporary Bharatanāṭyam presentation in Diaspora has drastic modifications in order to reach the wider audience. Traditional stage replaced by modern space due to many reasons. Therefore there is a gradual fadeout of performance rituals in contemporary Bharatanāṭyam work. Two factors influenced in this regard are state of the art, technology and infrastructure is available in the United Kingdom.



3.1.2.7. Photo: Akademi Maaya Dance Production, Westminster Abbey, London

The above picture is one example of performances in the United Kingdom using different spaces as a platform to reach a wider audience and the portrayal of Indian classical dances and their exotic features in Diaspora. The picture is taken from the production ‘Maaya’ presented by Akademi in the United Kingdom Parliament – Westminster Hall, London. In the picture the Indian classical dance is presented mainly to make a mainstream attempt and therefore make the audience experience the art form in different context.



3.1.2.8. Photo: Beeja Dance Company Dancer presenting Bharatanāṭyam in a public park, London: Photo Courtesy: Himabindu Uppari

In the above picture it is observed that Bharatanāṭyam art form is being presented in an unconventional space to entertain the army group on a specific social occasion. It raises a concern of minimally responsive spectators to an art which aims to be practiced and presented with an objective of connecting.

- Concept and themes: The concepts and themes in Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora vary according to the contexts from subjects like day to day life, social issues, contemporary topics, abstract and themes related within the cultural, aesthetic and political scenario in Diaspora. E.g. Shanta Rao's and Pushkala Gopal's work mostly portrays a message within the parameters and culmination of art forms. Bisakha Sarker's and Anusha Subramanyam's work mostly focuses on social and contemporary topics which are relevant to the society. Shobana Jeyasing's work emphasises mostly abstract formats.
- Guruśiṣya parampara: Indian art form is known for its tradition of sharing the knowledge directly from the Guru. The concept of learning from one Guru at his or her place has gradually disappeared in the last 50 years. Even in India people learn from various Gurus from institutions and sometimes even from internet. So the age old tradition of Guruśiṣya parampara has been replaced by institutions. There are very few individuals / institutions, who teach traditional Bharatanāṭyam with success.

3.2. Identifying the artists and their work:

This chapter identifies the works of some of the artists who made a major contribution to Indian Diaspora and their detailed analyses are given in the subsequent chapter.

The very purpose of experiments emerged with a need to showcase identity and to acquire an enhanced approach for reasons such as:

- Survival - Artists in Diaspora essentially use Bharatanāṭyam elements in conveying and communicating not only for identifying their ethnicity but also to be a regular and active part in the social context which also meets their survival

needs i.e. while dealing with different groups (Ethnic groups, Disabled groups, Refugees, Old age groups, Schools, Communities and Mainstream), the artists need to cater to specific requirements. For each project that is undertaken where the artist has to perform, there is the need to use relevant technology and exhibit an understanding the concept for the project.

- Creative expression –

1. Maximum utilization of the opportunities on different platforms provided by funding bodies remains a challenge to an artist's creativity and innovation in their craft. As mentioned above dealing with different groups with an innovative and creative approach always makes a mark in an artist's credibility. It is found that they present the art form with a combination of social welfare. It involves various components such as dance as a healthy body movement, understanding the moral of the stories, relating diet to the art and therefore creating a complete understanding of an art form to an ideal life style. Shanta Rao, the director of Annapurna Indian Dance Company, Halifax, Yorkshire, United Kingdom, creates an atmosphere in various schools and communities where Indian art form Bharatanāṭyam and Indian Culture are simplified to help in understanding and educating the students through Indian storytelling in a manner relevant to the present context. Shanta Rao's work is described later.

2. Adapting the requirements for the projects according to the terms of funding bodies - retaining the ethnicity and yet being purposeful and adapting to the circumstances available, becomes an essential quality of artists in Diaspora. Technology being a core aspect in networking and communication, the art form utilizes technology in a creative and

innovative way as a prominent feature in presentation. E.g. the work of Bisakha Sarker and Shobana Jeyasingh stand as prominent examples in using technology for the creative expression.

3. Traditional teaching methodology vs. adaptability: Passing on the traditions of art form while teaching in Diaspora holds the challenge of modifying the methodology in order to make it understandable by different ethnic groups with different cultural backgrounds, i.e. Pushkala Gopal - a renowned Bharatanāṭyam teacher, dancer, choreographer and musician who was also an artistic director of Mudralaya, established in 1984, Anusha Subramanyam - a dancer, choreographer, teacher, and dance movement therapist, founder of Beeja, both made remarkable contributions in passing on the art form having the traditional traits and yet being adapted to the requirements.

The importance of ethnicity in the Diaspora has taken a shape in the creative, academic, community, educational, contemporary contexts. Right from the time of Uday Shankar and Ram Gopal to the present Bharatanāṭyam artists in the United Kingdom, the impact of ethnicity on Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora has taken many shapes and dimensions with gradual modifications. Ethnicity and experiments play a major role in defining one's own identity through the art form in the Diaspora. The need for these experiments is reflected in the stated reasons in creative and political proposals. Therefore the need for collaborative work within the artist's spectrum with other art forms is a prominent feature in the mainstream performances. In order to connect to the larger audience, change and modifications have taken place in the presentation of the art form connected with many other objectives like creative expression, abiding to the

terms of funding policies in order to survive etc. Ethnicity and its impact on Bharatanāṭyam draws a beautiful connection of the technical aspects like Āṅgikābhinaya, Vācikābhinaya, Āharyābhinaya and Sātvikābhinaya in relation with the contemporary Bharatanāṭyam experiments on the parallel concepts of the above. Last but not the least the combination of ethnic representation and experimental work in Bharatanāṭyam brings out a flavour of exoticism in the Diaspora. Rukmini Devi says in her book *Speeches & Writings of Rukmini Devi Arundale* “Dance is for the recovery of the spirit and enkindling of joy. This ideal has long ago been emphasised but in the dancing of the modern world we have gone away from that ideal⁴¹.”

Bharatanāṭyam as an art form itself is a land mark of one’s identity but the core spirit and philosophy is the life of the dance form. At the same time the experiments in Bharatanāṭyam make room for different opinions of the same ethnicity and these impacts the art form in return.

3.3. Bharatanāṭyam – different perceptions in the United Kingdom:

The below stated content defines how Bharatanāṭyam art form in the United Kingdom is identified. The diversified dimensions and possibilities derived with the British Council’s encouragement towards art as a medium for the nation’s development are stated. In this unit how Bharatanāṭyam art form has been taken to the different platforms in different dimensions by different artists is discussed.

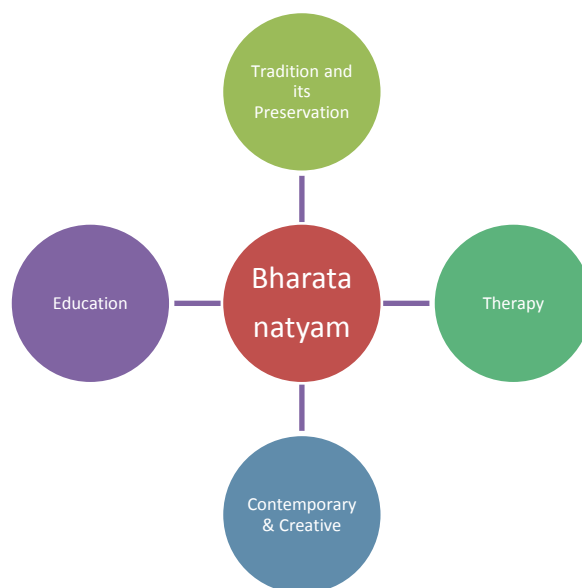
⁴¹ Rukmini Devi Arundale. *Some Selected Speeches & Writings VOL 1*. The Kalakshetra Foundation, Tiruvanmiyur, Chennai, 2003: 51.

3.3.1. Art forms and its importance:

Arts play a vital role in the United Kingdom to achieve many objectives leading to social welfare and appreciation of the culture. There are numerous organizations, communities and individuals who function distinctively. They aim towards achieving their respective goals through arts with different thought processes and approaches. Keeping this aside and focusing on this study of Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora, the need for such difference arises primarily for reasons of maintaining the art form's purity, enhancing its abstract work as well as, working towards the promotion, survival and appreciation of the form. The evolution of different categories mentioned above are resulted due to the respective interests leading to different purposes. The integration and intermingling with in the communities, art centres, schools and mainstream happening with the Bharatanāṭyam and its elements in Diaspora are observed.

3.3.2. Art and its dimensions:

The following are the major areas where there is a lot of scope to the Bharatanāṭyam artists to achieve the goals.



- Tradition and its preservation
- Education
- Therapy
- Creative and Contemporary work

In each activity in general and fine arts in particular, there is always an undercurrent of Indian philosophy and ethos. SriKrishna says in Bhagavadgīta that four different kinds of devotees seek him as those who have desires, those who want knowledge, those who want money and those who are wise.

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन।

आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ॥

Caturvidhā bhajantē mām janāḥ sukṛtinō arjuna.

Ārtō jijñāsuararthārthī jñānī ca bharatarṣabha..

(Bhagavadgīta , Chapter 7 ,Verse 16)

This Ślōka says that there are four kinds of good people who worship God, those who desire earthly gains, those who are suffering, those who seek knowledge and those who possess wisdom. Similarly we find four different approaches here.

Tradition and its preservation:

Besides the consideration of Bharatanāṭyam as a mere mark of identity in the United Kingdom, many artists focused on preserving and propagating tradition.

Bharatanāṭyam tradition in its purity is necessary modulated by the context, region, and lifestyle in the United Kingdom. Using the maintenance of tradition as the main criteria, categories of audience, students and venues have been created. The students who target for this area of emphasis are Tamiḷs, Sri Lankan Tamiḷs, Gujaratis

and other ethnic groups. The primary objective of this category is training for cultural identity, Arangētram-s (debut stage performance), and to appear for certifications. One institution which plays a major role in the United Kingdom to preserve and promoting the classical art forms is Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and individual artists like Pushkala Gopal, Usha Ragavan, Geeta Upadyaya, Chitralkha Bolar, Sruthi Sriram, and Shantosh menon.

Education:

The curriculum development in today's Britain has more emphasis on multi-cultural and contextual study approach in dance. The Education Reform Act of 1988 introduced a National Curriculum that provides some reflection of 'world culture'. The educational system as a whole has made headway in the development of 'multicultural education', to which the arts have played a major role through the AEMS project (Arts in Education in a Multi-Cultural Society)⁴². Community relations work in schools first received direct government support in 1982 in the United Kingdom. The schools in the United Kingdom states that the teachers, school managers, board members and trustees, educational administrators within the system are all to be responsible to make the children understand and learn to respect each other, accept customs and differences in tradition and to bring harmony in their lives. Education for Diversity, refer to the importance of teaching and reinforcing values like pluralism, pursuit of social justice, acceptance of human rights and responsibilities⁴³.

⁴² Naseem Khan. Transversal Study Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity, National Report, United Kingdom, Strasbourg, 6 February 2001: 11.

⁴³ Naseem Khan. Transversal Study Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity, National Report, United Kingdom, Strasbourg, 6 February 2001: 12.

Recent legislation such as the Race Relations Order of 1997 and the Children Order of 1995 in Northern Ireland and parallel Acts in the rest of the United Kingdom ensure that child-care agencies have regard to ‘multicultural issues and people of different racial origins’ in their provisions - has gone some way towards reducing racial discrimination and at the same time in working for good practices towards young ethnic minority people in statutory and voluntary sectors.

Previously, the United Kingdom’s Race Relations Act 1976 - dealt with discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin. This legislation - considered to be the most stringent in Europe - prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination and also victimisation. The Act covers education, housing, planning, advocacy services, associations, employment, advertising, and the provision of goods and services generally⁴⁴.

Because of such support provided by the Government, artists have a better scope to use their craft in the art form to succeed with many purposes. The usage of technique with the combination of creative expression by simplifying and yet being consistent with the essence to reach larger audience is a prime quality demanded in the Diaspora. Inculcating the sense of understanding and respecting the mutual cultural values and traditions to the youth in the United Kingdom leads them to be better citizens for a better nation. This is the prime intention of introducing multicultural activities in the education system in the United Kingdom.

⁴⁴ Naseem Khan. Transversal Study Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity, National Report, United Kingdom, Strasbourg, 6 February 2001: 13.

Therapy:

Art is bestowed upon mankind by nature for influencing the inner world and moral character. It is an integral part of social and cultural life of the human beings since it is the strongest form of expression of feelings, and is a powerful source of making all round development in the personality and intelligence of individuals.

Physical, Psychological, moral, intellectual and spiritual effects of an art confirm the supremacy of art. Various studies, experiments and empirical research in India and abroad have established the therapeutic value of art forms.

There is a concept of a therapy using dance as an instrument; we have different kinds of therapy. Some involve myth, superstition, cult or religion, and others are scientifically approved. Various theories have confirmed the existence of dance therapy since time immemorial. Number of dancers are engaged in carrying the spirit of dance through therapy. Indian Classical dances have quality of healing, which stimulates the brain to ease tension and handle fatigue.

Dance healing and its refreshing qualities are widely known. The tone, colour and rhythm match the nature of human body. The use of dance therapy is based on scientific and clinical approach and has been used with great care and deep study of the nature of illness. Physical and mental disabilities are a global concern. The impact of this may range from minor to major disturbances in human behaviour, thought and performance. Neglect avoidance, rejection, undue criticism, excessive restraints or control and disbelief in the worth and dignity of a person culminates in making him or her victim of disability and these affect their personality and behaviour. To promote

their maximum development or to lessen their dependence on society, these people are often provided with programs of special education through art and therapy.

The possibility of productive outcomes in the disability groups through art and therapy has been happening with effective support from the Government in Britain. Therefore it is a zone of challenge and creative excellence for the artists to do the maximum work through art and therapy. Achieving health and safety is an extremely important concern for the British Government. Arts play a major role to address these issues and therefore it created a pathway to the artists towards this dimension to work with individuals with disability, the elderly, asylums and refugees.

Arts dealing with disability found their voice in the nurturing atmosphere of the 1970s. The Theatre-in-Education (TiE) movement was another offshoot, and one of its brightest aspect and so were programs to support ethnic minorities, communities and arts. “The Arts Britain Ignores” is a publication published in 1976 created the general awareness about the South Asian Arts to the previously little known field. It revealed a very large body of work happening with immigrant and post-immigrant communities, from Polish children’s theatre to West Indian choirs and Urdu massed poetry events (whose atmosphere more nearly approached that of pop concerts), from Indian dance to Chinese music. Virtually every major urban centre was found to be hosting some form of ‘ethnic minorities’ arts – in the old African seamen’s clubs in Liverpool, in Scotland, one enterprising entrepreneur clad his Indian dancers in tartan sari’s and on neighborhood streets as nascent carnivals and festivals⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ Naseem Khan. Transversal Study Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity, National Report, United Kingdom, Strasbourg, 6 February 2001: 18.

The productive result in therapy through dance was a major element in the observation in the United Kingdom. This rightly serves the very purpose of art to mankind. There is no beauty without a committed vision and challenge - accepting attitude to an artist, especially in therapy. Bharatanāṭyam as a core element in the spear of therapy adds more value not only as an identity but also promising factor for society's welfare.

Contemporary and Creative Work:

Contemporary dance reflects an abstract relation to the state of emotions and uncertainty of the work. The culmination in contemporary work is all about the inhabited space. The construction of movement is attached with emotions and therefore the resulting choreography is framed by the performer/artist using and relating to space and objects.

Contemporary dance study with performance as outcome is a combination of many findings and understandings. This reflective practice is primarily embedded within the creative work itself. An increasingly significant factor for any contemporary choreographer is the importance of clarity of communication and his or her intention in the work and therefore having a connection with the audience. When the element of clarity and the connection with audience is absent there is a scope for confusion in the concept presented. Such clarity and connection with audience is recognised as the best contemporary work.

There have been many debates about the term 'contemporary dance' and 'contemporary style' which includes many definitions among dance practitioners, academicians and scholars. Contemporary dance represents the dancing body as a

medium that represents gender, race, sexuality, and physical ability as deep ideologies of daily life experience. The definition for Contemporary dance by the Queensland School Curriculum Council is as follows:

‘Recent dance techniques and choreographic approach used to interpret movement in an innovative way or to express current issues or ideas that reflect on contemporary life, derived from and often inclusive of modern dance techniques developed by artists including Martha Graham, Jose Limon and Alwyn Nikolias’⁴⁶.

Shobana Jeyasingh a contemporary dancer in the United Kingdom defines contemporary dance as:

“The body also has a psychology of movement that is equivalent in some sense to emotion. That is a kind of *rasa*; the *rasa* of movement. The way one does a movement has psychology, emotion, and life that need to come out. It is more than just opening your hand (in a particular movement). How one communicates involves *rasa*. In Freudian-based psychology, emotion is visible since it is a kind of psychology on the outside. In dance, it is invisible. [However], there is no non-emotional body even if the work is abstract⁴⁷.”

The acts introduced by the Government of the United Kingdom indirectly demand a creative instinct in the artists approach. In addition to this there are artists whose attempts are aimed especially at being creative, being different, being out of the

⁴⁶ Csaba Steven Buday. Exploring the Abstract Language of Contemporary Dance in Order to Create Emotional States/Nuances. Master of Arts (Research), Creative Industries, Dance Queensland University of Technology, 2006: 2.

⁴⁷ Ketu H. Katrak. Contemporary Indian Dance: New Creative Choreography in India and the Diaspora. Published by Palgrave Macmillan, 2011: 56.

box etc. In this context the arts become just a tool for the urge to be creative rather than a meaningful approach. There are also artists who achieve a great amount of community welfare by being creative and yet keeping the art forms essence intact. Art is a creative force of the response from within and is essentially a symbol of development of man.

The basis of contemporary work emerges because of the requirement to work with multidisciplinary and multicultural artists. The artists brought up in and exposed to multicultural society's influence tend to be contemporary. Creating and innovating new themes by blending various dance styles to meet the funding requirements, modifying their pedagogic strategies and negotiating their identities in Diaspora leads to the contemporary identity.

In order to address the research questions posted, the work analyses a wide variety of qualitative narratives that include the artists varied places of origin, and travel trajectories, patterns of settlement, religion, ethnicity, language and dance. Based on the unique work in the dimensions mentioned above this researcher has interacted with dance artists Pushkala Gopal, Shanta Rao, Bisakha Sarker, Anusha Subramanyam and Shobana Jeyasingh. There are many young artists like Mavin Khoo, Mayuri Bhoonham, Subadra Subramaniam, Nina Rajarani, Seeta Patel, Ash Mukherjee, and Shen Shambu and many more who are potentially innovative and creative. Their works are beyond the scope of this study.

Each individual's experiences has added value in this thesis, and has contributed towards understanding the politics of identity as a whole. Apart from the above case studies, a few other Bharatanāṭyam dancers, teachers and choreographers in

the United Kingdom were interviewed. They are - Geeta Upadyaya, Usha Ragavan, Chitralekha Bolar, Prakash Yadgudde, Meera Misra Koushik, Piali Ray, Sanjeevini Dutta, Mavin khoo, Geeta Sridhar, Shruthi Sriram, Kiran Ratna, Santosh Menon, Seeta Patel, Bhagya Lakshmi Thyagarajan, Priya Sundar, Navya Rattehalli, Abhirami Namasivayam, Shene Shambhu and Shubha Sachin all of whom have been working in the United Kingdom in the art field, some of whom have performed in the works or choreographies which were examined in the thesis.

Bharatanāṭyam is the most popular art form which is taught over the globe. This art form is mostly learnt as an extracurricular activity along with other interests by the students in India and Diaspora. Bharatanāṭyam art form in Diaspora today is mostly perceived with a goal to have an Arangēṭram and to carry cultural and political meanings rather than the intension to pursue as a profession⁴⁸.

Among the goals of the research in analyzing selected Bharatanāṭyam Dancers in the United Kingdom is to give prominence and recognition to the dance language and strengthen the ties among the performing artists in Diaspora. This research aims to highlight artists work using Bharatanāṭyam and its elements in different dimensions in the Diaspora. This research hopefully inspires the emerging artists, further studies on individual artists and their work with many dimensions with Bharatanāṭyam in the present modern world.

Pushkala Gopal, Shanta Rao, Bisakha Sarker, Anusha Subramanyam and Shobana Jeyasingh being the part of the case studies have played a vital role for the

⁴⁸ Ketu H. Katrak. Contemporary Indian Dance: New Creative Choreography in India and the Diaspora. Published by Palgrave Macmillan, 2011: xxv.

research work. Their educational workshops, community workshops, traditional, creative and contemporary teaching methods and choreographic works have added much information to the research in Diaspora in the United Kingdom.

The Dhananjayans, the legendary Bharatanāṭyam dancing couple, play a major role in contributing to the Bharatanāṭyam art form in the Diaspora. The first experimental work which took place in the United Kingdom in a larger way including many first and second generation artists of Indian classical dancers, happened in the year 1983 with the production of *The Adventures of Mowgli*, commissioned by the Academy of Indian Dance.

This production was choreographed by the internationally renowned dancing couple, Dhananjayans from Chennai. London is familiar ground for them, in fact South Asian dance in this country has been significantly influenced by the Dhananjayans - their production of *The Adventures of Mowgli*, commissioned by the Academy of Indian Dance (now known as Akademi) in 1983 was a turning point. It moved dance away from religious and classical themes and brought together United Kingdom based dancers, trained in Bharatanāṭyam, Kathak, Kathakali, and Ōḍissi. The cast included Shobana Jeyasingh, Pushkala Gopal, Unnikrishnan, Pratap and Priya Pawar, and a very young Akram Khan-all who went on in their individual ways to become influential performers, choreographers and teachers in the developing British South Asian dance scene⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ Ann David. Backstage with the Dhananjayans. *Pulse* summer, 2002: 18.

In addition to the Dhananjayans contribution to Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United Kingdom, there are many other versatile artists like Alarmel Valli, Padma Subramanyam, Chitra Visweswaran, C.V. Chandrashekar, Leela Samson, Mallika Sarabhai, Anita Ratnam, Priyadarshini Govind and Rama Vaidyanathan who played major role in making Bharatanāṭyam prominent in Diaspora in the United Kingdom.

This chapter deals with ethnicity and experiments of the Bharatanāṭyam art form in Diaspora. The core spirit of Bharatanāṭyam as its life has thrown a focus in parallel with aspects like Āṅgika, Vācika, Āhārya and Sātvikābhinaya. This combination makes us understand the impact of ethnicity in Bharatanāṭyam in the Diaspora. In continuation to that, various works in Bharatanāṭyam are identified and their important dimensions in relation with tradition, education, therapy, and creative/contemporary work explicated. Thus this research enabled on understanding of the remarkable position Bharatanāṭyam has gained in Diaspora context with many meaningful purposes and in creating an identity for many Bharatanāṭyam artists in the United Kingdom. An interview with the Dhananjayans about Bharatanāṭyam in today's modern world and their contribution add value to the research. The interview with the Dhananjayans reveals a secular dimension beyond the boundaries of India to Bharatanāṭyam. They emphasize the reasons for adapting and adopting the story to Bharatanāṭyam and vice versa (Details of this interview enclosed in the appendix - 2). Continuation of this discussion is followed in the next chapter with brief biographies and detailed work analysis of chosen artists in Diaspora in the United Kingdom.

Chapter - 4

Case Studies and Analysis

4.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the main argument of the thesis analyzing the works and choreographies of the case studies based on the life stories and experiments of Pushkala Gopal, Shanta Rao, Bisakha Sarker, Anusha Subramanyam and Shobhana Jeyasingh in the United Kingdom. The analysis of their works educates and creates an awareness of Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United Kingdom.

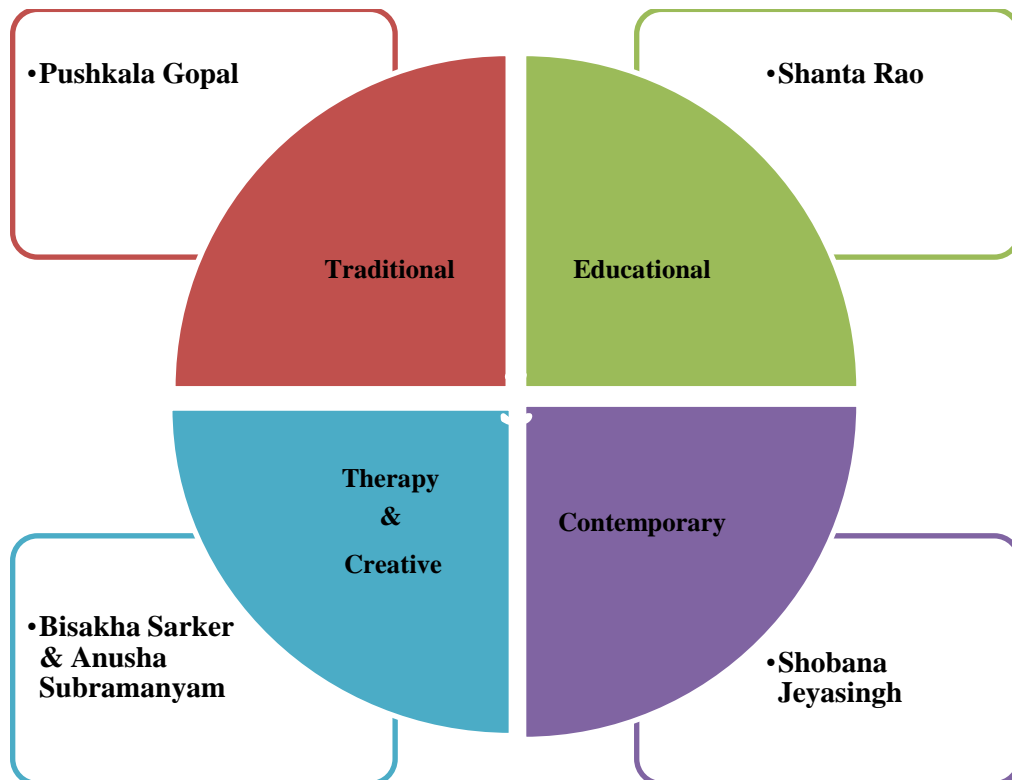
The existence of the art form Bharatanāṭyam in the Diaspora has taken different shapes and transformations, therefore the study of teaching, presentation and perception of this art form in the Diaspora in the United Kingdom is the major objective of the research work.

While interacting with artists, observing their works and performances in the United Kingdom, it is observed that emerging dance artists are continuously exploring, experimenting and pushing the boundaries of practices through their works and choreographies that have remained largely unexplored in literature, and thus need scholarly attention. It is noticed that Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United Kingdom as a traditional dance form itself gave birth to different dimensions. Those dimensions are Bharatanāṭyam as a traditional dance form, educational medium, therapy and creative body movement and contemporary art form in British context.

Dancing becoming knowledge:

Bharatanāṭyam artists in the United Kingdom, who had developed new tools or processes for stimulating creativity, created pathways for the traditional dance form to morph into different evolving methods of innovation – and which therefore opens the possibilities in the present diaspora scenario in the United Kingdom.

Pushkala Gopal, Shanta Rao, Bisakha Sarker, Anusha Subramanyam and Shobhana Jeyasingh are chosen as case studies for this thesis with a focus on their work, choreographies and choreographic patterns.



The time period for this study in which these above aspects have been practiced and taken place with changes in the United Kingdom is limited to 1970 to 2012. Certain performances witnessed, as specific cases to understand how the above mentioned aspects are happening through the individual choreographic skills,

presentation skills, thought patterns in presenting this art form in different contexts and other documents are considered as data for the work.

The Bharatanāṭyam artists chosen as case studies are first and second generation in the United Kingdom who worked hard to explore available opportunities, push their boundaries to reach a larger audience by preserving the art and also to survive in the Diaspora (United Kingdom). They have created a path for the next generation of artists to work in the field of dance and became role models for many young artists.

Before discussing the artist's work in the United Kingdom each artist's background, life stories and their exposure towards the art form and their craft are included.

4.2. Case Study - 1 - Pushkala Gopal:

Pushkala Gopal is a Bharatanāṭyam dancer trained in India under gurus Pakkiriswami Pillai, Malathi Srinivasan, Dakshinamurthy Pillai, Dandapani Pillai and the Dhananjayans.

Early Life:

Pushkala was born in 1955 in the United Kingdom, later on her family moved to India when she was five months old. Till the age of twenty eight she was raised in India, she scored a British council fellowship and went to the United Kingdom for advanced studies in western techniques in 1983. Pushkala was brought up in a musical environment. Her aunt Susheela Achyutharam was a very well-known Harikatha exponent of her time; she was also a leading artist in All India Radio, Chennai.

During her stay in Hyderabad she found Guru Pakkiriswami Pillai (1965) when she was 10 years old, and at the age of twelve she learnt under Guru Malathi Srinivasan in Chennai and did Arangētram under her tutelage in the year 1969. In 1971 Pushkala's father had moved to Delhi, and in Delhi she contacted Guru Dakshinamurthi Pillai (Pakkiriswami Pillai's brother) with whom she learnt Naṭṭuvāṅgam and Vīṇa during 1971- 1985. She happened to witness Prof C.V. Chandrashekar's performance in Delhi which made her refine her dancing technique further and have a better insight on Kalakshetra style.

Later she continued her training with M. S. Jayalakshmi (Kalakshetra). M.S. Jayalakshmi and Rukmini Devi Arundale are related to Pushkala Gopal. The family tradition comes from Akhilandapuram. Pushkala's parents did not let her peruse dance as her full time career especially from Kalakshetra, since they emphasised on her academics simultaneously. Later she took her intense training in Bharatanāṭyam under the Dhananjayans with a Government Scholarship in dance. For two years with the scholarship she continued her dance from Dhananjayans, and did PG Diploma in Madras. With her dancing career ascending to different endeavors, she started teaching dance classes which progressed with a British Council fellowship. Pushkala moved to the United Kingdom, in 1983.

Career in the United Kingdom:

Pushkala Gopal's life in the United Kingdom commenced with the British Council's fellowship along with the training of dance and theatre at Trent Park in 1983. Her life in the Britain progressed as an artist with many pursuits like freelancing, choreographing, teaching, directing, composing and also as a musician. She played a

major role as vice chairperson of the South Asian Dance faculty and as a core member for the ISTD syllabus format.

Chitra Sundaram, Chitrlekha Bolar, Geetha Kumari, Surya Kumari and many more contemporaries of that time were seen as Indian classical dancers in the United Kingdom. Pushkala had one year teaching experience at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, London. She excelled in teaching dance, conducting workshops, lecture demonstrations and touring as a Bharatanāṭyam dancer in the United Kingdom. Pushkala has proved herself a complete and multi-talented artist as she was a vocalist, an efficient teacher in training for Arangēṭram-s and with her strong traditional background, she has produced various classical dance productions.

With over three decades of experience as a performer, teacher, workshop leader, choreographer and composer, she works with dance in a holistic way. She is one of the earliest professionals to apply Bharatanāṭyam to the needs of the larger community in Britain. She trained hundreds of students in Bharatanāṭyam in these three decades. Her basic teaching structure made her a key personality or a role model in the tradition of Bharatanāṭyam practice in the United Kingdom.

She plays a vital role as a resource for the research of ‘Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora’, under the scope of the United Kingdom. Her experience and knowledge plays a vital role in understanding her larger contribution towards Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom.

Mudralaya - An institution then run by Pushkala & Unnikrishnan (A Kalakshetra alumnus, Bharatanāṭyam and Kathakali artist). Pushkala follows the ISTD

syllabus, because she believes that it's the standard syllabus in the world though she follows Kalakshetra style. Health and safety aspect has been added as a mandatory feature in the ISTD syllabus in the United Kingdom.

In 1995 due to the insufficient funds granted by the Government there was a hindrance to the management of Pushkala's Mudralaya dance theatre company, because of which she had to take a step to close the dance theatre company. She continued with a smaller group audience in the United Kingdom.

Pushkala Gopal presently works under the Institution Sānskṛti. Founded by Pushkala's daughter, Shruti Sriram, in 2000 in the United States of America, Sānskṛti - is now based in the United Kingdom. As an institution dedicated to the performing arts, Sānskṛti is a place where many communities, youth and adults can access training with an enriched culture and community environment. (Pushkala Gopal's Interview video enclosed, see appendix - 4)

Guru Pushkala Gopal and her daughter Shruti Sriram are the teaching faculty at Sānskṛti. For additional teaching they employ professionals and qualified artists. They include the capable students of Sānskṛti in the teaching stream. Sānskṛti's motive is to focus on a child's capacity not just through the lessons taught but beyond. Students of Sānskṛti are trained and groomed to appear for the examinations of ISTD in Bharatanāṭyam and Karnāṭik vocal.

Sānskṛti: means culture - the name was carefully chosen using the Sānskṛt meanings where the expansion reads South Asian Nāṭya (dance) Saṅgīta (music) Kriya (act of performing, theatre) Iti: (etcetera)⁵⁰.

The nature of training at Sānskṛti for different age groups beginning from age four gives scope to understand the art form theoretically, technically and practically to enhance the knowledge with performing skills. Music and dance taught as a conjunction gives a wider perspective to understand the construction of a composition with its aesthetic spirit. Appreciation for art is inculcated in the students to develop and stimulate the creative potential and imagination.



4.2.1. Music class at Sānskṛti by Sruthi Sriram (Pushkala's daughter), Ilford, London

⁵⁰ Available at [http://www.freeindex.co.United Kingdom /profile\(sanskriti:\)_324032.htm](http://www.freeindex.co.United Kingdom /profile(sanskriti:)_324032.htm)

Classes at Sānskṛti are conducted according to the age ability with adequate attention to monitor the performance levels. Ensuring the strength in foundation of each student in the art form has been a salient feature of the training.

Sānskṛti: classes are held at Ilford, Manor Park, Croydon, Raynes Park and in Kent. Duration of classes is limited to sixty minutes at Sānskṛti. To enable the comfortable commute and space, classes are held at different locations like Church halls with built in heating and lighting facilities for rehearsals and other needs.

Yōga, is considered important as part of the Bharatanāṭyam training to enable and enrich the body resistance to overcome rigorous body work to acquire the stamina. This particular aspect which is observed in the Kalakshetra style of training is well imbibed by Sānskṛti. Classes for Abinaya (expression) and theory are covered in parallel for the students. The duration of training is to three to six years to prepare a student for a complete repertoire performance which is called as Arangēṭram. Bharatanāṭyam training at Sānskṛti encourages the students to showcase their talents at various communities and yearly public events, competitions to improve confidence and overcome stage fright.

Shruti Sriram is a Karnāṭik vocalist, who had her training under her grandmother Kalpakam Balasubramanian and Bharatanāṭyam training from her mother Pushkala Gopal. She continued to pursue her vocal training from Saṅgīta Kaḷānidhi Śrīmati D. K. Pattammal and later with Rajkumar Bharathi. Shruti Sriram gave her Bharatanāṭyam Arangēṭram in the year 1993 under the tutelage of Gurus Padmabhushan Shanta and V.P. Dhananjayan.

Pushkala Gopal's students Bharatanāṭya Arangēṭram-s is mostly performed with full mārgam. The majority of the audience are Sri Lankan Tamiḷians, Gujaratis & Maharashtrian students. The list of the compositions chosen for her students' programs is according to the audience. Movement based compositions are mostly chosen if the performance is for a British audience. Pushkala's mother and Dr. Pappu Venugopal Rao, who is a well-known Indian educationist and renowned musicologist, are major contributors for sāhityam (lyrics) for innovative compositions tailored for Pushkala's students Arangēṭram-s. In her students Arangēṭram-s she always includes one contemporary item and she always chooses items from more than one language, i.e. Tamil, Telugu, Sānskṛt etc. Pushkala collaborates with theatre groups as she finds it challenging to work in the United Kingdom.

Productions and Artistic Creations:

- Production, performance and touring of dance theatre work including Adventures of Mowgli and Return of Spring as Artistic Director of Akademi 1985-87.
- As a Director of Mudralaya, created and performed in Tapestry of Tales, Beauty and the Beast, Twilight, Taming of the Shrew, Shanti and Secret of Life.
- Choreographed special dance piece for Queen's inauguration of the Nehru Gallery at V&A museum, featured in several performances at the Nehru Centre, and choreographed Dēvi Diva for North West dance Alliance, 2005.
- Directed several children's productions to date and created many dance and music pieces.

Lectures/ Educational projects:

- Lectured at the Laban Centre's Community dance MA, Surrey University's dance graduate and postgraduate programmes, Middlesex University's dance and music degree modules and Goldsmith College's Drama course.
- Taught regularly at summer schools in United States and Europe.
- Assistant Director in Akademi's Coming of Age project at the South Bank Centre, 2001.
- Served as senior monitoring examiner and vice chair of South Asian Dance faculty.
- Played an active role in formulating Bharatanāṭyam syllabus for ISTD.
- Several students have completed their Arangēṭram-s in Bharatanāṭyam and Karnāṭik vocal under the tutelage of Pushkala Gopal.

Awards:

- National Scholarship for Advanced training in Bharatanāṭyam, Ministry of Education, 1975.
- Singar Mani, title from Sur Singar Samsad, Bombay 1977.
- Nāṭya pūrṇa award from Bharatakalanjali, Chennai 1979.
- British Council Fellowship, 1983.
- Time out Dance Award, 1988.
- Digital dance award, 1988.
- Gulbenkin award for musical studies, 1992⁵¹.

⁵¹ Available at [http://www.freeindex.co.uk/United_Kingdom/profile\(sanskriti:\)_324032.htm](http://www.freeindex.co.uk/United_Kingdom/profile(sanskriti:)_324032.htm)

4.2.2. Discussion and analysis:

4.2.2.1. Traditional learning:

Pushkala Gopal gained an expertise in her teaching skills by adapting to various communities and making the art form not only accessible but also with equal understanding of its traditional values. Her flexibility and sensibility with the students has fetched her great sense of receptivity from various communities. Sri Lankan Tamils, Gujarati's and Maharashtrians are some of the major communities in Pushkala Gopal's students group. Understanding student's background with their respective culture, tradition and exposure towards arts and life enhances the student - teacher relationship and fosters a productive response.

Pushkala Gopal still carries on the traditional Gurukula system, where students reside with Guru as part of intense training and study of the art form. She successfully manages the balance between traditional values with the modernized world, which itself is a challenging aspect in the Diaspora community. Pushkala's training has a balance in making the students understand and follow the tradition like the dress code and outlook. She emphasises imparting the knowledge in the dance form with equal justice to warm ups, technique, abhinaya, theory and music. This in turn results in a complete understanding of the structure and aesthetics of the art form.

Pushkala says Guruśiṣya experience is very important in learning arts. Her observation about the quality of the student says, if a student is committed to learn the art form by his or her personal choice that makes a 100% contribution.

A Quarter of the learning from the teacher

A Quarter of the learning from his intellect

A Quarter of the learning from his colleagues

A Quarter of the learning from the time gestation

This is inspired by an age old traditional Sānskṛt verse which says a student learns 25% from the teacher, 25% from his intellect, 25% from his colleagues and the rest in due course of time.

“आचार्यात् पादमादत्ते

पादं शिष्यः स्वमेधया

सब्रह्मचारिभ्यः पादं

पादं कालक्रमेण च”

“ācāryāt pādamādattē

pādam śiṣyaḥ svamēdhayā

sabrahmacāribhyaḥ pādam

pādam kālakramēṇa ca”

(Udyōga parvaṁ, Mahābhārataṁ)

4.2.2.2. Pedagogy - Emphasis:

The traditional Bharatanāṭyam dance training methodology was widely accepted, when obedient students aspired to become professional dancers. However in Pushkala’s teaching methodology – we see more of the thoughtful dancers and artists who bring in depth for themselves and their training and on to the stage. Pushkala prepares dancers for current professional expectations and supports their technical, artistic and personal growth. In doing so we see a graduation from training which enhances skill ability in relation to development of the whole person.

Pushkala Gopal as a Bharatanāṭyam dance educator gives her students four important tools for their artistic and physical development:

1. Understanding the concept and anatomy of sound and dance technique.
2. Refining the awareness and perception.
3. Understanding and knowing one's own body for the purpose of dance.
4. Developing the strength of knowing oneself.

Understanding of sound and dance concept gives a scope to the dancers to nourish their technical proficiency and therefore the physical body structure. This however depends on the individual perceptions and limitations. Pushkala encourages the students to improve the anatomy to reduce the fatigue and improve the longevity of life in dance. She inculcates the awareness to sense the subtle movements and differentiate between them. The kinesthetic aspect in learning Bharatanāṭyam proves the efficiency of Pushkala Gopal's methodology.

Understanding one's own personal structure and physique empowers the student to explore their full potential under Pushkala's training. She teaches the students to find the optimal individual way to reach the desired aesthetic goal. She encourages them to ask "How can I best achieve this result with my body?" this personalized approach of Pushkala Gopal to healthy dancing can be supported by tools for self-care, including the knowledge of the principles of conditioning for strength, flexibility and endurance. These qualities enable the artists to understand the traditional approach in the modern scenario and also cultivate a strong sense of self and self-esteem.

Channelizing the pupils according to their interests, goals, most importantly potential enables the process of teaching and learning to be a mutual concern, i.e. Students targeting Arangētram-s, Solo performances, Competitions, Examination oriented and regular classes are treated accordingly.

Pushkala's teaching methodology varies according to the student's caliber with effective individual attention and observation, i.e. encouraging video documentation during the class for the deserving students who can make effective use of such a learning aid.

Pushkala Gopal demands continuity in the learning process though there are requests for short term courses. The reasoning for such is mainly to make one understand the value and knowledge of a particular aspect which is gained more effectively with continuity and consistency in the prescribed training period.

Pushkala's efficiency in music and singing adds an advantage in students understanding. Dealing with a complex subject such as abhinaya in the Diaspora context demands a large amount of sensitivity to produce the result with a great score. Her singing and rendition adds more effect to her students understanding.



4.2.2.2.1. Pushkala as a vocalist

4.2.2.3. Multifaceted Personality:

Pushkala Gopal plays a vital role in Bharatanāṭyam and Diaspora scenario in the United Kingdom. She did a major contribution in designing of the ISTD (Imperial study of Teachers Dance training) syllabus in the United Kingdom.

She is a board member of Akademi and active member who heads many projects and conduct lectures, workshops in many reputed institutions, community centres and Universities in the United Kingdom.



4.2.2.3.1. Pushkala as a performer

Her ability to conduct herself as an accomplished Bharatanāṭyam dancer, teacher, vocalist and educationalist makes her a prominent artist in the United Kingdom Diaspora community.

Pushkala Gopal as a dance educator created her own curriculum which had the capacity to transform and liberate learning for the students. This enabled her to provide access to hundreds of students to communicate their cultural stories and traditions through Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora. Therefore this is an evidence that learning in through and about Bharatanāṭyam under Pushkala's training significantly is about communicating to reduce disparities and create a sense of achievement in students.

4.2.2.4. Arangētram-s in Britain:

Arangētram is the debut on-stage performance of a Bharatanāṭyam student. It is a Tamil word, Araṅgam meaning stage and Etram meaning to enter or ascend. Arangētram-s in Britain chart the phenomenal journey of an Indian ritual from its ancient temple village customs to the modern day South Asian Dance practice. These Arangētram-s are prominently observed in the community centres and theatres of the United Kingdom, in Hounslow, Wembley, Tooting, Croydon, Leicester, Scotland and Wales. In an age of very public, sweet sixteen birthday parties, communions and weddings televised on channels in the Great Britain, Arangētram is also a great way of celebration. In the United Kingdom there are several celebrations for teenagers, and the South Asian community has adopted the Arangētram as their own celebration for their children.

Arangētram-s in Britain is beyond just the dance. It defines the dancer's journey and marks momentous milestone of the training. It is a celebration of the young student's progress by the proud parents and an appreciation to keep up the Indian culture and tradition intact in the modern times of Britain.

The budgets of Arangētram-s in the United Kingdom are much like a wedding with elaborate decorations and murals, lavish guest lists, orchestras flown in from India and ending with a buffet. This created a notion amongst the dance teachers of Bharatanāṭyam that the meaning of Arangētram is being lost amidst the luxuries and expenditure for the event. The uncertainty in the present generation's decision making has become one of the reasons to do an Arangētram in the United Kingdom. At this junction the learning process of a student is celebrated to acknowledge the hard work in practicing Bharatanāṭyam, which is being reinvented constantly in Diaspora.

The approximate cost for an Arangēṭram in the United Kingdom ranges between ten and fifteen thousand British pounds including the insurance, musician remuneration, and beverages. Arangēṭram brings the family and communities together. Bharatanāṭyam Arangēṭram is a land-mark to express the joy of one's cultural identity. Keeping this in view, the students of Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom are sent to India to imbibe additional valuable inputs in the training. Experiencing as an Indian is a priority for the teacher especially in Diaspora with students of non-South Asian heritage. British Bharatanāṭyam dancers have accuracy in portraying mature Indian nāyikā-s in their Arangēṭram-s with an accurate understanding of Indian culture

Arangēṭram is symbolic of reaching a level of understanding and emotional maturity to become qualified to begin a professional career in dance. It is a completion of sorts, but it is equally a beginning. Today, Arangēṭram-s have come to a totally different meaning in some instances. It is also misinterpreted as a graduation. Many students of dance train for several years and become capable of having their Arangēṭram-s. Upon completing them, they stop dancing. These students of dance see the Arangēṭram as a completion of their education in dance and an end to their experience of it. It is an accomplishment like degree certificate that eventually lies forgotten somewhere. At the same time there are many dance students who have done Arangēṭram and taken up dancing as a professional choice and discovered themselves better with their dancing capabilities⁵².

Pushkala Gopal excels in training for Arangēṭram-s and has influenced many dance students with the great sense of commitment and understanding towards the dance form with her extremely effective teaching methodology.

⁵² Fipa. British Arangēṭrams. Kadam, Supported by The National Lottery, heritage lottery fund.

How flexibly and imaginatively she approaches people & students

Expertise in methodology – Knowledge, technical, procedural & intellectual



Identifying the student perception levels and encouraging with Intrinsic and effective training to enhance the learning skills and motivation

4.2.2.5. Pushkala Gopal - Training methodology of Arangētram:

The objective of the student is to reach a standard worthy of exhibiting his or her abilities and the objective of the teacher is to prepare the student to reach that level. In this process the teacher hands over to the students the heritage of Indian classical dance obtained from their respective Gurus. Pushkala Gopal takes up training of student depending on their ability and potential.

4.2.2.6. Interview with Pushkala Gopal:

***Q:** What are the challenges you have faced during Arangētram training?*

***A:** British Asian students in particular are extremely conscious of the effort that the parents take in supporting their artistic journey. I have always found it challenging to pass on the tradition of Indian classical art form Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora community. Mainly because of the upbringing with an Indo British*

culture, students tend to have a curiosity to know about the simple Indian aspects during the training process, i.e. “why do we put Bindi, Bells and the meaning for Namastē etc....”

Giving them a complete understanding about the Indian values and culture, which are directly connected to the dance tradition enables them to portray better, especially in the Arangētram performance.

Q: *How do you motivate the students?*

A: *Besides the teaching of the pure technique of Bharatanāṭyam it is very important to have general conversations, interactions, sharing with the students at every level of their training process. Identifying the need to understand the way of teaching with the respective capabilities is a great deal of challenge, i.e. A student may understand better and get motivated in group more than individual interaction, same way there are some students who need and respond well with the individual attention.*

Q: *How do you train the students?*

A: *To inculcate a complete understanding, creative thinking is demanded for both me and student in the class room. These are few points because of which there is a need for creativity.*

- Question and challenge – students are curious, and question and don't necessarily follow the rules.

- They make connections and see relationships with what is being taught. They think laterally and make associations between things that are not usually connected.
- They imagine, see possibility and ask “what if?” picture alternatives and look at things from different viewpoints.
- There are students who explore ideas and options, try alternatives and new approaches, keep open minds and modify their ideas to achieve creative results.

***Q:** How do you design the Arangētram performance?*

***A:** Arangētram performance is a land mark of sense of achievement, cultural identity, and artistic caliber. Having said that I feel it is very important to consider one’s family background, upbringing, and their nature of witnessing an art form. For example a Gujarati student’s Arangētram performance may include a composition relevant to their tradition and region so that the audience can connect and respond better with the performance. This not only adds value to audience perception but also boosts the dancer’s confidence levels with encouragement.*

Apart from traditional compositions the inclusion of compositions relevant to contemporary aspects like, the student’s respective language, region, tradition etc. is a prominent feature observed in Pushkala’s Arangētram training. She includes at least two different languages in the repertoire in order to make it customised and more reachable to the audience, i.e. for her one of her student’s Arangētram Pushkala got Sāhityam written specially for the occasion by Dr. Pappu Venugopala Rao and her mother and music by Rajkumar Bharathi. This recognises her sense of creativity with the combination of tradition and contemporary.

Mentioned below are Pushkala's creative works with lyrics composed by Dr. Pappu Venugopala Rao in Telugu and Sānskṛt.

kīrtana in Telugu:

ఏమి నామము ఎంత మధురము

ఎన్ని జన్మల పుణ్యమో

స్వామి రారా శబరి గూటికి

సజల నయనను చూడర

విన్నాను రామ కొశికుని యాగము గాచితివియని

ఎన్నేళ్ళుగా శిలయైన అహల్యను వుద్ధరించీతివని

చిన్నారి రాముని కైక నేర్పిన శస్త్ర విద్యలు వింటిని

అన్నాతి జానకి నలవరించిన ఆనంద రాముని కంటిని

లక్ష్మణుండు తోడు రాగ లలన సీతని వెదకుగ

లక్ష్మి నీ వెంట లేదని గుబులు గుబులుగ వుంటివా

వెదకి తెచ్చితి తీపి పండ్లివి రుచిని తెలుసుకొనిచ్చితి

“ēmi nāmamu enta madhuramu

enni janmala puṇyamō

svāmi rārā śabari gūṭiki

sajala nayanānu cūḍara

vinnānu rāma kauśikuni yāgamu gācitiviyaṇi

ennēlḷugā śilayayina ahalyānu vuddharincitīvaṇi

cinnārī rāmuni kaika nērpina śāstra vidyālu vinṭini

annāti jānaki nalavarincina ānanda rāmuni kaṇṭini
lakṣmaṇunḍu tōḍu rāga lalana sītani Vēdakuga
lakṣmi nī venṭa lēdani gubulu gubuluga vuntivā
Vēdaki tecciti tīpi paṇḍlivi rucini telusukonicciti”

Jāvaḷi in Sānskṛt:

प्रिये कमल नयने अपसर कलह वितानं
श्रावय नूपुर किंकिणि तानं दद मृदु पद लावण्य लास्यं
वद वदन सुरुचिरे मुग्ध पद मंजुलं
दद सुधाधर मधुर मधु चुंबनं
जनन जननांतर प्रणयिनी रमणी
पति विरह तापोप शमनि मृगनयनी

priyē kamala nayanē apasara kalaha vitānaṁ
śrāvaya nūpura kiṁkiṇi tānaṁ dada mṛdu pada lāvaṇya lāsyam
vada vadana surucirē mugdha pada maṁjulaṁ
dada sudhādhara madhura madhu cumbanaṁ
janana jananaṁtara praṇayinī ramaṇī
pati viraha tāpōpa śamani mṛganayanī

The above lyric is an exception in many ways, particularly for an Arangēṭram, because, in the entire Bharatanāṭyam repertoire there are not many songs for Shabari. And in no other Arangēṭram could be a lyric portraying Shabari in the character for the young student who performs the lyric in her debut performance. The interesting aspect of this lyric is Shabari portrays the story of Rāmāyaṇa until she meets Rama and

consoles him as he goes through the pain of separation from Sita. She offers fruits and berries tasted by her to test their sweetness.

Pushkala asked Dr. Pappu Venugopala Rao to write lyrics on a piece of abhinaya exploring the male's bhāva, a peculiar male Jāvaḷi that too in Sāṅskṛt. In this Jāvaḷi the hero requests the heroine to remove the veil of quarrel, requests her to dance, offer him nectar from her lips... you are my love of many births and you can pacify my viraham. Here the Nāyika - kalahāntarita prauḍ and the Nāyaka - uttama anukūla pati. Pushkala has enormous scope for choreography and the artist who performs her Arangētram reflects all these components.

4.2.2.7. Conclusion:

The following are the major components of Pushkala Gopal's contribution to Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United Kingdom.

- **Pushkala Gopal used Bharatanāṭyam as her mainstream in educating diverse groups with the values of culture, style, and aesthetics.**
- **Pushkala Gopal is a multifaceted artist. She plays a major role in curriculum development for Bharatanāṭyam. She has educated many students through her lectures, workshops and teaching with the medium of Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom. She has created an importance to the Bharatanāṭyam art form in the United Kingdom, which has resulted her in being a board member for many Organizations, Universities and Institutions in the United Kingdom.**

- **Arangētram-s in Bharatanāṭyam have taken a vibrant place in the United Kingdom with Pushkala Gopal's methodology and nature of keeping up the classical tradition with its pristine purity.**

This case study of Pushkala Gopal examined how her journey moved from being a performing artist to an accomplished teacher in the Diaspora community in the United Kingdom. She has around fifty five Arangētram-s to her credit, which proves her teaching capabilities which have been sufficiently received by hundreds of students across the United Kingdom. The study reveals how she had gone through the training from various eminent Gurus and performers, which added a strong impact to her teaching capabilities. The narrative analysis has indicated her experience of understanding the pulse of audience in the United Kingdom, which is again a result of her exposure with various performing tours, teaching, lecturing and conducting workshops simultaneously at different universities, community centres and organizations. Her success is through her vast knowledge and experience as a teacher, performer, vocalist and organiser has led her to be a core person to formulate Bharatanāṭyam syllabus for ISTD. This analysis gave an idea about teaching of Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora context with the traditions intact. It is a mutual connection of having Bharatanāṭyam as an access with communities, who still remain with unfolded traditional values of Indian art forms and take up formal training from the teachers available and vice versa. However the basic foundation in the art form always adds to better results in any experimental attempt. Her wide experience as a critic and interest in musicology and dance theory make her perceptions unique as a performer and a teacher who brings particular eloquence. In this context Pushkala Gopal has

marked her own path of traditional teaching and experimental methodology in Diaspora in the United Kingdom.

4.3. Case Study - 2 - Shanta Rao:

Shanta Rao is an eminent personality who has been actively taking part in promoting Indian culture and Indian arts through the medium of Bharatanāṭyam in educational workshops and community workshops in the United Kingdom.

She is a Bharatanāṭyam dancer, writer, choreographer, storyteller, founder and Artistic Director of Annapurna Indian Dance Company, based in Halifax, Yorkshire. As a dancer, writer, teacher, and storyteller, Shanta Rao has a strong record of work in Indian dance making it accessible and enjoyable for thousands of children in schools and communities throughout the United Kingdom.

Through her creative and highly original dance projects, Shanta aims to present the best artistic heritage of India to wider audience across Britain with a vision to bring harmony and integration between communities. She has developed a unique style of participatory work in education.

Early Life:

Shanta Rao was born in Kondapura, Karnataka state in India. Shanta Rao was brought up in a strong cultural back-ground and had always a deep sense of its importance. She married to Dr. Prabhakar (Medical Doctor) and as a result relocated from India to the United Kingdom in the year 1977. A constant quest of making Shanta Rao's children to realize and feel proud of their culture has led her to become a teacher primarily to share and exchange the cultural values within the communities in the Great Britain.

Career in the United Kingdom:

It was through Bisakha Sarker an eminent Indian classical dancer that Shanta Rao was inspired to take up Indian classical dance as her domain. From then Shanta Rao understood the Indian classical art form in a multidimensional approach and she has made it a medium to educate, entertain, communicate and last but not least pass on the values of Indian culture.

Geeta Dhaka and Shankar master were her first Bharatanāṭyam teachers in India. She had undergone training in Bharatanāṭyam in India from many Gurus like Dhananjayans, M.S. Jayalakshmi, Mallika Sarabhai, Krishnaveni Lakshmanan, Padmini Ravi and Chandrashekara Nawada. Her passion towards understanding the technique and philosophy of the art form has made her work unique which is prominently visible in all her teaching programs, workshops, dance projects related to health, education, community well-being and expression.

Shanta Rao moved to West Yorkshire around thirty nine years ago and became a primary school teacher. While working in Bradford, she experienced multiculturalism in education first hand and discovered how it was incorporated into the curriculum.

She became very aware of how important it is to give children the opportunity to taste and appreciate ideas from different cultures. It allows them to increase their capacity to understand the wider world. During her teaching days she spent lots of time observing dance companies who visited her school and as a dancer herself; she could see the positive impact through these types of activities with children. According to her observations, she feels that it was great to watch the children respond to the movements. She felt that it was at this point she realised the potential that Indian

classical dance could have in education, with its catchy rhythms, intricate hand gestures and stylised expressions which are used to tell stories. Education and Indian dance are two things she has always felt very passionate about. To her it made sense to combine the two and take on the challenge of making this wonderful heritage accessible for all, and more importantly use it to enrich different areas of the curriculum. During the early days of her teaching career, Shanta was fortunate to receive a bursary from the Arts Council England which enabled her to train in all aspects of community arts. She soon resigned from her teaching job and set up Annapurna Indian Dance Company, with an aim to share the rich artistic Indian heritage with children. She says '*In the beginning I felt like the Pied Piper, visiting school after school, sharing with children the joy of dance.*'

Annapurna dance day starts with a demonstration to the whole school, which is usually a combination of interactive storytelling and dancing. The stories are mostly myths and legends with an interesting message or moral and contemporary relevance. As Shanta explains, 'There is a popular legend we often tell of a little boy Krishna and his brave fight with a ferocious snake which was poisoning the beautiful river in the village. This story is highly symbolic of endless pollution in our rivers caused by industrial waste so it's a great tale to educate children on environmental issues.' Using a combination of Bharatanāṭyam, puppetry, singing, drumming and traditional Indian crafts such as raṅgōḷi, henna and folk art wherein each demonstration lasts around forty five minutes to an hour. Shanta and her team then do workshops with each class in the school, before helping the children put on their own colorful performances. Shanta Rao says '*I want to provide a joyful and meaningful multi-sensory experience for every child that takes part,*' she adds, she is on a very satisfying yet challenging journey with

Annapurna, striving to be innovative in every idea and trying new ideas and stories with different mediums and art forms. Although Shanta's work is currently based in Yorkshire, her long-term ambition is to reach every school, college and university in the country. She wants to nurture children and help them learn the importance of respect within different cultural communities. She wants to make them understand that people express beliefs and values in many different forms, as this is important for preserving the cultural mosaic of Britain, and the whole world. She has absolute confidence and faith that through her work she can help, remove prejudices and this gives her a great joy and satisfaction. They are contributing towards building a tolerant society which creates stronger communities and a true celebration of diversity. Despite her desire to help others, Annapurna is a very personal success and a dream come true for Shanta. Hundreds of schools across the region are now involved with her workshops, the head teachers and those involved in the arts in Yorkshire are unable to praise her and her work highly enough. Children listen to what she says and become transfixed by the performances – they are captivated by the tales she tells and learn from the morals of her stories. Shanta's long term-plan is ambitious, but in a world which so often sees cultures divided, it is refreshing and exciting to speak /study to an individual, whose dream is to educate, inform and entertain the next generation in such a unique and colourful way. With its vivid colours, vibrant costumes and infectious vibe, Indian dance is a romantic, entertaining and highly informative form of storytelling. Shanta Rao devotes her time to bringing the rich artistic heritage of the pastime to Yorkshire schools and colleges through her company Annapurna Indian Dance.

She founded Annapurna Indian Dance Company in 1994 with a vision to share the rich dance form Bharatanāṭyam and artistic heritage of India with the wider communities and as a way of breaking down barriers between people of different cultural backgrounds through effective communication. Through her creative and highly original dance projects, Shanta aims to present the best artistic heritage of India to wider audiences across Britain with a vision to bring harmony and integration between communities. She has developed a unique style of participatory work in education. Annapurna Indian Dance Company targets to pass on and introduce the rich Indian artistic cultural heritage through performances, workshops, and storytelling keeping Bharatanāṭyam as the medium. Always enthusiastic about work, she has shown true leadership and has worked consistently and with integrity in hundreds of schools, Colleges and Theatres. Annapurna Indian Dance Company enables to achieve an understanding of cultural harmony through Bharatanāṭyam. There are various professionals in the company who work as storytellers, musicians, puppeteers, percussionists, visual artists who are renowned International artists who make the productions/projects more appealing through their craft. These artists travel through dance projects including the Indian mythology representing India and Indian arts. As a genuine ambassador of Bharatanāṭyam, she has excelled at devising fresh, new ways to retell traditional Indian tales-always finding a contemporary relevant theme with a classical story. Her community works included other dance styles such as Kathak, Odissi and Folk with a creative tinge.

Shanta Rao has piloted the company successfully over a number of years delivering the work with responsibility and commitment. In this process she has also trained and mentored many young Bharatanāṭyam dancers offering those opportunities

to work alongside her to experience the positive benefits of creativity and ensuring that the work continues beyond her. Being an ardent devotee of the Indian art form Bharatanāṭyam, she has created a significant way of presenting Bharatanāṭyam through her wonderful skills. Her major contribution to this art form is conducting Educational workshops in Schools and communities also by introducing various eminent artists and making her own mark in understanding the importance and value of Indian Culture. (Shanta Rao's Interview Video enclosed, see appendix - 4)

The researcher had an opportunity to work with Shanta Rao as a guest artist in Annapurna Indian Dance Company – (see details in Appendix - 3)

Projects and Artistic Creations:

Annapurna Indian Dance Company offers Bharatanāṭyam art form portrayed through many other creative aspects that celebrate diversity, cultural awareness and are presented with a vision of achieving harmony and understanding between people of different cultures.

Making the art form Bharatanāṭyam reach the world itself is a thought provoking process. Shanta Rao gained a remarkable position to make this happen predominantly with Indian tradition and values. She focuses on making Bharatanāṭyam work as a tool to educate by thinking widely and expanding one's imagination to go beyond the formal procedures to consider multiple solution and alternatives. Her abilities to procure funding through effective implementation of Bharatanāṭyam to practical life and issues speak about her efficiency in articulation of proposals.

Projects of Annapurna Indian Dance Company:

Annapurna has initiated educational projects for several local authorities throughout the United Kingdom but mainly in Yorkshire. As an artistic director, dancer and project manager Shanta Rao conceived, produced and took on tour these productions of Annapurna Indian Dance Company. Some of the reviews and production brouchers are enclosed in Appendix – 6.

1997: RĀMĀYAṇA: A dance Drama of Indian Epic in collaboration with Black Cat Theatre Company (Tour promoted by Rural Arts North Yorkshire)

1997: COLOUR'S OF INDIA: Touring for an organisation called Yorkshire Youth and Music

2000: INDIAN MONSOON: A lottery funded Project Tour promoted by Rural Arts North Yorkshire (Collaboration again with Black Cat Theatre Company and with touring dancers from India)

2001: MOODS AND MELODIES OF INDIA: (Commissioned by Alhambra Studio Theatre, Bradford)

2002: NAMASTĒ! Greetings from India: Another Lottery Funded project toured all over the United Kingdom with various visiting artists from India.

2003-2006: ROMANCE WITH THE GODS:

2004: SPIRITED ARTS - Did a documentary for a school programme for BBC called Spirited Arts.

2005: Work for Breeze International Youth festival for Leeds city council.

2006: THE MANGALAM project with two International Indian dancers and drummers with funding from West Yorkshire Grants. This project toured in twenty two schools in West Yorkshire and many venues in Yorkshire.

2007: INSPIRATION INDIA- This project toured in more than 25 schools in

Yorkshire and throughout the United Kingdom including Witham

International Festival with touring puppeteers.

2008: TWILIGHT RHYTHMS- This project toured 30 schools in Yorkshire and
Performance at Carriage Works in Leeds.

2009: DANCES FROM DISTANT LANDS – This project toured 25 schools in
Yorkshire and introduced several dance styles of India with rich stories.

2010: TALES FROM MYSTIC INDIA- This project aims to encourage people to be
open to the aesthetic and rarely explored philosophies from the East.

2011: THE INDIAN HEREAFTER: An innovative exploration of various ancient
stories of incarnations from the Indian mythology blending traditional Bharatha
Natyam dance with storytelling and live Vedic Chanting. Stunning Costumes
and original music.⁵³

It also represents a bold attempt to reach a wider audience, in the wake of the
company's recent success whilst touring in Devon, Cornwall, Norfolk and Scotland.

This is an ambitious project, it seeks to introduce audience to some of the
deepest concepts that define the system of ideas of Indian people, and to relate these to
contemporary issues relevant in the United Kingdom today. Ancient epic stories that
have been chosen for Tales from Mystic India reflect the quintessence of the energies
of East and also the everyday habits, customs and beliefs of people today. The stories
are particularly focused on the past lives of strong women, whose search for inner
liberation and self-discovery provide an inspiration to all. The chosen tales reflect and
articulate their unique thought processes, yet are part of the wider human

⁵³ Available at <http://www.annapurnadance.com/past-events.html>

consciousness. They celebrate the spirit of freedom and a strong search for our own personal space and identity in this universe. Traditional Indian storytelling with beautiful costumes intricate dance sequences is accompanied by an originally composed score in the traditional Bharatanāṭyam style.

2011: THE HEALTHY HALIFAX PROJECT (“4Health 4Fun 4Life”)

This project was funded by Calderdale Community Foundation and was delivered in partnership with YMCA, SURE START, ESOL, St Augustine Centre and Girls Brigade in Illingworth. The schools involved were Abby Park, Parkinson Lane and Savile Park.⁵⁴

Awards:

- International Women Award 2010 in the field of Art and Culture
- Award from West Yorkshire Police Community Trust

4.3.1. Dance Education:

Dance is a significant path for integral development of a student to become a better human being. Through the kinesthetic medium of dance there is a holistic way to stimulate the spirit of mind and body. Bharatanāṭyam is a medium to express culture with an artistic and, aesthetic sense in the education. Expression of one’s stories, beliefs and thoughts through arts create a socio cultural phenomenal relating the world with in through dance.

⁵⁴ Available at <http://www.annapurnadance.com/>

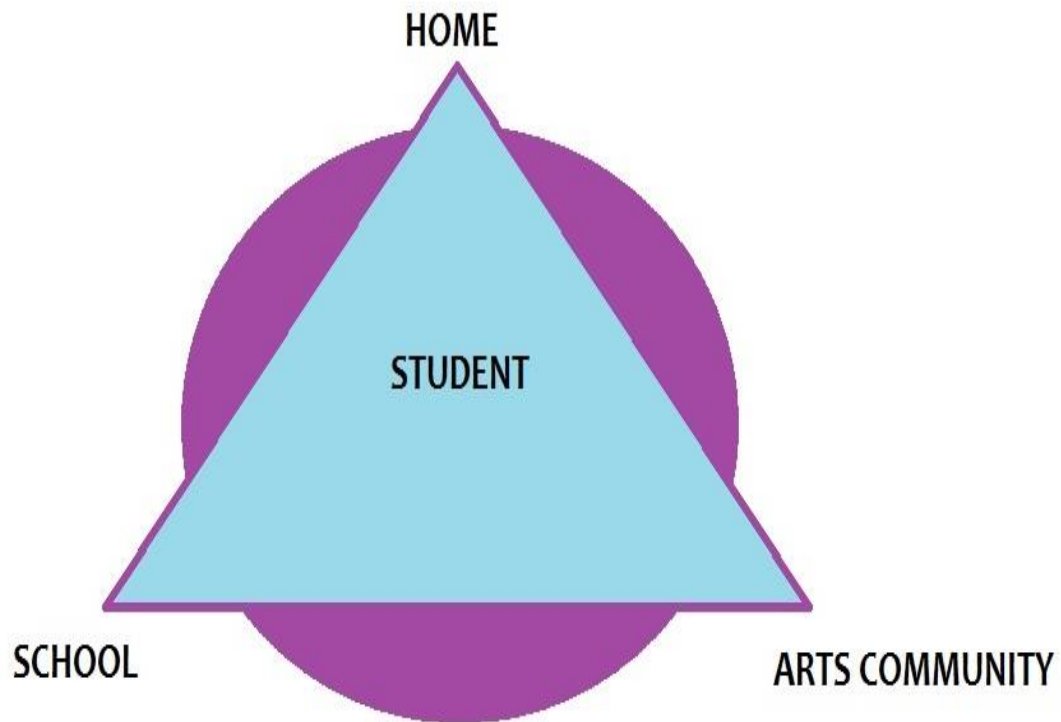
Benefits of education through dance:

Developing skills, knowledge, and solving problems creatively, collaborating, thinking critically with multiple perspectives are effectively possible through dance. Education through dance or education with elements of dance enables access to a significant area of human knowledge with a great capacity of perceiving the world.

- Dance education gives a great scope to explore vocabularies, technologies and technique of various dance forms.
- Understanding and realizing the use of the body as an expressive medium.
- To enable the artistic quality in children and to make them feel the experience and express themselves better.
- Introducing experiences and awareness in visual arts, music, dance, drama and literature aesthetically.
- Developing the capacity to identify the stimuli in dance to work and choreograph.
- Educating through dance enhances the quality of enjoyment, respecting the mutuality, critical views, analytical and the ability to develop informed judgements about society.
- Cultivating the sense of learning through rehearsals, refinement, performance for various purposes and audience through dance.
- Appreciation and investigation about dance relating to socio cultural contexts both past and present encompasses responsibility in a student of dance study.

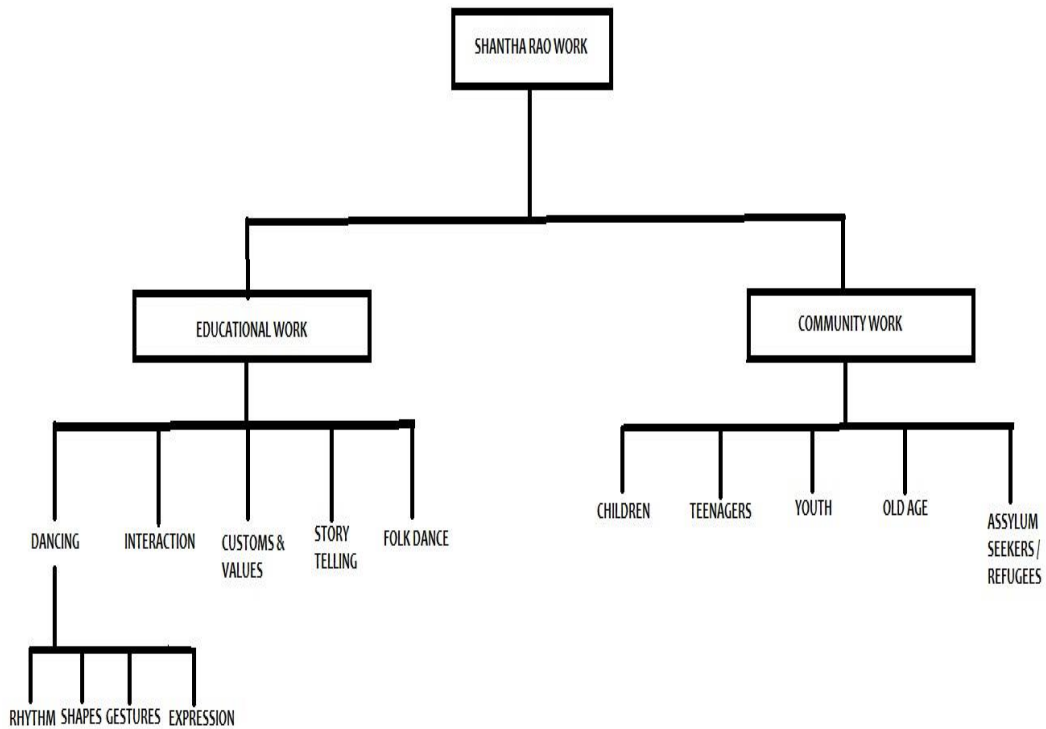
Dance indicates the link between study, discipline and life. Experiencing dance in education enables one to discover to what category they should be involved in, i.e. appreciation, exploration, enjoyment, interpretation and response.

The three essential aspects in a student life which gets enhanced in the dance education:



Students get complete access to communicate their ideas and be able to express past and present times. Learning through dance significantly showcased the achievement of students in many areas such as home, school and arts community. A different way of understanding the commonality contributes to the artistic and aesthetic skill development. The contribution that dance can make to general education suggests the need to have dance curriculum and implementation at various levels in the student's education process.

4.3.2. Discussion & Analysis:



As a Bharatanāṭyam artist Shanta Rao's work is primarily classified into Educational and Community work. Through Bharatanāṭyam she effectively portrays, educates and shares the values of tradition and culture in connection with the United Kingdom scenario. Educational work consists of various mediums through which Shanta Rao makes an impact in the society. The mediums are Bharatanāṭyam, interaction, customs and values, storytelling and folk dance. The elements of Bharatanāṭyam – rhythm, shapes, gestures and expression are observed as prime components in educational work. Compiling all these above aspects and simplifying them to give a best and clear understanding about values and traditions in connection with their backgrounds is Shanta Rao's expertise. The second category is community work in which Shanta deals with children, teenagers, youth, old age and refugees. Here, Shanta Rao uses the dance form Bharatanāṭyam as an effective tool for a healthy

society with in the communities. Healthy Halifax "4Health 4Fun 4Life" project is one of the best examples of Shanta Rao's work with the communities. The purpose of this project was to introduce health aspect for society and to achieve stability in physical, mental health. The funds procured for this project were from Calderdale Community Foundation, with an intention to encourage people to make health as an essential choice for better quality of life. As part of this research work, the researcher participated in many workshops were conducted in collaboration with Shanta Rao.

A few eminent artists in the United Kingdom have created a structure in the field of educational works with their vast experiences and research in the field of dance. This has created a clear pathway for the future generation artists, Shanta Rao is one of them.

Shanta Rao specialises in making the beloved stories from Indian mythology and epics more interesting through storytelling, and musically accompanying them with drums, puppets and Bharatanāṭyam. The dance workshops provide great opportunities to appreciate and feel the joy with graceful rhythmic movements of Bharatanāṭyam and also understand more about Indian culture. The children are able to work creatively and learn to tell stories using facial expressions and hand gestures. The workshops create an understanding with various movements of Bharatanāṭyam and folk with origin of Indian music.

4.3.2.1. Educational Work:

Annapurna Indian Dance Company has a strong record of dance work in Education especially in Yorkshire. In Education all their projects aim to promote a

greater understanding and appreciation of the cultural traditions from India through innovative ways and increase awareness of racial, cultural and social issues.

With the above observations keeping in mind, the general structure of the Educational Workshop are as follows:

1. Introducing the Namastē, greeting from India – Namastē is the Indian way of greeting each other. Namastē could be just a casual or formal greeting, a cultural convention or an act of worship. However, there is much more to it than meets the eye. The real meeting between people is the meeting of their minds. When we greet one another with Namastē, it means, ‘may our minds meet’, indicated by the folded palms placed before the chest. The bowing down of the head is a gracious form of extending friendship in love, respect, and humility.



4.3.2.1.1. Artists introducing “Namastē” gesture of Indian Greetings in a school Workshop

2. Introduction to Bharatanāṭyam - A brief Introduction to India, Indian culture and Indian classical dance Bharatanāṭyam with simplified description about the dance forms followed with the dance movements, creates an atmosphere of understanding and observation.



4.3.2.1.2. Artist introducing Bharatanāṭyam and Indian Culture

3. Explaining the major elements in Bharatanāṭyam - i.e. rhythm, music, literature, technique, gestures, stories, costumes, props etc.

Rhythm is an important aspect in dance. Introducing the importance of the ankle bells in Indian classical dance forms and making children follow the sound of the bells and understand the rhythm nuances is one way of educating them.



4.3.2.1.3. Artists explaining the sound of rhythm through the ankle bells

(Video enclosed, see appendix – 5: Kathak dancer Sandeep depicting the training through sound and rhythms of the bells and his footwork)

4. Introducing hand gestures as a medium of communication - in order to represent objects, describe a situation, and express meaning is the core activity in the educational workshops.



4.3.2.1.4. Artists explaining the hand gestures of Bharatanāṭyam

(Video enclosed, see appendix – 5)

5. Showing them a short dance piece on Ganesha (an elephant headed God) - explaining the concept of the God, giving an idea about Indian Gods along with specifying the purpose of worshipping them and the meaning of the dance adds a creative atmosphere at the study place. Specifying the Gods and philosophy through masks, and props give a better understanding for their imagination.

English Song on Lord Ganesha:

Time signature / Tālam: Ādi Tālam

||-indicates starting or completion of rhythm cycle

| - indicates completion of half cycle

||Who is welcome in the house | Sitting on a little mouse ||

||Ganesha | Ganesha ||

||Who has an elephant's head and| the body of a man ||

||Ganesha | Ganesha ||

|| If you are starting any task | Ganesha's blessings you should ask ||

||Ganesha | Ganesha ||

||Guru of the world | Gentle and wise ||

||Ganesha | Ganesha ||

||Ganesha | Ganesha ||

Ga ne sha.....

(‘A short dance piece on Ganesha’ video enclosed, see appendix – 5: at Kirkgunzeon Primary school, Kirkgunzeon, Dumfries, Scotland on May 26th 2011)



4.3.2.1.5. Artists including children in describing Lord Ganesha

6. Introducing rhythm with mathematics with different count patterns and making them understand and experience Bharatanāṭyam with a broadened and enriched various ways.

The following picture shows children being involved in understanding the rhythm in the Indian Classical Dance.



4.3.2.1.6. Artists demonstrating the rhythm through mathematics with different counts

Art comprises ideas, feelings, and experiences in visual images through the language of music and movement. Description of sound relating to daily life provides a better understanding. Shanta's methodology of using arts especially Bharatanāṭyam in education provides a sense of intellect, emotion, and enriches creative thinking, contributing to the child's holistic development. The artist creates an impact on the

child's observational ability by relating the feet tied with ankle bells with various rhythmic patterns to showcase e.g., the sound of a train moving from point to point. The visualization of the sound of a train from a close distance moving gradually through the ankle bells creates a strong experience. Shanta Rao's workshops demonstrate and describe differences between sounds and pauses, to illustrate tempo, speed, pitch, dynamics, structure, timbre, texture and style. ('Artists demonstrating the rhythm through mathematics with different counts', video enclosed, see appendix – 5)

Children imitate rhythmic patterns using hand gestures and body percussion. Listening to enhance enjoyment and responsiveness to a wide range of rhythmic patterns with the sound of the ankle bells creates expressive possibilities of varieties of component activities. The emphasis is placed on active listening of the child - thereby encouraging the physical ability, expressiveness, and responsiveness to the sound.



4.3.2.1.7. Artists demonstrating simple dance piece with control of dance elements
(Video enclosed, see appendix - 5)

The artists invent and perform short simple dance pieces (Jati/ kōrvai) including dance elements which can be as follows - fast/slow (tempo), loud/soft (dynamics), long/short (rhythm), to start and stop (structure) etc.

The above activities help children learn variety, balance and continuity by means of an art form. A complete understanding of various rhythm aspects is passed on aesthetically through the medium of Bharatanāṭyam. By demonstrating a simple dance piece, a child experiences the source through which skills such as keeping a steady beat and confidence may be enriched.

In the workshop, the students are allowed to ask some questions and seek answers and to conclude the workshop with Namastē. The children after watching the dance are allowed to make queries and their curiosity regarding Bharatanāṭyam, its technique, costumes, deities, make up, ornaments, bells etc. is observable. The artists answer their questions about bells and rhythm, explain why Indian Dancers wear bells, their significance and importance, and teach them the mathematics / calculations that exists in Bharatanāṭyam i.e. takīṭa-3, takadimi-4, taka takīṭa-5, takīṭa takadimi-7, takadimi taka takīṭa-9. The same counts are produced with foot work using the sound of bells and the students are asked to identify the number. This is made further interesting by doing an exercise with the bells like creating the sound of a train sound through the foot work. Children enjoy these exercises and simultaneously they understand the importance of rhythm, bells and footwork in the Bharatanāṭyam.

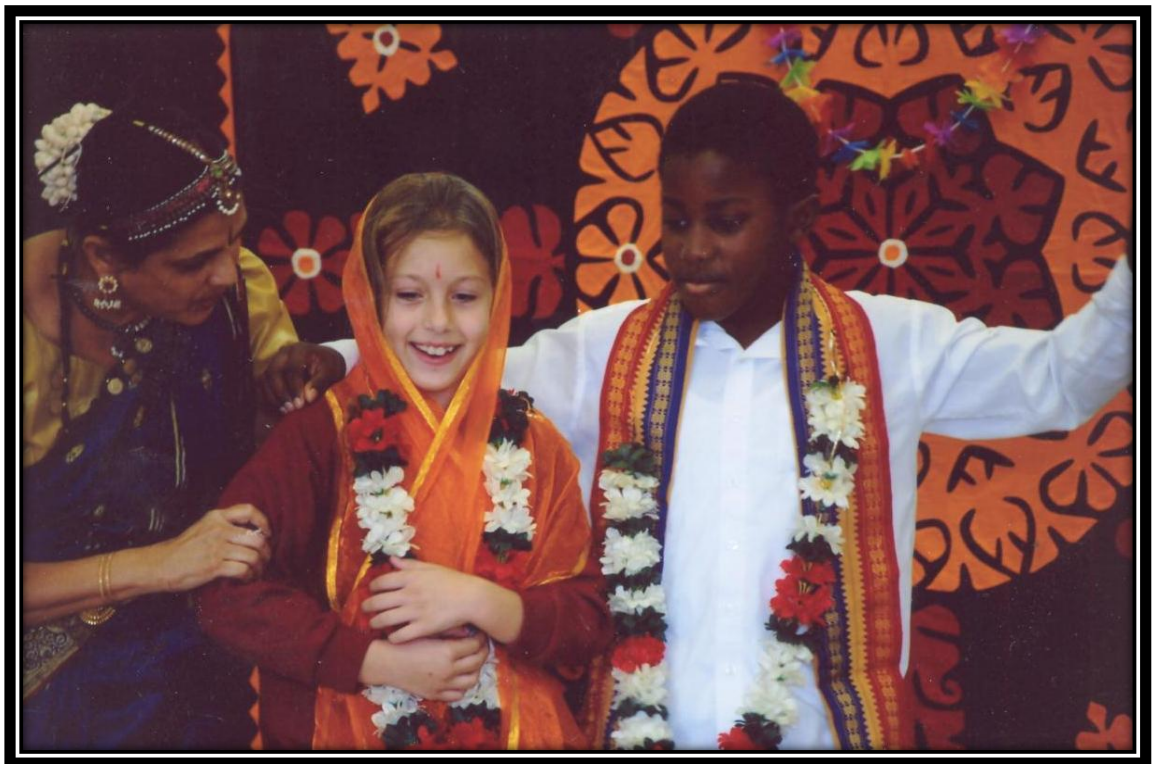
7. Indian culture has been passed on from one generation to the next through many stories and storytelling for thousands of years. Listening to stories especially in Diaspora can enable students to come across various concepts and to be introduced to new topics and terminology. This also aids in enhancing abstract thinking and in dealing with scientific problems. Therefore storytelling becomes an excellent basis to enquire into science meaningfully. Storytelling enables skills such as observing, predicting and evaluating. Students learn to observe what is happening in a story through a visual image or movement, predict the outcome based on that existing knowledge and finally they develop a skill to evaluate what has happened from different perspectives and form conclusions from the whole activity. Stories allow for brainstorming's a range of ways in which children could make optimum use of their resources. Indian stories i.e.

Ganesha, Murugan Story (Concept of respecting the parents amongst the audience as a source of knowledge), Hare (Rabbit) & Tortoise story (slow and steady wins the race).

While retelling the story, both children and teachers participate to enact the story. In India, performing Bharatanāṭyam, talking about the stories of Indian Epics, Purāṇa-s, Bhāgavatam is very easy and appeals to the audience. The audience easily connects and understands what is being explained through the performance. It is not an easy thing in the Diaspora to make the subject, arts and culture understandable to the audience, who may be the non-Indians or Indians, born and brought up abroad. It's a challenging task to the dancers to simplify the content and making help the audience understand Bharatanāṭyam by using simple words in a local language. Using Indian mythological stories to convey a moral relevant to the present context helps to establish a creative understanding in Diaspora.



4.3.2.1.8. Above stories being enacted by the artist and children



4.3.2.1.9. Artist making the children to enact an Indian story

(Video enclosed, See appendix – 5: Ganesha & Muruga story)

Shanta Rao encourages students to think beyond the stories presented and enables them to explore the issues through the stories. This helps them interact, take on the roles of characters, perform and engage in a discussion in the class room.

8. For the simple music (4 beats) and based on those hand gestures teaching a short dance sequence in Bharatanāṭyam to the children.



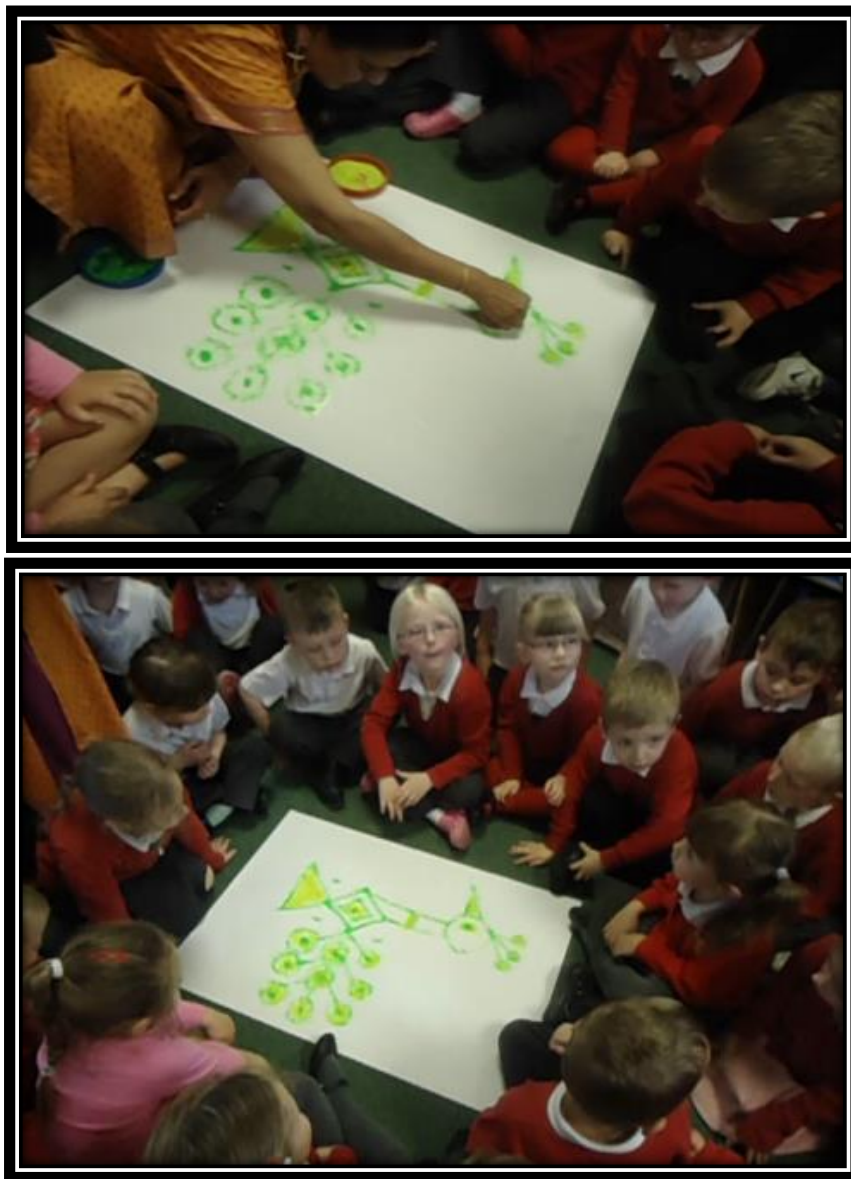
4.3.2.1.10. Artist engaging children with simple melody, rhythm and hand gestures

(Video enclosed, see appendix - 5: Manor house school, Surrey, London)

Introducing Bharatanāṭyam through Indian melodies and, rhythm patterns simplified to make it understandable for children is one of the remarkable creative activities Shanta implements in her school workshops. Such learning has a positive impact on children's learning skills.

9. In-between showing them the simple patterns of Indian Rangoli / Kōlaṁ.

Below is a demonstration of Raṅgōḷi in a school workshop.



4.3.2.1.11. Artist demonstrating Kōlaṁ (decoration with colour powder)

As part of the regular curriculum, Shanta introduces Indian traditional ritual Kōlam – drawn out of rice flour/colour powder at the entrance of homes. These considered auspicious and add beauty to the simplest space. Relating this activity with of basic drawing fundamentals creates an interest and curiosity in younger children group. (Video enclosed, see appendix – 5).

10. Shanta enhances the workshops with an embellished activity with Indian folk dance using various props and one of them is the stick dance (Kōlāṭṭam). She engages students and teachers beautifully with a folk Indian composition usually as a concluding feature of the whole workshop. (Video enclosed, see appendix – 5)



4.3.2.1.12. Children along with the class teacher practicing the stick dance

By being part of some of the workshops it is understandable why it is important to present Bharatanāṭyam in a simplified manner to reach children and adults. Shanta Rao's remarkable contribution in making Bharatanāṭyam a medium in educational platforms stands as a mark of great example in Diaspora context. She plays a major role being a mentor for many new and young Bharatanāṭyam artists in the United Kingdom seeking a promising role in the art field.

Shanta Rao's work has won great recognition and applauses, and has fetched positive feedback from the Educational institutions who have received her contribution. Mentioned below are few of the responses from different schools.

- *'Abbey Park school feedback'*

When: 20th July 2011

Where: Abbey Park School, Illingworth

Providing a workshop designed to increase healthy living, Annapurna dancers worked with school children to teach basic fundamentals of traditional Indian Dance and healthy cooking/eating alternatives. Reaction was very positive from children, parents and members of staff. "The children thoroughly enjoyed all aspects of the sessions and were talking about it for some time after the day, demonstrating the hand movements which they had seen and talking about the meanings. They were riveted by the dancing and followed the explanation of the different movements keenly. They were clearly explained by the dancer. They also enjoyed sampling the food and experiencing the different flavours, and they took the health messages on board.

Overall the full experience was very valuable to our children and gave them an insight into cultural experiences which they would otherwise not have had, vital in the predominately white area in which the school is situated. I would like to compliment the young lady who delivered the sessions on her expertise and her delivery and manner with the children. Thank you for arranging the sessions and putting them on at Abbey Park.”

-P. Rushworth – Head Teacher, Abbey Park School.

- *'Reepham High School workshop feedback'*

When: 12th May 2011

Where: Reepham High School, Norfolk

A workshop was conducted with the Reepham High School's students, culminating in a very successful and entertaining performance for the rest of the school.

“I am writing to express my delight and appreciation at your performance here in Reepham last week. It was excellent and it introduced Indian Classical Dance to a rural community that rarely has the chance to experience it. Particularly enjoyable was the closing dance, when you involved the members of the audience! I hope that your performances in Hindleveston (even more deeply rural!) and Wymondham were well attended and appreciated. Please come again.”

-Stephen Parvez Rashid, Reepham High School, Norfolk

- “Hi

I just wanted to write to say how much my family enjoyed the performance last evening. We were hugely impressed with the technical skill of the dancers, but what impressed us most was the personal nature of the evening. It is so rare that we tell each other stories face to face these days - we have always done it with our children, but so many people just rely on entertainment through screens these days. I am not sure if I understood everything about Shiva - I want to read some more about it in order to understand better....but I did come away with the thought that it's worth being open to good things in life, and I need to keep drawing my chariot towards me!!”

-Sarah Steed

4.3.2.2. Bharatanāṭyam in Community Work:

Shanta's community work focuses on programs through art forms for development of “at-risk” communities. The different categories as mentioned above are different community groups which have benefitted through many activities composed and conceptualised by Shanta Rao using Indian art form especially Bharatanāṭyam. Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora has taken a prominent role in reaching to a wide range of communities not just as a religious basis but for a general welfare. Shanta's community work varies as follows –

Shanta works with various children communities where she engages, introduces, educates and creates awareness through Bharatanāṭyam. The children communities get an exposure through such workshops which help them to have a physical activity, better expression, understanding and acceptance of mutual cultural values and traditions. Handling youth communities demands a great amount of

planning to create circumstances that value arts and culture. Youth as a future of the country need to have a holistic view about economic, social, cultural and health. Dealing with old age groups focuses more on qualitative work which Shanta has designed. Achieving great response through Bharatanāṭyam with diverse groups like Asylum seekers and Muslim communities draws attention in the Diaspora context. Art for everyone is one policy which is observed in all Shanta's community works.

4.3.2.3. Arts and Communities:

With the encouragement from the British Arts Council for emphasising arts as a powerful tool for the Nation's wellbeing, there is a large scope for the arts and artists to grow in this context. Shanta Rao is a prime example for making this actively happen through many workshops and projects. Achieving and cultivating the intrinsic effects in the citizen's result in enriching individual lives in a pluralistic society. These arts experiences and expressions of common values in communities constitute a significant achievement.

Amongst all the major projects of Shanta Rao "Healthy Halifax" is one of the examples which have created a positive impact in the communities.

The Healthy Halifax Project ("4Health 4Fun 4Life") (2011)

In this project Bharatanāṭyam as a major component was funded by Calderdale Community Foundation and was delivered in partnership with YMCA, SURE START, ESOL, St Augustine Centre and Girls Brigade in Illingworth. The schools involved were Abby Park, Parkinson Lane and Savile Park.

(Video enclosed, see appendix – 5: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwmFn2pOWsQ>)

Annapurna Indian Dance Company went from strength to strength and toured nationally including at Dumfries and Galloway Festival in Scotland, and in Cornwall and Norfolk. The company had two international artists from India for this tour. Sandip Mallik and Hima Bindu Uppari were the visiting artists from India for this tour.

Dance as an affective medium referred to often as a powerful tool to influence mood or emotion. Communities play a major role in maintaining a healthy way of living. Many opportunities are discovered because of the communities and bring positive and healthy change. Arts and culture plays a major role to engage at various levels to bring significant changes in the communities. Shanta Rao's community work contribute to developing the community's health, capabilities, creative learning and entertainment, thereby enabling activism and mobilization and helping build capacity and leadership.

These groups were exposed to Bharatanāṭyam performance to entertain, to educate and enrich the quality of their lives. Art for everyone is one policy which is observed in all of Shanta's community work.



4.3.2.3.1. Community work – Artist working with children at YMCA, Halifax



4.3.2.3.2. Community work- Artist engaging youth communities

(Video enclosed, see appendix – 5: available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYdWDpKHaro>)



4.3.2.3.3. Community work – Artist working with Old age group at YMCA, Halifax



4.3.2.3.4. Community work – Artist working with Scout group



4.3.2.3.5. Community work – Artist working with Muslim community at Central library, Halifax, United Kingdom



4.3.2.3.6. Community work – Artist working with Asylum seekers at St. Augustine Centre, Halifax, United Kingdom



4.3.2.3.7. Artist preparing healthy Indian salad in a school workshop



4.3.2.3.8. Artist engaging the children with dance activities at Parkinson Lane Primary school, Halifax, United Kingdom

Mentioned below are some of the responses from different communities.

- *West Yorkshire Police Community Trust feedback on 23rd November 2010*

Project duration: eight week:

Across Calderdale in Mixendon and Illingworth areas working closely with the community with the goal of spreading cultural awareness, Annapurna Dance's project was designed to reach out to young people in select areas and help raise their confidence while helping them find creative strengths. Engaging directly with these individuals, the workshops would teach new skills through dance, movement and the creation of original music. This, in turn, encouraged team work and positive attitudes towards other cultures, discouraging future anti-social behaviour.

The project was well received and deemed successful enough to be considered as potentially repeatable on an annual basis.

- *'Praa Sands performance feedback on 9th April 2011 at Praa Sands and District Community Centre:*

Demonstrating a sparkling combination of Dance, music and costume, Annapurna Dance project was one that balanced the weighty cultural significance of this project, while keeping a clear focus on entertaining audiences at all times. Reaction to this performance was extremely positive, with a packed audience and a very enthusiastic response.

- *“Dear Shanta,*

Firstly, I want to thank you all, for a truly splendid evening on Saturday! I have enjoyed Indian music for many years, ever since I saw Ravi Shankar and Alla Raka in Manchester in 1964, but I have never before had the opportunity to experience Indian dancing other than in “Bollywood” films, and your programme on Saturday evening was a real revelation. It was Linda Collins’ idea to bring you to Praa Sands and, I have to admit, much though I was looking forward to the event myself, I did wonder how popular your show would be – we normally run events based on Cornish or, at least, British culture. However, as you are aware, we had a complete sell-out show and a very enthusiastic audience. Linda and I were absolutely delighted with your performance, the audience reaction and the success of bringing a different culture to our rural Cornish community. Linda and I asked as many of the audience as we could what they thought of the evening and the response was overwhelmingly positive, we had comments like “We really enjoyed it”, “It reminded us of our holiday in Southern India, we wish it could have gone on much longer” and “I’m so glad I came, it was so beautiful”. So, on behalf of the whole audience, thank you so much for a wonderful evening of grace, beauty and cultural insight.”

*Alan Knight - Chairman of Management Committee, Praa Sands and
District Community Centre*

- *“Hello and thanks so much for a most entertaining and beautiful performance on Thursday! I can see from your website that you would probably like to perform against rather more evocative backdrops than is possible in a country school hall. The costumes and dancing were utterly compulsive. The*

performances were all to a very high standard. However, I must single out the young lady in the saffron and red costume with the exotic white head dress. She was nothing short of bewitching....verging on the divine itself! I have never before seen such perfection in movement and gesture. Please convey my appreciation!

As a practicing Buddhist myself and whose grandfather was a scholar of Sānskṛt who understood Hindi, Urdu etc. (he was a professor) I'm aware that Hinduism grew out of Buddhism. My grandfather's exploits in India during the late 19th century are described in a recently published book, "The Buddha & Dr. Fuhrer – an Archeological Scandal" by Charles Allen. He also translated the text for Oldenberg's "Buddha – His Life, His Doctrine, His Order"....still a standard work today.

So I do appreciate the rich cultural heritage involving in the universal philosophical & religious teachings through mythical stories, legends and the like. These stories surely do have much more profound meanings."

-Fergus Hoey

- *'The Catstrand, Scotland feedback' on May 27th 2011 at The Catstrand, New Galloway*

Presenting a series of traditional Indian Dances, this performance took Annapurna Dance across the United Kingdom and received a positive response. In particular, performances at The Catstrand in Scotland and Calstock Village Hall were very well received and were considerable success.

“Your programme, Dances from Distant Lands, performed at the Catstrand , New Galloway, was excellent. The mixture of storytelling followed by an interpretation through dance made the whole thing so easy to understand. The dancing was exquisite and the costumes stunning. It was a lovely way to spend an evening, enjoying a culture from another land, very different from the usual concerts in our area. Well done and thank you for coming to a far flung part of Scotland!”

-Anne Hamilton (Newton Stewart), the Catstrand, New Galloway

- *'Calstock Village Hall feedback' on 8th April, 2011 at Calstock Village Hall, Cornwall*

Thank-you for the great show in Calstock village Hall, it was fantastic to be transported from a small village in Cornwall to India for the evening. I have visited India but was not lucky enough at that time to come across dance of such a high standard. I felt the show really revealed some of India's rich culture.

Good luck and Thank-you

-Tania Clarke, Calstock Village Hall

All the above responses unanimously agree on the impact that Bharatanāṭyam had on their lives.

4.3.3. Conclusion:

The following are the Major components of Shanta Rao's contribution to Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora.

- **Shanta Rao uses Bharatanāṭyam for storytelling, inculcating the sense of rhythm and introducing values to children.**
- **She uses Bharatanāṭyam in her projects to elevate the understanding of society.**
- **She uses Bharatanāṭyam as a source of entertainment, education and teaches healthy living and awareness of challenges in the environment through Bharatanāṭyam.**

Shanta Rao, a multi-talented artist who evolved as a performer, teacher, choreographer, storyteller and artistic director. At present she is established as a successful artist collaborating with various educational institutions & communities to develop an Indian art instinct and sense of Indian art appreciation. Her early life and upbringing has made her have a strong bond with Indian culture and heritage. This is a prominent reason for her success in propagating Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom. Her wide exposure to training with different gurus has led her expand her reach in order to creatively pass on the values of Indian heritage. She balances and blends aspects of old Indian traditions to create a more diverse and accessible body of work in Diaspora. Shanta Rao excelled in creating her own ways to approach successfully both educational institutions and communities. Through her work she creates an awareness of how important education is in mutual cultural understanding. She aims to create an interest and enthusiasm in the mind of pupil, to cultivate the formation of a correct and sensitive taste in art form, to develop Bharatanāṭyam and a

sense of appreciation. Shanta Rao's success lies in the simplicity in her methodology. Her way of explaining, describing and presenting Bharatanāṭyam, Indian values, stories, traditions through Bharatanāṭyam speaks to her skill in understanding the pulse of the audience in order to customize a session accordingly.

Interview with Shanta Rao:

Q: What is the biggest challenge of performing Indian classical arts in England?

A: "The biggest challenge as an artistic director for me in producing and presenting the rich Indian ancient stories is making it accessible for the people who have never watched Indian dance before as well as those who are connoisseurs. It requires a deep sensitivity and clarity and risk taking at all levels to make this happen. My ambition has always been to present the deepest concepts and define the philosophy and system of Indian people in such a way that it will have a resonance in the cutting edge contemporary life of the people." (ARTS, 30 EASTERN EYE June 24, 2011. www.easterneye.eu)

Her technique reveals her remarkable capacity of designing projects helpful to society and to the company to fetch funds in order to better serve society. Shanta's aim is to present the best of Indian artistic heritage to a wider audience in Britain with a vision to bring harmony and integration within the communities in Diaspora.

This concludes with an observation that Shanta Rao is not only creating an impact of Indian art form Bharatanāṭyam in the diaspora but also she inspired and created a pathway for many young Indian artists who come to the United Kingdom.

Her work stands as a great example and reference for many Indian artists who work in the United Kingdom.

4.4. Case Study 3 - Bisakha Sarker:

Bisakha Sarker is a leading artist specializing in creative dance, Bharatanāṭyam and Maṇipūri. She is a performing artist, choreographer, researcher, educationalist, critic, writer and video maker. Bisakha Sarker was born in India and received her Master's degree in Statistics from the University of Kolkata. After coming to the United Kingdom she adopted Liverpool as her home.

Early Life:

Bisakha was born in Kolkata. Her first public performance was at the age of three years. According to her, dance is an art of connecting the outer and inner; in her words *“with dance we can see the life little further, experiencing the limited and unlimited”*.

It was her mother's dream for her to dance. She started her dance training with Maṇipūri. In Kolkata people treat dance as part of upbringing. Tagore's dance and music deeply inspired Bisakha. She developed quite a wide interest and understanding towards dance and music. She took Kūcipūḍi training from R.S. Sundaram (Kolkata), Balakrishna Menon and then went to Uday Shankar. During this time she met Manjushree (Contemporary Indian style call Navanṛtya). She learnt Bharatanāṭyam from Gnyanprakash, Balasaraswathi's disciple. Later on she was trained in dance under Amla Shankar and Uday Shankar. From Uday Shankar she learnt the basics of classical styles Bharatanāṭyam, Kathakālī and Maṇipūri. She says she learnt aesthetics and vocabulary from classical dances, with that base she can create the central creative

poetry. In Uday Shankar's school they used to have general class commence with live orchestra using Sarōd, Ghaṭam, Tabla and Flute. The music and movement comprised exercises with different speeds, with various body movements.

Bisakha shares her work experience with Uday Shankar - *“Uday Shankar's dance teaching methodology opened up Indian dance to creative dance. Uday Shankar did have the legacy, he made west to become aware towards Indian dance and he passed a soulful message to the West. Uday Shankar worked and toured with Pavlova, he never used western dance/ movement when he danced. He is famous for his hand wave movements. His dance is the essence of Indian dance; his dance performance gives an idea of a total theatre (lighting, stage design, creating ornaments, body movement).”*

Bisakha worked as a senior research scholar with Anthropological survey of India to record the dance. This study of hers gave her a better vision towards dance. Her marriage with a Doctor migrated her to the United Kingdom.

Career in the United Kingdom:

Bisakha has worked widely over the country in different contexts. Her expertise and innovations are primarily connected with disabled people and her spiritual knowledge creates an inspiration to translate the emotions into Bharatanāṭyam. Indian dance marks a great image for Bisakha in the United Kingdom. Bisakha Sarker shares her knowledge in dance with her co-artists to empower them uniquely.

Bisakha is the artistic director of Chaturangan, in Liverpool. She and her company worked to uplift the image of South Asian dance, culture and spirituality both

locally and nationally. Since 1971 she has been performing, choreographing, researching, educating, writing and video making using dance as the epicenter.

Bisakha says *“I believe in dancing, dance is not only for the dancers, the beauty and impact this special form of expression create is for all to enjoy, it is this self-discipline part that one tends to overlook and dismisses dance by simply putting it in the category of fun, there is more to dance than this element of fun without rigorous training, determination and self-discipline. No one can move in a way so different from what is commonly known as normal movement that the society and basic principles of aerodynamics expect from us. Dancers and dance enthusiasts are dreamers with a special understanding of motion and stillness. Few things interest me more than being able to share the joy of dancing”*.⁵⁵

Bisakha Sarker teaches the movements to the students to get an insight into the principles of South Asian dance. Her innovations in the work especially with the disabled people challenge traditional cultural boundaries. This has brought her much fame challenging many traditional cultural boundaries along the way.

By creating different dimensions to the Bharatanāṭyam and being well versed with the shades of other dance forms, she has made this art form as a tool to work with children and challenged people. Her objective to work with the said groups is to inculcate better health and wellbeing using the medium of dance & movement. She made dance and movement as a tool to bring social change and to nurture value for a healthy environment. Her intention to work with physically challenged people is to

⁵⁵ Jacky Lansley and Fergus Early. *The Wise Body, Conversation with Experienced Dancers*. Intellect, the University of Chicago Press, USA, 2011: 159-169.

help them grow in confidence, joy and self-affirmation. With this they develop the creativity which flows naturally in them.

Her decades of experience and focus have helped her to bring a clear pathway for delivering health targets. She has also taken initiative for racial harmony, for which dance medium has become a key element in Diaspora.

She works as a freelance artist, doing educational work in schools, through the multi-cultural education route. The majority of her work entails doing one day sessions in schools. She tries to leave a sense of musicality and quality with the children. She is quite fascinated by the language of teaching and also works with people with disabilities of any age. There is a general lack of knowledge and awareness about how South Asian dance can be used for and by disabled people.

(Bisakha Sarker's Interview Video enclosed, see appendix - 4)

Aesthetics in Bisakha's work:

Aesthetics gives a framework through which she perceives the world around her. It sets out criteria for evoking a comfortable and pleasing state of mind. Its rules are sometimes clearly specified and sometimes elusive. Through the association with different experiences of life; lights, colours, shapes, smells and sounds all acquire special meanings. Everything from the mythology behind the forms of religious icons to the borders of her mother's saris, have contributed to develop her early sense of aesthetics.

As a South Asian dance practitioner in the United Kingdom, she is working across cultural boundaries teaching and creating work. When it comes to teaching, we are often dealing with bodies not trained to respond to the aesthetics of South Asian

dance and minds not yet prepared to receive the complexity of this genre of dance. Often she is left with the question of what should she teach? She has sometimes stopped and examined her own practice and understanding of Indian dance aesthetics to ascertain the validity of her work.

As she looked deeper into the aesthetics of Indian dance forms especially Bharatanāṭyam, she realised that the ultimate truth and satisfaction of dance lies in the engagement of the mind with movement.

All those beautiful lines of postures, moving to the music are there to let the body enjoy the flow of energy passing through it. Differently formed bodies will make different shapes to pulsate with the same intensity of energy. She has also learnt to look for aesthetics not only in the external shapes of the dance but in the way the body responds to the energy that motivates it to move⁵⁶.

Arts in disability found its voice in the nurturing atmosphere of 1970s. The Theatre-in-Education (TiE) movement was another offshoot and one of the brightest of ethnic minorities and communities. The publication 'The Arts Britain Ignores' (1976), which is a very first research report, created the awareness of previously little-known art field. In this publication she has addressed many issues relating to ethnic minorities.

Bisakha - Creative Body Movement, Therapy and Animation:

South Asian dance in the United Kingdom is developing against a different backdrop than in the subcontinent. Bisakha Sarker, as an Indian Bharatanāṭyam and Creative dancer points out that "dance in the subcontinent was born, and flourished,

⁵⁶ Bisakha Sarker. Aesthetics in my work. Pulse summer, 2002: 21.

around the temples,” and since South Asian dance has moved away from its conventional backdrop, she believes “there are new aesthetics, and a new context for these forms”. She feels this will change the dance form and that the film medium offers one of the best means to explore and express these changes. This is because it can definitely place South Asian dance choreography physically against those very backdrops that are changing it; against, what she calls, “new architectures”. She has put this thinking into her film steps and craft⁵⁷.

4.4.1. Productions & Artistic Creations:

4.4.1.1. Dancing “Care”

Dancing care project is Bisakha’s perception which she inspired from since thirty years of time from the various people she worked with. For better or worse she has blurred the line between her work and life. So much of this lecture will dip in and out of her life’s experience.

She dances for the joy of her own being and she dances for the people she loves, dance their cares into the keeping of someone or something greater than us. She believes that this interplay between the smaller herself and a bigger sense of self within a vast great universe is the key to wellbeing.

One comment that hugely inspired her which she quotes and keeps with her as a mantra is *“Dance gives me an enhanced sense of wellbeing. Dance may not cure but stimulates the body in a different way. It can shift the focus from one mindset to another. We know dance for its great entertainment value, we know dance for its*

⁵⁷ Anita Dawood Nasar. Filming into the mainstream. Pulse Spring, 2002: 14.

spiritual connections and we know that dance comes from fifth Vēda, so it is naturally a great tool for education”.

Acknowledging dance as a medium for social change is a concept that Bisakha has fully understood as she worked in the dance sector in the West. Community dance is not a word that comes up in the discussion of Indian dance. Over last thirty years it is within this sector that the notion of dance for health and wellbeing has rapidly developed. Dance makes a drastic impact on its role carrying the nature of care and comfort for physical and mental health care. If we look at the history of the last thirty years, what comes into focus is a clear pathway that has brought to the current excitement and appreciation of dance for delivering health targets.

4.4.1.2. Dance and Ageing

As Bisakha was approaching fifty, she felt a need to re-examine her perception of dance and the body and specially an ageing body. In Indian dance the concept of mōkṣa or liberation is a goal. If that is the case then how can it not liberate a mind from the fear of ageing? There started a search; does beauty lie only in youth?

Bisakha Sarker’s work has always been ornamental and collaborative with various technical experts who specialised on installation, sound track, animation etc.

In the eighties there were many initiatives to promote racial harmony. Formal education sector took it up seriously to deliver multicultural education.

4.4.1.3. Dance and Disability:

Long before disability discrimination act was in place, through the pioneering work by several inspiring dance leaders a new meaning and aesthetics of dance started

to emerge. Artists started to learn and discover ways of making dance practice accessible to the wide range of people with different disabilities. Companies like Amici, Candoco, Anjali, Blue eyed soul do amazing work and have changed the face of dance in the United Kingdom.

In 1995 as a part of the year of dance there was a two year long project to see how South Asian dance can be used in this sector. ADITI (the National Organisation of South Asian Dance) produced a film documenting the three projects as models of good practice.

As dancers, they learnt about the rules and ways of working of the day centres, assessment centres and care homes. The artists had to go on disability awareness courses. The concept of duty of care followed. The dance artists became more aware of the health issues and risk factors. Findings from the project and recommendations were presented in a publication called MAKING SPACE, which Bisakha was very fortunate to co-author with Francois Matarasso.

Transferring the skills and contents of theatre dance practices into this new arena is both challenging and rewarding. Amazing examples of courage and sheer joy in the faces of the participants told a different story of what one can do rather than what one cannot. It was moving from disability to different ability.

From the turn of the century there, was a positive movement of addressing age as an important and interesting topic within the dance sector and crossovers of health care and use of dance to deliver some of the responsibilities of health care started to come into focus. In 200, there was a conference in Cork led by Mary Brady supported

by their national health called Moving age. They presented the findings of a medium term project, where Fergus Early and his Green candle team took up a training project and taught age appropriate dance to different people responsible for the care of the elderly. Washington based dance artist Liz Larman took their breath away with the description of some of her work with older people.

Bisakha says there is another famous American dance company, Mark Morris Dance Co. that is doing very special work with the patients of Parkinson disease. In the United Kingdom they consider Amanda Fogg as a specialist in this field. British theatres, libraries, museums and community centres there is a whole range of interesting work taking place with and for older people.

Few years back when the government brought out the law with local government, Bisakha realised that this will open the opportunity for greater intervention by dance artists in the health care of older people. She organised her first conference Marks of time.

4.4.1.4. Dance for health and wellbeing

Liverpool as the European capital of culture introduced dance into health settings such as the waiting areas of the clinics and the wards of the city's major teaching hospitals, hospices and patient support groups. The experience revealed a new perception of dance in health care. Chaturangan delivered a part of this project along with Comedy trust and FACT.

She worked for Parkinson's Foundation (PF) Society support group, Royal Liverpool hospital hematology clinic, oncology ward, women's hospital, children's

hospices and arts on prescription and Mersey care. A coffee table book produced from this project went to every GP surgery in Liverpool. GP refers to a generic United Kingdom term for the location where a GP regularly sees a small general patients or family medical practice with no more than a handful of medical practitioners and other staff. They may prescribe drugs or perform minor surgeries, and sometimes form an emergency point of call. This became one of the flagship projects of the capital of cultural programs. Bisakha's organisation was invited for the Cultural Programs to present examples of the work during both the Queen's and the Prime minister's visit to Liverpool. Health and wellbeing as related role of dance was gaining ground all the time.

To overcome the confidentiality clause and to create a series of high quality original art work, Bisakha worked with Visual artist Noelle Williamson, who documented the work with water colour paintings. Liverpool city council had announced 2010 to be the year of dance and health and wellbeing. As a part of that they are commissioning ten new dance pieces.

A well-known long time champion of older people and dance, Diane Amans is collaborating with Bisakha to create a new piece. As a part of this initiative they have delivered few sessions in Broad green hospital's Stroke rehabilitation unit. She says, as dance artists we want to be prepared to provide the best kind of dancing care that is possible.

2011 - Tropical Tales (Care and Cure)

The idea in selecting Tropical Tales is as a cross arts project, and the stories from Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) are collected and performed by a

creative team of established artists like painters, poets, musicians, dance and spoken word performers, to produce resource materials. Some of the material will be used by local school children and part of the material will be published as story cards and innovative digital media. Initially this will be available via the Well-Travelled Clinic, which is a part of LSTM and local National Health Service waiting rooms.

2010 – Pieces of memory – Pieces of Map

2010 was designated as the year of innovation, health and wellbeing by Liverpool City Council, and within this initiative the Council has commissioned ten new dance pieces. Amongst these, Chaturangan is delighted to have been chosen, in light of its earlier work in this area highlighted by the conference "Marks of Time". For this commission, Chaturangan is working in partnership with Diane Amans, the founder of Freedom in Dance, well known for her work in training staff in health and social care and managing dance projects in health settings. Their main goal is to produce a body of work reflecting on “release from restrictions” from an artistic perspective. The artists will draw on strengths from each other’s dance practices, life experience and substantial knowledge of working with older people in a wide range of situations to create this new dance piece.

2009 and 2008 – Different tune

This co-production in fusion with New Theatre for Young People draws dance styles from across the world, highlighting cultural diversity and identity. This is exclusively for young children with stunning new dance theatre piece.

This is totally a different piece of jingle which tells the story of a group of animal friends and their adventures. As the play goes on, they playfully dance together;

sometimes they fall out and then make up. During this episode they gain confidence and learn to care for each other. 'A Different Tune' will artistically and creatively relate through dance, drama and music fusion. The story is of how one animal – hated by other animals – discovers his own new way of dancing and through that finds self-respect and recognition without having to compromise his own identity. The story comes alive through live dance and music within attractive surroundings created by the use of Isadora interactive video software.

2006 - Dance of the Night Sky

Chaturangan launched its dance installation programme "Dance of the Night Sky" for Liverpool Planetarium on Saturday 11th March 2006 at 12 noon. This is a Planetarium show based on an ancient Indian myth about the origin of the Plough, the Pleiades and the double stars Alcor and Mizar. This installation programme was shown every Sunday afternoon through 2006 and 2007 at the Planetarium.

2004 and 2005 – Sacred move

“Sacred Move” is an emotional evening of new dance, live music and spoken words to mark "Faith in One City". It was devised by Bisakha Sarker with support from David Heirons.

This project demonstrates the presence of different faiths in the City. It is a quality performance piece which is achieved by working in partnership with these faiths. They also initiated an outreach programme to inspire inclusive spirituality. The project encourages investment in culturally diverse artists to prepare them to take a fuller part in the Liverpool European Capital of Culture 2008 celebration. The project

builds on scheduled collaborations with artists outside the region to raise the national profile of artists from Merseyside and thereby improving their job opportunities.

Chaturangan has created a project that reflects the Liverpool's diverse cultural and devotional heritage. The project uses dance as a medium to bring these diverse faiths and traditions together and results in a performance in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral.

The performance truly reflects the spirit of 'Faith in One City' and it is a moving and spectacular artistic expression. It is a multi-faith work with contemporary artistic influence and gives aspiration to all including those who born and brought up in Liverpool and for those who have settled there as their home.

Awards:

- New Horizon, from Cloust Gobenkien Foundation
- Lisa Ullman Travelling scholarship
- Windsor scholarship from ACE
- ACGB Training Bursary for training with Wolfgang Stange
- Digital editing Training award from MFV
- ACE training bursary 'research methodology' at Laban
- Year of the artist (2000)⁵⁸

4.4.2. Dance and Disability project - Discussion & Analysis:

Art has been associated with physical and emotional healing throughout history. The ancient Greeks assigned the God Apollo to reign over both music and healing (Trehan, 2004). Aristotle and Plato both prescribed music to debilitated individuals.

⁵⁸ Availble at <http://www.chefred.org.United Kingdom /chat/>

Plato prescribed both music and dancing for the fearful and anxious, while Aristotle spoke of the power of the music to restore health and normalcy to those who suffer from uncontrollable emotions and compared it to a medical treatment⁵⁹.

Physiologically and psychologically, dance affects the biological process differently. Dance changes the pulse and effects the occurrence of fatigue. The nature of dance has an influence on the body and changes the mind as well. Dance influences mood relaxation and reduces stress to deal better with pain and anxiety. Bisakha Sarker has taken a position where she deals with dance as a medium that fosters a greater sense of understanding of the needs in different communities, especially the disabled. She has done a great amount of work that has changed the worst cases to less stressful and intrusive cases through dance.

Long before disability discrimination act was in place through the pioneering work by several inspiring dance leaders a new meaning and aesthetics of dance started to emerge. Artists started to learn and discover ways of making dance practice accessible to a wide range of people with different disabilities. In 1995, as a part of the year of dance there was a two year long project to see how South Asian dance can be used in this sector.

Aditi, the National Organisation of South Asian Dance, produced a film documenting the three projects as models of good practice. As dancers, they learnt about the rules and ways of working at day centres, assessment centres and care homes. The artists had to go on disability awareness course. The concept of duty of care

⁵⁹ Dawn Kent. Music on Humans. Senior thesis, Liberty University, 2006: 4-5.

followed. The dance artists became more aware of the health issues and risk factors. Findings from the project and recommendations were presented in a publication called 'Making Space'. All these workshops move the participants from disability to different ability.

Dance and Disability project is referred to as South Asian Dance and Disability initiated by the South Asian Dance Educational Forum, and dealt with as a pilot project by three distinctive dance exponents in the United Kingdom. Bisakha Sarker is one of those three who has succeeded in making her own mark through this project. It is a collaboration between Aditi and The National Organisation of South Asian Dance and Dance for The National Dance Agency for The East Midlands Supported by The Arts Council and Leicester City Council.

This project exploring the use of South Asian dance forms and technique was initiated by the South Asian dance education forum. The purpose was to examine the methods used by the workshop leaders to learn from their successes and failures and to encourage other dancers to work in this field.

This project was filmed using only the available light, no micro phones were allowed to intrude. Filming took place at the beginning, middle and end of the project. This project was led by Bisakha Sarker with a community of disability. None of them had previously been involved with South Asian dance. In this project the forum collaborated with local organizations and local funders, help was also received from the Arts Council.

Aims of this project:

- To make it possible for disabled people to have access to South Asian dance Bharatanāṭyam; to serve as a bridge between disabled people and South Asian dance.
- To affirm the validity of South Asian dance in all contexts and among all people.
- To explore effective means of achieving the experience of South Asian dance for people with disabilities.
- To build the confidence of the participants and encourage their sense of belonging to the community at large.

This project took place at Blackburn, lasted for six weeks in November and December, 1995. Each week there was one session of two hours duration. The participants all had physical disabilities and some had learning difficulties as well.

Credits:

Project Leader	-	Bisakha Sarker
Music	-	Nick Willsh
Textiles	-	Jahir
Camera and Editing	-	Sue Wallin
Project Manager	-	Donna Mc Donald
Video Production Facilities	-	Fosse Community Studios, Leicester
Funders	-	Partnership between North West Arts and Lancashire Country Council and its development office. It was also supported by the Country youth and community service and Blackburn Borough Council.

Most of the Bisakha Sarker's projects focus on health and wellbeing related to arts. She aims at making the dance, music and art, more diverse with quality. She strived to make it accessible for different health needs to evaluate the work professionally using Bharatanāṭyam. She has spread dance, music and visual arts to establish the potential for promoting health care and welfare and to make them more recognized. For this to happen, one needs a greater opportunity for culturally diverse artists to gain a great amount of experience. Deep understanding of the issues concerned will lead artists to develop appropriate artistic content and methods of delivery. Bisakha Sarker has a prominent place in this field of art as a tool for social wellbeing. Dance and disability project was handled by Bisakha Sarker which gave a greater understanding and experience for the disability groups to have a creative health space. Her generosity lay in opening the possibility to take dance, music and story as great ingredients for the expression of the differently abled. Her sessions create an opportunity to give, connect, be active, learn and express.

A group of people setting off on a much unknown journey - following the tradition of South Asian dance Bharatanāṭyam, Bisakha starts her session with greetings to dance. This establishes a discipline and regularity to the session. This helps her understand the nature of the group and gives her some notion of the needs of the individuals within the groups.

This project was three way collaboration between the dance, music and the textile, which stimulates the senses creatively with the kinesthetic way of experience, i.e. making an attempt to experience the touch through the rhythm, music and the movement.



4.4.2.1. Bisakha engaging differently abled group with kinesthetic learning

Bisakha through her project dance in disability has explored a transformative impact on people's lives using dance and music as primary forces. Bisakha has influenced the activities that shape the mind's ability, interpret speech, awakening emotions and encoding memory. One of the joys of dancing is to live in a different world of feelings and imaginations. This has been an element in all her works in the survival and development of abilities. She uses anything that she can stimulate the mind to respond to the feelings and imaginations.



4.4.2.2. Bisakha helping the participants to hold the gestures



4.4.2.3. Bisakha engaging the group with dance activities



4.4.2.4. Bisakha engaging the participants with a dance movement

Nick Willsh, the musician observed Bisakha's sessions with the group and absorbed her nature of handling the sessions and imbibed the technique of providing and creating music relevant to her imagination. She gives the space to involve group members to actively participate and connect. This provided the structure for Nick to compare the music and later record it for them to dance to. Nick establishes the rhythm in one session, then this rhythm is interpreted using different movements, such as sound stamping, tapping, some shoulder movement and other actions. Each member had opportunity to contribute and lead in the creation of dance.

Bisakha says – “Rhythm is a good starting point - Rhythm and Chanting, Rhythm and Shapes and Rhythm in movement”.



4.4.2.5. Disability group experiencing rhythm and music

Introducing the pulse and rhythm, by making them experience the same with the help of a volunteer who can make them witness the body movement practically.



4.4.2.6. Group activities with the volunteers help

Using material like Batik sarees, and scarves as properties to enable the maximum stretch of the body movement and to enhance the visual image aesthetically is one of Bisakha's ways of conducting. She had different Batik sarees on each day to reinforce the idea of using images from Batik patterns.

She introduced the group to Batik; she encouraged them to draw on dance movements as an inspiration for the patterns of the scarves. Free movement of the boutique scarves encourages the body to move with similar grace. Scarves also help them to dance colour.



4.4.2.7. Bisakha making movement patterns with Batik Saris

This was not a performance project, and accordingly the participants hadn't planned on the use of costumes, but on the final day they all wanted to dress up and share their own ideas. Bisakha involved them to an extent interestingly where the response was that, they preferred to choose Bisakha's wardrobe for sarees and extra scarves by themselves. At the beginning she grouped them all at one end of the room in

order to create a sympathetic environment to give them security. By the end of the project having created their own music, scarves, and dance they were ready to turn around and face the larger environment with confidence.

Handling disability groups with certain feelings such as timidity, shyness, self-consciousness and feelings of isolation and insecurity is quite a challenging task. Bisakha's sessions speak to her sensibility of accepting their responses and yet engaging them actively through music, rhythm and textiles. In this way the rhythmic gesture through music, dance and textiles becomes a way of expressing themselves better.

In setting up the project, the aim was to counter racism amongst the abled bodied community, which believed that South Asian dance especially Bharatanāṭyam was only suitable for South Asian people. Interestingly, it was welcomed as an art form by the participants in Blackburn. Bharatanāṭyam was made accessible to disabled people and for those who want to work in this area. South Asian dance offers every one valuable opportunity for personal development. This pilot project was also brought into focus with a number of guiding principles, most of which also apply to all dance workshops. The project took place in safe, warm, private spaces with clean floors which were important for bare foot dancers.

Workshop always contain repressions people reveal unexpected talents but dancers can also encounter unexpected problems. Preparation makes it easier to deal with unforeseen circumstances. Preliminary work with the participants where appropriate with professional staff can be helpful, but workshop leaders must always be

ready to adapt. Many workshop leaders think the ideal project lasts about six weeks with one session a week. It allows learning to be well placed.

Music:

A musician must be sensitive with the dance leader to the uncertainties of the workshop. Most workshop leaders have an understanding of music. In Blackburn the music was inspired by the participants and created especially for the project.

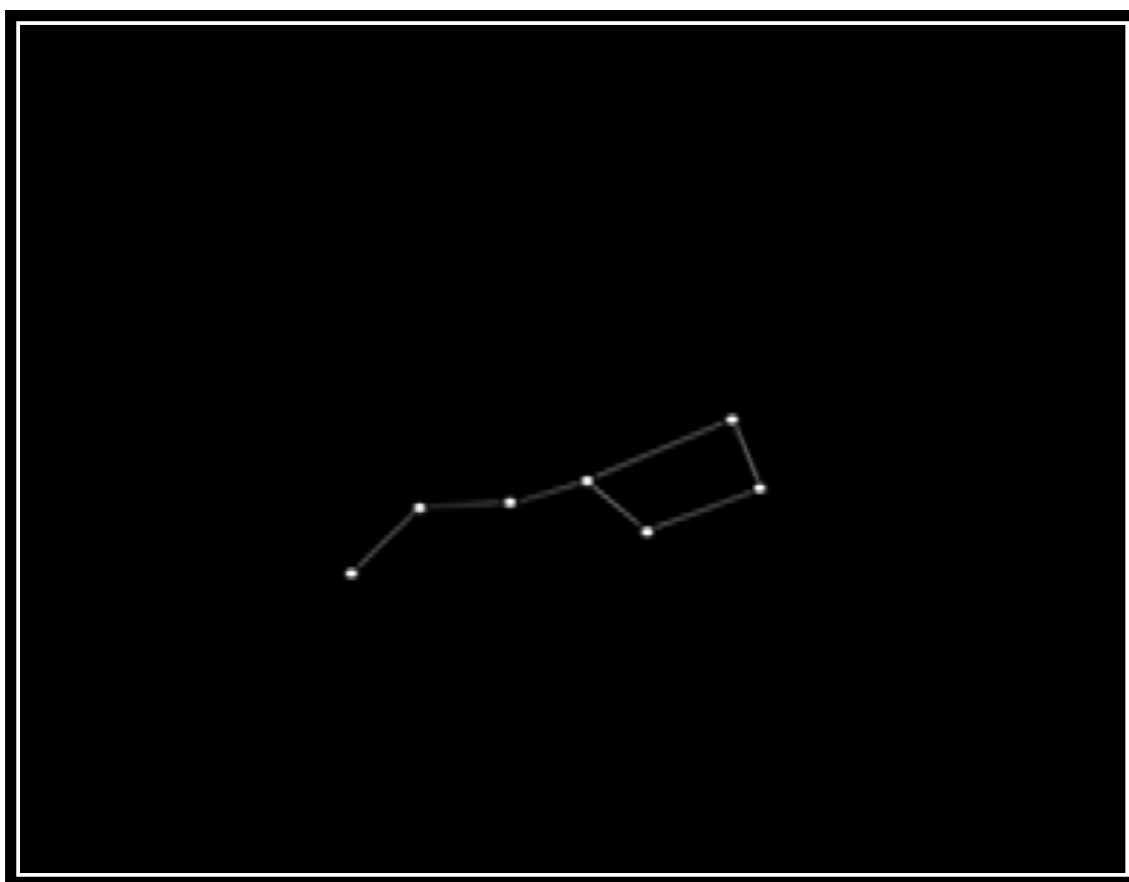
Costume:

Costumes play a major role in Bharatanāṭyam and other Indian classical dances. Costume can help the creative sense in a special way. It never brings a disparity of being disabled on to the performance space. The sense of wearing a well-fitting costume brings out confidence in presenting what has been learnt in the sessions. Costumes and other objects can stimulate the imagination of dancers and workshop participants. Costume also helps a workshop leader to share aspects of South Asian culture with people from other traditions.

Bisakha states that the teaching of Bharatanāṭyam or any other South Asian dance to disabled people is not art therapy. Dance, whatever its origin is an art form which gives pleasure to the participants. Disabled people have the same rights to enjoy the arts as non-disabled people. ('Dance and Disability' project video enclosed, see appendix - 5)

4.4.3. "Dance of the Night Sky"

This show was presented in a planetarium to exhibit the Indian myth relating the origin of Pleiades and the double stars Alcor and Mizar formed into a shape of Plough.



4.4.3.1. Image of seven stars formation in the shape of a Plough

The Dance of the Night Sky is the story about the origin of the Great Bear, the Pleiades and the double stars Alcor and Mizar as imagined in the ancient India. This concept has been presented with multimedia video at Liverpool Planetarium.

"Ripples from the Sky Above":

This show was specially conceived to present in the World Museum Liverpool planetarium. This was funded by the city council's "Round the City in eighty days" project. In Ripples from the Sky above production, the story connects with the stars and relates to the emotion of how one travels from cultures, countries and continents to portray the attachments people have with their memories and loved stories.

Star watching has been an important activity from ancient ages and especially in India there are many scientific facts and stories discovered from the formation of stars that are passed on across generations. In India, there are many mythological stories relating to the stars – for example a formation of stars compared with Sun as a young man riding a chariot of seven horses and the seven stars constellation referred to as Saptarṣi-s, the seven wise men in India.

“Dance of the Night Sky” production was made as a video animation narrating the images of stars through Bharatanāṭyam movements. In the year 2000 this production was acclaimed with seven shows for the public at the Jordell Bank science centre, which was the very first non-European theme presented at that venue.

This particular Bharatanāṭyam animation production was launched in the year 2006, March 11th at Liverpool Planetarium by Chaturangan Dance Company. This was presented as Sunday afternoon shows at the Planetarium from 2006 and 2007. Review provided by Paul Ishtar –

"I found the museum show an intelligent and alchemical synthesis of dance, myth and science. The show was not only very entertaining, but educational on both a cultural and scientific level. The filmed dance/drama performance projected onto the planetarium ceiling against a back drop of the night sky showed high quality expressive / creative Indian dance, which at the same time was traditional and highly archetypal." - Paul Ishtar⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Available at <http://www.chezfred.org.United Kingdom /chat/>

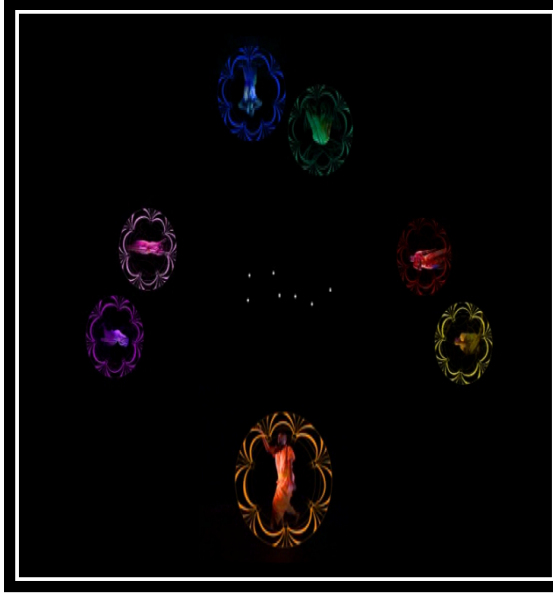
Analysis of “Dance of the Night Sky”: [The Saptarṣi-s 5 Screens portrayed as one]

Credits:

Concept and Artistic Director	-	Bisakha Sarker
Performers	-	Agni- Kali Dass, Svāha- Sangeeta Ghosh, The Kṛttikas- Mohana, Sripadan, The Rṣis- Shane Shambhu
Choreography	-	Kali Dass and Shane Shambhu
Illustration	-	All Marwood
Costumes	-	Mark Simmonds
Music	-	Arun Ghosh
Mixed	-	Ollie Brown
Film	-	Dan Saul
Script	-	William Radic
Design	-	Ali Harwood

Story:

The Saptarṣi-s – were Visvamitra, Jamadagni, Bharadvaja, Gautama, Atri, Vasistha and Kasyapa. These seven sages lived in the Northern Sky. The seven sages were married to seven sisters the Kṛttika-s. Peacefully together the Rṣi-s and Kṛttika-s performed the rituals of the universe.



4.4.3.2. Seven sages -Saptarṣi-s

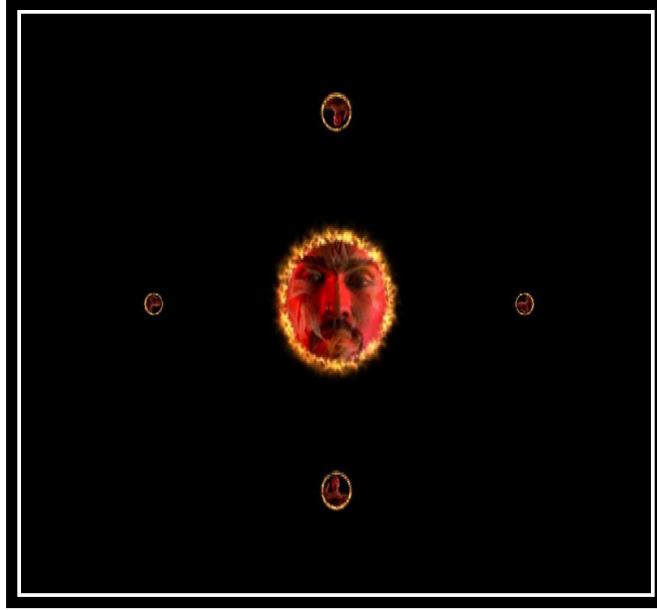


4.4.3.3. Seven Kṛttika-s

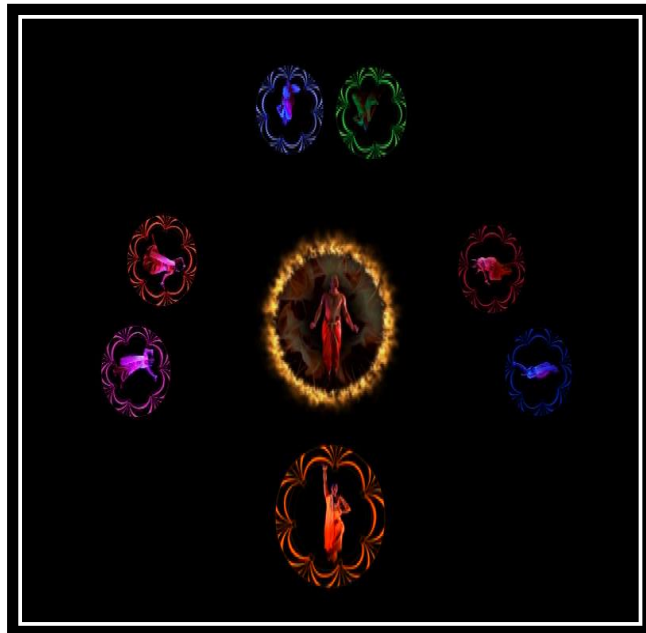


4.4.3.4. Seven sages married to seven Kṛttika-s

One day out of the flames appeared Agni, the God of fire. On seeing the Kṛttika-s Agni fell in love, tormented by desire Agni retreated to the forest.

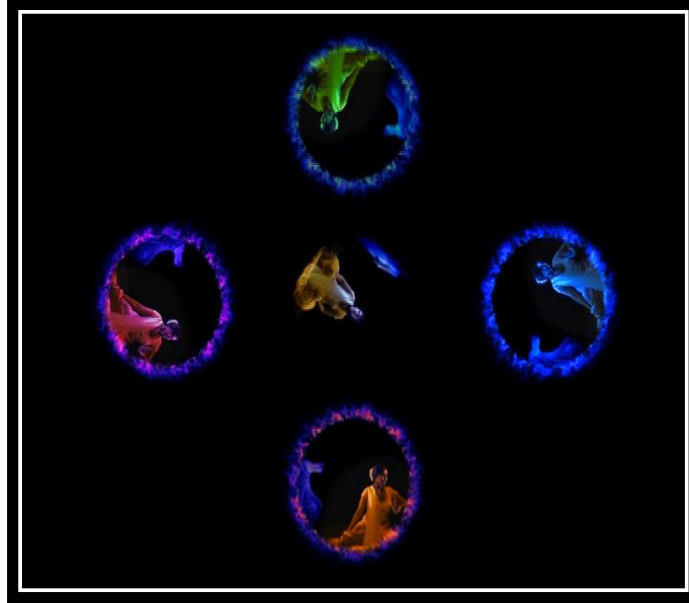


4.4.3.5. Agni's appearance



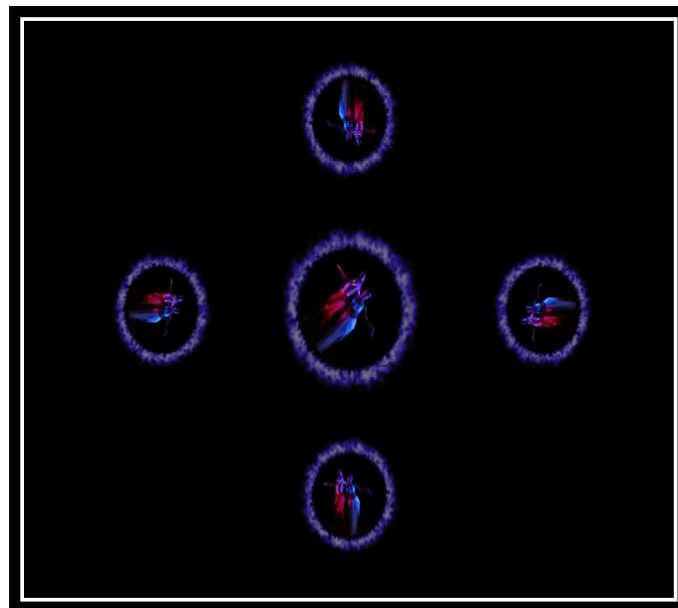
4.4.3.6. Agni tormented by desire

In the forest lived Svaha who had always loved Agni. Svaha's all-consuming love urged her to take the path of deception. She disguised herself as the Kṛttika-s, soon stole the heart of Agni.

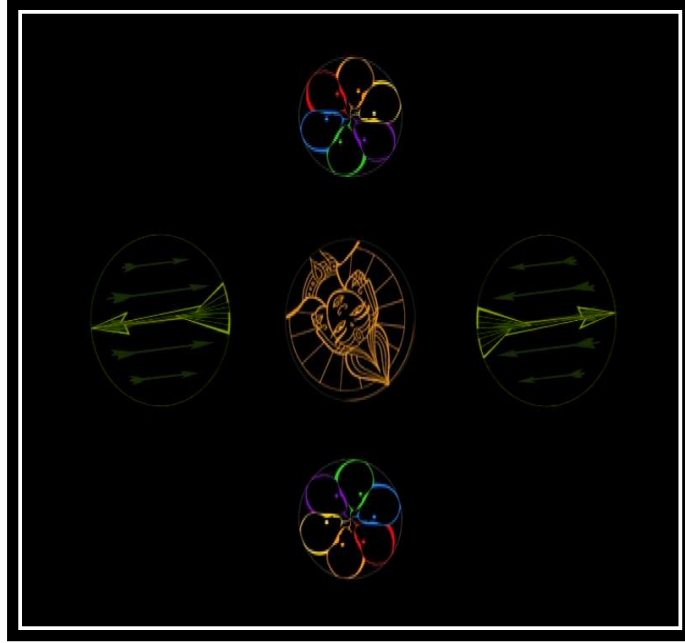


4.4.3.7. Svaha in disguise of Kṛttika-s

She remained united with him forever and their child was 'Skanda', six headed
Skanda resembles six Kṛttika-s.



4.4.3.8. Union of Svaha and Agni



4.4.3.9. Birth of six headed Skanda

The Rīṣi-s suspected tragedy amongst their wives. The Kṛttika-s fled to the other side of the galaxy. All that is except for one ‘Arundhathi’, who was so devoted to her husband that Svaha couldn’t take her form.

Arundhathi is always so true, the Rīṣi knows that Arundhathi never deceived him, and was always his lover. The pair was here double stars; together still Arundhathi and her husband (Vasistha) in the night sky..... together still you die in the night sky.....



4.4.3.10. Arundhathi and Vasistha together in the night sky

And so perhaps it was and so it is today and if in the night one gaze at the stars one can see the seven Rishi-s living in the Northern sky and the six wives can be seen as the star cluster of planets. But if one looks closely at the constellation of Ursa Major, Arundhathi and her husband Vasistha can be seen eternally together. Many scientists believe that the stars Alcor and Mizar are true double stars, bidding each other once every three quarters of a million years.

4.4.4. Discussion and analysis:

Bisakha's creative work with dance and music has widely expanded to translate experiences and emotions into the shapes and rhythms of dance. She has chosen animation for few projects as a vital medium in describing Indian mythology and traditions. "Dance of night sky" is one of the major projects with animation. The description of the story of "Saptarshi-s" compared their origin with the shape of a plough and their evolution, transformation, their characters and the science behind it is

enclosed in this production with animation. It creates the illusion of motion and change with a rapid display of a sequence of static images which differ from each other.

Bisakha's project "Dance of the night sky" explores her own style of celebrating the unique possibilities of mind and science through dance. The co-relation between the concept, stars and the dance has been beautifully established and installed in order to bring an artistic craft and insight to the theme of Indian mythology. Simplifying the story of the seven stars as embodiments of seven wise men, provided the impact of visualising this reality with the sense of creativity through dance. The balance of dance, animation, storytelling and music speaks of Bisakha's sense of creativity, experimentation and life through the process of subtlety in her presentation. The effect of the video presentation can be experienced with maximum connectivity, if one views it in the ambience of a planetarium. ('Dance of the Night Sky' video enclosed, see appendix - 5)

4.4.5. Conclusion:

The following are the major components of Bisakha Sarker's contribution to Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora.

- **Bisakha is trained in three art forms - Bharatanāṭyam, Creative dance, and Mañipūri.**
- **All her works reflect her density of knowledge in these three dance forms. She utilises them basically with communities, disability and film animation.**
- **Her creativity in Bharatanāṭyam and understanding of the movements expands into various horizons.**

The documentation of Dance and Disability project is the best reference for researchers and artists in this field. Bisakha's work emphasises the importance of physical vocabulary. Dance and Disability project is a great example which portrays the combination of dance and balancing to overcome the sense of disability, isolation and fear. The researcher discussed the various activities of Bisakha, which she has composed to engage with disabled communities to help them communicate, express and experience. Her activities included kinesthetic learning, observation and response.

Being a disciple of eminent dancer and choreographer Uday Shankar, Bisakha imbibed the quality of understanding art with a spirit of aesthetic and traditional values. Her choreographic and artistic works as an artistic director speaks to her sensibility of adapting and experimenting with a balance. Along with that, her exposure to various classical dance forms like Bharatanāṭyam, Kūcipūḍi and Maṇipūrī has led her have a tremendous flexibility to work with artists with different schools of thoughts and different schools of philosophies.

Composing the productions and workshop sessions with dance, music, and textiles is one way of Bisakha's approach and on the other hand Bisakha keeps updating herself with the latest technology, its usage and finding its relevance. Animation is also one of the prominent features observed in many of her works. She portrays the importance of documenting her work throughout. This gives a great amount of artistic understanding for the present and future. The sequence of images depicting the story of Saptarṣi-s – the seven wise men with their evolution to characterisation has been drawn and translated aesthetically through the movements of Bharatanāṭyam and technology.

Other than the dance and disability, the projects related with animation, Bisakha has widely explored the dance field through many other projects like Dance and Ageing, Health and wellbeing, Racial Harmony through educational workshops and collaboration with diverse artists and technical experts. Her work is a land mark to convey how many possibilities exist in the field of dance to the new and young generation. Bisakha's work is infused with a spiritual approach from the gradual process of storytelling and expressiveness. The spiritual approach happens with an intention of expressing an art form not just as a physical element but also with a soul stirring experience.

Bisakha Sarker has raised the profile of South Asian Dance to a remarkable status through her creative activities in Diaspora in the United Kingdom. Her ultimate purpose of working with communities in the United Kingdom is to connect the spirit of mind with movement.

The reason behind choosing her two projects 'Dance and Disability' and 'Dance of Night Sky' is because they serve as remarkable examples amongst her many other projects. These two projects which are discussed here give a source for many upcoming artists and students seeking a responsible position in the art field in the United Kingdom. As a performer, story teller, artistic director, her adaptability towards the globalisation adds to her efficiency of craft in Bharatanāṭyam along with other dance forms.

4.5. Case Study 4 - Anusha Subramanyam:

Anusha Subramanyam is a dancer, choreographer; teacher trained in Bharatanāṭyam and also expanded her interests into therapy in the United Kingdom.

She graduated from Kalakshetra College of Fine Arts, Chennai in the year 1986. She takes the credit of having performed at many reputed platforms internationally.

Early Life:

Anusha was born in Khirki, next to Pune in the state of Maharashtra, India. She travelled throughout her childhood extensively in India since her father was in the navy. Her first dance teacher was her mother who was also a trained dancer and singer. Anusha's initial informal training was from her mother. It was her mother's dream for her to join in Kalakshetra. Before Kalakshetra her training consisted of dance and music. Her mother being a loving teacher, used to work with local organizations and communities like Bālavāḍi, Aṅganvāḍi, special needs children and rural development. She also worked with a company called VSA (very special arts) in Delhi. Anusha's training in dance was very informal, open and creative before she joined Kalakshetra 1983 to 1986; from there she went to Delhi and worked with Leela Samson (from 1986 to 1994).

She says Kalakshetra gave her a good structural, spiritual and philosophical grounding, while she was in India, she worked with special needs communities. Anusha was inspired by Tripura Kashyap's dance therapy workshops in Delhi and decided to work on Dance therapy.

During that time she had an opportunity to attend a modern dance course conducted by Sangeet Natak Academy and another course with a Drama therapy in Delhi, conducted by the British Council. After attending these workshops, she focused on this arena and explored possibilities to pursue further work in this area. She came to the United Kingdom on scholarship to train as a dance therapist in the year 1994. She

got admission at the University of Hard Orchard to get trained in dance therapy.
(Interview Video enclosed)

Career and Work in the United Kingdom:

As part of her studies in the Hard Orchard University, Anusha had to work as an apprentice of a dance therapist. She thought of it as a good opportunity and worked with dementia, mental health issues and learning disability children by using dance movement. As soon as she came to the United Kingdom, she got connected with many organizations, and among them was Akademi. Akademi gave her scope to work and create to target the special needs communities. She travelled and performed throughout the United Kingdom.

Anusha's training in dance and her purpose of dealing with the disabled has led her expand her horizons. This had created many dilemmas initially as she had a traditional, ethnic training background at Kalakshetra. Her purpose made her modify the traditional approach to make it appropriate to the disabled and other communities she was engaged with. Gradually with the teaching and exploring new possibilities she could resolve her queries based on her own experience.

Anusha's work is a combination of Bharatanāṭyam, creative movements and music. She has experimented with and explored dance movements in public spaces to spread the spirit of art. She plays an important role in the team creating the ISTD Bharatanāṭyam syllabus in the United Kingdom. Her emphasis on physicality of dance led her train as a Pilate's teacher. She also worked as a dance movement therapist and continues to explore the healing power of dance and movements. She used dance as a therapy for education with special needs communities, exploring various

methodologies. Bharatanāṭyam was a medium to pursue the above through workshops of her own format. She has explored and incorporated the rich potential of Indian classical and folk dance forms, both in term of pure movement and creative expression in its abstract and narrative forms in her therapeutic workshops and exercises. Her work has benefited differently abled communities, children, teachers, and professionals.

She is a person who has multi tasked in making this art form more understandable in the United Kingdom. For example, she performs, conducts educational workshops and movement therapy, teaches dance and also she is an active employee in the CAT (Centre for Advanced Training for South Asian and Contemporary Dance)⁶¹.

Her work whilst rooted in Bharatanāṭyam is trans-cultural and intergenerational with contemporary relevance. She has given wide range of performances, which is interactive with audience and is site and theme specific, which also features collaborations with artists from a variety of disciplines i.e. theatre, music, poetry and multi-media.

Placing dance, particularly Bharatanāṭyam, in different contexts where it might not traditionally be seen is at the heart of what she enjoys most. By doing so, she had to unpick and de-construct the form and at the same time layer and re-construct it with other South Asian forms and new movement vocabularies. This has given rise to work that is hybrid and which yet has a clear South Asian sensibility. She has created performance work for hospitals and other health settings, art galleries, tube stations,

⁶¹ Donald Hutera. Anusha Subramanyam: One 'From the Heart'. Pulse, Asian music and dance. Summer, Issue 117, 2002: 10-11.

schools, and day care centres. Anusha's idea is to make the audience experience the spirit of her creative work for new contexts.

She has worked extensively for the people with special needs, schools and family groups, exploring the issues of culture, religion, identity etc., through creating choreographic works with non-dancers. These works have extensively illuminated her creative life.

Anusha Subramanyam is the artistic director of Beeja - A London based Dance Theatre Company. She is one of the Bharatanāṭyam exponents who work and experiments with the tradition. She has worked with many artists and many disciplines to make her work accessible, interesting and challenging. She has incorporated education and contemplative practices into dance which has marked her as a great teacher. She is a recipient of Lisa Ullmann travelling scholarship which enabled her to travel to the USA to strengthen her practice with experimental study at the Body Movement Centre in Pittsburgh. Anusha has directed a program for Dance India 2009, and continues to be a Subject leader for Bharatanāṭyam at the CAT (The Centre for Advanced Training program) programme managed jointly by Birmingham's DanceXchange and Sampad.

Anusha Subramanyam travels extensively between India and London for having a continuous training spirit in Bharatanāṭyam. Besides being a Bharatanāṭyam trainer in Diaspora, she continues to perform and engage in dance therapy and creative movement for wider communities with physical and mental challenges and also for refugee groups.



**4.5.1 Anusha using Bharatanāṭyam as therapy in hospitals.
Photo courtesy: Vipul Sangoi**

She worked in India in the year 1986 – 1987 and then later settled in London, which has made her seek many opportunities to explore Bharatanāṭyam in different contexts in the United Kingdom.

Anusha says – “In the United Kingdom everything is structured in terms of its policies, they make policies very quickly”. Few of the policies are – increasing access to the arts for elderly people above fifty years of age, engaging the community with arts for wellbeing, happiness, physical activity, innovative ideas and social interaction etc. The United Kingdom is a multicultural, multifaceted society and politically people vary with dance styles that have faith orientation.

She has worked extensively with special needs communities like schools, family groups, exploring issues of culture, religion, identity, normalcy etc., through

creating choreographic work, with non-dancers. This work has illuminated her creative life.

Anusha's company Beeja works on creating Bharatanāṭyam based choreographies with a purpose to benefit the physically challenged. This conceptualized choreography will be seen in her production "From the Heart". Based on her experience with the disabled and mentally challenged people, Anusha draws an inspiring output through her work. Anusha's 'From the Heart' is a combination of both classical and contemporary dance. She teaches Bharatanāṭyam at London's The Place, and in other arts and community centres in London and Birmingham. (Anusha Subramanyam's Interview Video enclosed, see appendix - 4)

Artistic Creations:

Outlined below are some examples of her performance projects that have used narrative structures but are based outside of a specifically South Asian context. All works mentioned below was performed in site-specific venues and had an element of interactivity. These were also created within a social context with a view that movement is a catalyst for change.

From the Heart (2012):

This is a Culmination of a two-year dance therapy project in children's wards in hospitals. This piece specially depicted children's world and the interaction of their lives with those of adults. This work was performed and toured in India and London.

Na Asat (2010):

Anusha's performance begins with a work based on a Vedic text from Nāsadiya sūkta, the 129th verse from the tenth book of the Rīgvēda. This book speculates on the

origins of the cosmos through a series of paradoxical dialogues and theological questions rather than offering definitive answers. This piece was first commissioned by the Alliance of Religions and Conservation, for ‘Many Heavens and One Earth’, an inter-faith summit at the Windsor Castle, celebrating ecology and faith. Music created by Michael Ormiston. Lights and costume Vipul Sangoi.

The tenth book is entirely devoted to speculations on the origins of the cosmos and seeks to converse about the origins of existence itself. The Rig Vedic texts are written in paradoxes, working on opposites as theological questions rather than as definite answers; Anusha considers the big bang theory, the other concepts of black flow and black hole as the source of this project. The existential concept that “nothingness” came into existence and wraps around everything is used. Or the fact that it has been scientifically proven that everything on Earth has the same molecular structure as when the Universe began; so the universe is in me and I am in the universe is used as the basic structure line.

The Monkey King (2009):

This is a Buddhist story wherein the Buddha incarnated as a King of the Monkeys, sacrifices his own life to protect many others. This story was danced at Windsor Castle in November 2009 at the launch of more than thirty long term plans by faith organisations to protect nature where leaders of nine faiths met to launch their long term plans to protect the environment. This show was performed to celebrate their commitment, made in the presence of HRH Prince Philip and Secretary-General of the United Nations. It included new versions of the collective stories from the Rig Vēda, Buddhist story of the Monkey King, the Conference of the Birds, the Sikh evening prayer, and the Canticle of the Creatures. In each of these, nature itself is given a voice.

The performance was given by the Beeja Dance Company with Michael Ormiston composer and narrated by Sally Magnusson.

“Inside-outside”:

This is a dance theatre piece and was based on Korczak’s Polish version of *Post Office* that was originally enacted by children during the Second World War in Warsaw. Korczak often engaged the form of the fairy tale in order to actually prepare his young readers for the complications and difficulties of real adult life, and the need to take responsible decisions. This production was specially created to tour Bosnia, just after the Bosnian war.

Colour Contacts:

This is a performance project commissioned by the Museum of London and explored the city through the eyes of its residents. Images were created in dance, rhythm, speech and music, which were linked to create an interactive performance in a public space. These voices and stories were collected from the oral history collection of the Museum of London. It reflects the lifestyle of London and its streets where many voices are heard. This was performed throughout in several public spaces such as Southwark tube station and Brent Shopping centre.

Yes (2009):

This was performed at the Aldebrugh poetry festival in November 2009. This is collaboration with Wonderful Beast and is a performance that celebrates the life and work of one of the United Kingdoms’ best-loved, funny, passionate and political poets, Adrian Mitchell. Anusha also re-worked and performed *The Hare and the Tortoise* fable recently at Tate Modern as part of the “Fairy Tale” celebrations - which featured Adrian Mitchell’s wife Celia, daughter Sasha, Roger Lloyd Pack and Diana Quick.

This performance was described as a triumphant, anarchic synthesis of words, jazz and rock 'n' roll.

Little Red Chunni (2007):

It was collaboration with the story telling Theatre Company Wonderful Beast was created in Jaipur, India with slum children and public school children. It was performed at the Jaipur International Heritage Festival 2007. Little Red Chunni successfully toured Suffolk schools between March'07-June'07. It ran for two weeks at the Aldeburgh theatre during the literary festival in July 2008.⁶²

4.5.2. From the Heart - Discussion & Analysis:



4.5.2.1. A still of creative dance movement by Anusha's 'From the Heart', PC: Vipul Sangoi

⁶² Available at <http://beeja.com/choreography/>

From the Heart:

This was a culmination of a two-year dance therapy project in children's wards in hospitals. This piece clearly depicted children's world and the interaction of their lives with those of adults. This work was performed and toured in India and London.

"From the Heart" production is a challenging concept that addresses the normal and abnormal state of minds inspiring the therapeutic approach with Bharatanāṭyam and creative movement. This includes physically and mentally disabled communities too.

At Renal ward of Birmingham Children Hospital, Anusha engaged children and their families to balance the pain with the medium of Bharatanāṭyam as therapy. The Bharatanāṭyam usage for the above purpose had the sufficient combination of gestural grammar and emotion, portraying both classical and contemporary styles.

Credits:

Title	:	From the Heart
Music	:	Michael Ormiston, Candida, Alice Shields and TM Krishnan
Mentored	:	Katy Dymoke
Music Arranged	:	Vipul Sangoi and Anusha Subramanyam
Lights and Costume	:	Vipul Sangoi
Venue	:	The Hat Factory, Luton, England
Year	:	2012

Document source: “Kadam and Hat Factory present Unlocking Creativity Shorts, Thursday 26th April 2012, 7:30 pm, The Hat Factory, Luton”.

Sanjeevini Dutta, Director of Kadam Dance and Editor of Pulse Magazine graced the evening with the content that marked the fifth year of Kadam’s pioneering course “Unlocking Creativity”, which was held in 2012.

She feels the Bharatanāṭyam form is very powerful because of its form, philosophy and music. She used elements of Bharatanāṭyam with hand gestures, facial expressions, and storytelling - as a tool to intersect with and empower the children’s own movement. Some could hardly move at all, but could experience a sense of dancing by using only their eyes or hands. Imagery and visualisation was a key to the process. Anusha says “some of the children, the boys especially, told me that they didn’t want to ‘dance’, so we played football. Lying on their beds they could use legs, heads, hands or shoulders to imagine the excitement of a playing in a match, kicking the ball, saving a goal, and we set the movement they created to music. As they danced the children gained confidence and began to regain their identity beyond that of sick patients”.

Her experiences as a therapist feed her as a dancer and this performance piece emerged as a natural progression of her experiences, in witnessing dances that is ‘From the Heart’. This work is an exploration of the dance that people created irrespective of physical and mental abilities – challenging the thoughts of physical disabilities, and vice versa. Above all she has been inspired by the nature of the movement which was original – straight from the heart. When they moved and felt, she believed what they believed in. When she dances, she wants to be as vulnerable and as open. Finally

she reflects on the boxes we all live in – those that are imposed on us and those we create for ourselves.

"Dance moves me in more ways than I can probably articulate," says Anusha. "The joy and freedom I experience in dance is something I wanted to share with everyone. Dance also gives me a great ability to be in touch with who I really am. I wanted to translate this conviction; empowerment especially to individuals that I think can get marginalized any way."

Anusha discovered experiencing dance is beyond the feeling of seeing dance. This spirit has been carried out thoroughly throughout her work as dance movement therapist, educationist and workshop conductor. *"I feel that the dances I saw in these settings are raw and real because it really was from the heart,"* explains Anusha. "The participants gave what they really believed in. This feeds her as a dancer because she wants to try and be vulnerable when she dances. She wants to be one and generous in whom she is and not tries to hide herself."

"From the Heart": this production of Anusha is an extension of her idea of creative dance. She continues to explore various movements during her work experience with diverse groups. She has cultivated the sense of creative achievement through Bharatanāṭyam as therapy.

Anusha co-related the creative movements and Bharatanāṭyam with cultural harmony and a sense of unity. The music used for "From the Heart" is Mongolian Khoomii singing and instrumental version by Candida Valentino and Micheal

Ormiston. She used various environmental sounds of nature rearranged and composed by Vipul. She also used the rhythm count four for tīrmānam-s.

Anusha Subramanyam used the sāhityam in a context where she shows the beauty and joy that she saw in all the young disabled people she worked with in the hospital. This portrays the joy of dance they did with her and finally Anusha presents this as a question to herself and the audience explaining the strength in all of us in any situation is the tool to shine, dance and therefore the person one wants to be.

4.5.3. Choreography Patterns:

“From the Heart” is a production with combination of Bharatanāṭyam and Contemporary elements. She used Bharatanāṭyam elements - hand gestures, facial expressions and storytelling as a tool to intersect with contemporary settings. Anusha Subramanyam’s ‘From the Heart’ talks about the shades of joy and pain through elements of Bharatanāṭyam, Contemporary and creative movements. Her attempt of using dance movements showcase the ease, pain and timidity. This portrays her very idea of expressing the comparison between these states. Usage of Bharatanāṭyam steps and abstract body movements in the beginning provides a clue to understand the purpose of the dance. The proportions of lighting, music and abstract movements add to portray her vision of joy and pain. The subtle movements in the beginning with the angular lighting give an image of curiosity.

Her training with Bharatanāṭyam, experience with the disabled, experimental thought in movement paints a picture of her creative attempt. Anusha uses the stage space by multiple curvatures around her body, depicting the serial images of joy and

pain. The music with irregular jerks explain and indicate the uncertainties or pain that exists.

Her movements consists of Tā tai tai tā - di tai tai tā, Tei ya tei hi, Tā hata jham tari tā - jham tari jaga tari tai - tadinginatōm takatadinginatōm takadikutadinginatōm and Taṭṭimeṭṭu aḍavu-s. The hand gestures include Patāka, Tripatāka, Kaṭakāmukha, Alapadma, Kapitta and Kartarīmukha.

She keeps her costume and make-up subdued and maintains a subverting tinge of traditional presentation. It creates a moment of exclamation witnessing the costume which has relevance to the concept.



4.5.3.1. Creative dance movements and Bharatanāṭyam elements demonstrated by Anusha Subramanyam. PC: Vipul Sangoi.

‘अभयप्रदां मणिगणैर् नानाविधैर् भूषिताम्’ ।

‘abhayapradām maṇigaṇair nānāvidhair bhūṣitām’ ⁶³

abhayapradām maṇigaṇair - to the gems of fearlessness

nānāvidhair bhūṣitām - to the one adorned with bunch of gems and other various ways.

The above mentioned Sāṅskṛt verse is about the Goddess being an embodiment of fearlessness with ornamented form. Anusha expressed her vision of pain, fear in connection with a supreme force as a tool of eradication.

Anusha understands the deep philosophy of pain and joy, which has given a path to this experimental work. Her expressions on the different phases of pain, bearing the pain, sustaining oneself and therefore getting liberated, draws a basic framework to her production ‘From the Heart’. (‘From the Heart’ video enclosed, see appendix - 5)

4.5.4. Conclusion:

Anusha Subramanyam an ardent, adherent of Bharatanāṭyam is different in using Bharatanāṭyam for different activities of human life. Major components of Anusha Subramanyam’s contribution to Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora include:

- **Anusha has been the subject leader for Bharatanāṭyam at the CAT, The Centre for Advance Training program in Birmingham to serve the dance community as a Bharatanāṭyam dancer.**

⁶³ Śrī Lakṣmī Aṣṭōttaraśatanāma Stōtram, (Verse 8) Ślōka 8.

- **Her main forte however is dance therapy focusing predominantly on healing physical, mental and psychological elements through Bharatanāṭyam.**
- **Among the five chosen case studies, Anusha is the youngest, her youth and dynamism are seen in her attitude, approach and style.**

Anusha Subramanyam's case study has shades of dance, life experiences, therapy, and experimentation. Her specialisation has been discussed in the thesis has gained a mark in the second generation of artists in the United Kingdom. Examining her early life, training and early career give an insight into the reason of her choice in the field of creative dance. Thereafter her career combined with her ideologies accelerated with various purposes and opportunities. "From the Heart" portrays pain and its experience and brings her to the fore as a Bharatanāṭyam artist with an imaginative force. Her case study also features how her interest lies in expressing truly of what is felt with the circumstances around. With her perception of art as a boundary less medium to express oneself, Anusha designed and choreographed the dance piece 'From the Heart'. This characteristic of hers, also defines her experimental creations with various other projects combined with creative activities in spaces like Museums, Public malls, Railway stations, and Gardens etc.

Being a second generation artist seeing a promising future in the field of art in Diaspora, Anusha has created a mark for her own self with Bharatanāṭyam as therapy, medium of expression of her experiences in all her works. Her urge to express is the source of her creative drive.

4.6. Case Study 5 - Shobana Jeyasingh:

Shobana Jeyasingh is a pioneer in the British Bharatanāṭyam dance scenario. Her area of performance interrogates Bharatanāṭyam and modern dance. Jeyasingh was among the first choreographers to deconstruct what she calls “rule-bound dance” and Shobana Jeyasingh has been recognized internationally for the past twenty years “with her dynamic, fearless, and enigmatic choreography.

Early Life:

Shobana Jeyasingh’s life journey traversed India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia. Her Bharatanāṭyam training begun at early age during the 1980s and led her to continue her further studies in English literature in the Britain.

As stated by Shobana in her website *“A single idea of Indianness was very restrictive. From the outset, this remarkably thoughtful and intellectual artist wanted audiences not to respond, to dance as a cultural phenomenon but rather as a dance phenomenon”*⁶⁴.

Career in the United Kingdom:

Shobana Jeyasingh established her Dance Company in 1988. Her company took its place as one of the world’s leading companies. As an artistic director and also choreographer she produced various dance productions and toured internationally.

Shobana Jeyasingh achieved excellence in her choreographic works with an aspect of women empowerment in the field of dance through Bharatanāṭyam and Contemporary styles.

⁶⁴ Available at <http://www.shobanajeyasingh.co.uk/>

The company's vision is to dwell on the society's thoughts in unique ways. Featuring the daily life experiences of different cultures present around, avoiding the usual and stereotypes is seen in Shobana's experimental choreography.

Shobana creates new definitions to target new audiences to enable a sense of delight and challenge. Her powerful presentation with a precise content output allows her to be dynamic in her craft with a sophisticated approach.

Shobana Jeyasingh stands as an important example in various cultural conferences and debates. She connects differences to create an artistic meaning and collaborates with a wide range of possibilities to bring better value to her work.

Nature of Shobana's experimental works:

Shobana has collaborated with various musicians and artists and has pioneered in her branch of art. Shobana's company has produced many productions and projects including Michael Nyman's String Quartet No. 2 to the contemporary artist Kevin Volans.

Shobana Jeyasingh's dance has shades of imagination, innovation to propagate in schools and wider communities. The spirit of her projects resonates with women's empowerment, inspiring and motivating young people at all study levels. Body movement is the prime factor which describes Shobana's style of dance. Her definition of expressing an emotion is related to the psychology of the body movement and she defines it as *rasa*. The output comprises emotion and depth which can be traced by the psychology of one's body movements.

The body movement which is common in the choreography style of Chandralekha in India is observed in the style of Shobana's choreography in the United Kingdom. Shobana Jeyasingh's abstract dance has made pioneering contributions to innovative choreography in Contemporary Indian Dance. Trained initially in Bharatanāṭyam, Jeyasingh created a signature style that she described as movement as a way of expression with an urge. This defines the nature of her dance vocabulary⁶⁵.

Shobana's opinion about innovation and modifications in a dance form is possible with a deep understanding of fundamentals. To make any significant changes one has to have a deep understanding of the underlining structure. She seeks to have her own dance idiom with an idea of India as rooted in timelessness, unable to change or keep pace with modernity whether in dance or in lifestyle.

Shobana Jeyasingh excels in translating abstract into meaningful content. Her dance company auditions many multi ethnic professionals for her creative work. Her co-artists are from countries like Britain, Malaysia, The United States and Europe. Shobana's company aims to work with diverse cultures to enrich the innovative and collaborative work ranging from film artists, theatre artists, multimedia artists, musicians and designers. Her boldness in experimenting and collaborating led her art to reach wider horizons. Shobana worked with Ilayaraja - South Indian film composer and Ramamani – musician based from Bangalore school of percussion. Her company is a recipient of prestigious Prudential Award and was telecast in BBC's documentary called "In-Between".

⁶⁵ Ketu H. Katrak. *Contemporary Indian Dance: New Creative Choreography in India and the Diaspora*. Published by Palgrave Macmillan, 2011: 58-59.

Shobana's performances from specific sites like Greenwich Borough Hall was telecast live in India. Few of her prominent original projects are Polar Sequences for Random Dance, Triptych for Canasia Festival, Canada, City-Zen for City Contemporary Dance Company, Hong Kong among others.

Shobana's published writings, papers, panel presentations and interviews broadcast make a major contribution to Bharatanāṭyam and the contemporary dance field in the United Kingdom. Her vision lies in numerous choreograph techniques of Indian and West. The secret of her company's success is to extract the creative potential of each individual and design the movement to reach widely. Such projects are presented with Hestia Housing and Support, the mental health charity Mind and East London Dance as well as numerous United Kingdom schools and colleges. The Mulberry School for Girls in Tower Hamlets has a long association with Shobana's dance company.

Productions & Artistic Creations:

Shobana Jeyasingh has been creating dance works for twenty seven years. Prominent venues like theatres, outdoor and indoor auditoriums have presented the creative works of Shobana. Her philosophy of dance has a combination of intellect and physical strength. All her experimental works are featured with the music originally composed by eminent artists like Michael Nyman to Beat Boxer Shlomo.

Her achievements as a dance pioneer include:

Theatre:

Configurations	-	2012
Dev Kahan Hai?	-	2012

Bruise Blood	-	2010
Just Add Water?	-	2009
Fault line	-	2007
Exit No Exit	-	2006
Transtep	-	2005
Flicker	-	2005
Interland	-	2002
Phantasmaton	-	2002
Web	-	2001
Surface Tension	-	2000
Fine Frenzy	-	1999
Intertense	-	1998
Astral Shadows	-	1997
Palimpsest	-	1996
Raid	-	1995
Romance with Footnotes	-	1993
Making of Maps	-	1992
Speaking of Sakti	-	1991
Late	-	1991
Byzantium	-	1991
Correspondences	-	1990
Configurations	-	1988
Studio Theatre Works:		
The Dancer's Cut	-	2007
Memory and Other Props	-	1999

The Bird and the Wind	-	1996
Delicious Arbour	-	1993
Defile	-	1989

Festivals & Site Specific Work:

- TooMortal 2012 Dance Umbrella, Venice Biennale, Dansens Hus Stockholm, BITEF Belgrade, London 2012 Festival
- Counterpoint 2012 Somerset House and English National Ballet for Big Dance 2010
- 2Step 2008 City of London Festival for Steps of St Paul s Cathedral
- 4Squares 2004 Mayor of London for Diwali in London in Trafalgar Square
- Foliage Chorus 2004 Arts Depot, London
- Cafe Event 2003 Waterman s Arts Centre
- Curve Chameleon 2003 Greater London Assembly

Film & TV

- Counterpoint 2010 Broadcast in 3D by Sky Arts
- Raid 1995 Broadcast by BBC
- Duets with Automobiles 1993 Commissioned by Arts Council England and BBC Commissions
- Detritus 2009 Beijing Dance Academy
- Breach 2008 Ballet Black
- City:zen 2006 Hong Kong co-choreography with Mui CheUnited Kingdom –yin
- Pop Idle 2005 Richochet Dance Company Move Me Dance Booth
- Debris 2004 Anurekha Ghosh Dance Company
- Triptych Self 2003 Canasia Dance Festival, Canada

- Neon Dream 2003 Sonia Sabri Dance Company
- Polar Sequences 2003 Random Dance Company
- Curve Twist Gaze 2002 Sonia Sabri Dance Company

University & College Commissions

- Re: Mix 2009 Laban CAT
- Body Talk 2008 MapDance, University of Chichester
- Sibuya 2007 London Studio Centre
- Taxon 2007 Middlesex University
- Counterfeit 2006 Northern Contemporary Dance School
- Skin Deep 2005 London Contemporary Dance School

Awards and Achievements (1988 till 2012):

- An honorary doctorate from University of Chichester
- An honorary MA from Surrey University
- An honorary doctorate from De Montfort University Leicester
- In 2012 she was nominated Best Independent Company by the Critics' Circle National Dance Awards.
- Shobana is a Research Associate at ResCen, the Centre for Research in Creation in the Performing Arts at Middlesex University.

2012

- TooMortal, a site-specific work for historic churches, premieres at Venice Biennale and presented by Dance Umbrella as part of the Olympic's London 2012 Festival.

- Company nominated Best Independent Company in Critics' Circle National Dance Awards

2010

- Company tour India for the first time in its 22-year history
- Counterpoint commissioned by London's Somerset House and English National Ballet, performed by 20 dancers in the historic fountain courtyard and broadcast on TV by Sky Arts

2009

- Faultline added to United Kingdom GCSE dance syllabus

2008

- Shobana named Asian Women of Achievement Awards for her contribution to arts in the United Kingdom

2004

- Shobana awarded a NESTA Dream Time Fellowship to visit China and Japan

2002

- Dance Umbrella commissions *Interland*, the first live dance webcast between United Kingdom and India

1996

- Palimpsest nominated for South Bank Show Award
- Time Out Best Choreography Award for Palimpsest

1995

- Shobana Jeyasingh was awarded an MBE (The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) for services to dance, an honorary MA from Surrey University and an honorary doctorate from De Montfort University, Leicester

1993

- Arts Council Women in the Arts Award and The Prudential Award for Dance together with the £100,000 Prudential Premier Award for the Arts

1992

- Time Out Best Choreography Award for *Making of Maps*

1990

- Digital Dance Award for *Speaking of Sakti*, choreographed by Chandralekha to music by W Subrahmanyam

1988

- Digital Dance Award for Miniatures (a precursor to Configurations), choreographed by Shobana Jeyasingh to music by Michael Nyman She is the recipient of many awards including two Time Out Dance Awards, three Digital Dance awards, and MBE (1995) for service to dance, an honorary MA from Surrey University and an honorary doctorate from De Montfort University, Leicester, an institution that fosters teaching of Contemporary Dance. In May 2008 she was named as Asian Woman of Achievement for her contribution to the arts in Britain⁶⁶.

⁶⁶ Available at <http://www.shobanajeyasingh.co.uk> United Kingdom /

4.6.1. Making of Maps:

4.6.1.1. Introduction:

Shobana Jeyasingh's work "Making of Maps" is rooted in her experiences as a British Asian and explores the conflicts between diverse personal and cultural origins. Her style of choreography draws with elements of Bharatanāṭyam, contemporary, ethnic dance forms and Ballet brings out various sources for her craft.

The way of life today is the core aspect seen in Shobana Jeyasingh's choreography of "making of maps". Her work in this production portrays the issues of today's everyday life like cultural identity, change in technology, vast traditional boundaries. It addresses the present issues of dance and yet stimulates the peoples thinking in order to connect themselves with the world around.

Shobana Jeyasingh's "Making of Maps" has been chosen in this thesis for analysis, as she has the nature of blending and experimenting with Bharatanāṭyam vocabulary, abstract movements, and western music and also bounded with an intellectual concept resulting with tinge of newness in the whole presentation.

Credits:

Choreographer	:	Shobana Jeyasingh
Composer	:	Alistair MacDonald and R.A. Ramamani
Dancers	:	Monisha Patil Bharadwaj Jeyaverni Jeganathan Subathra Shekhar Savitha Shekhar Vidya Thirunarayan
Set Design	:	Andrea Blotkamp

Stage Lighting Design	:	Mike Seignior
Costume Design	:	The Company costume makers-Victoria Baker and Rosie Bower
Set Construction	:	Conor Murphy
Video Production	:	Ginnie Wollaston
Production Assistant	:	Suzanne McLaughlin
Sound Recordist	:	Tim Watts
Boom Operator	:	Tom Barwood
T.V. Lighting Director	:	Keith Osborene
ON Line Editor	:	Kate Spankle
Cameraman	:	Ludovic de Marillac
Line Producer	:	Tana Lester
Directed and Produced	:	Peter Mumford

The video enclosed for the discussion and analysis of “Making of Maps” is a footage taken for ‘A Dance lines T.V production 1993, funded by the foundation for sport and the Arts’.

Shobana Jeyasing’s production Making of Maps is all about the pure dance and its meaning rather than literal word translation. The inspiration of Making of Maps was “Mappa Mundi” map drawn in relation to the facts in the medieval times. The resemblance of Mappa Mundi’s map which had a very primitive structure with less accuracy and the relation of Jeyasingh’s identity with many countries in her upbringing suggests the reason of her inspiration.



4.6.1.1.1. Map of Mappa Mundi

For the medieval man who actually drew this map the centre of history was his faith, and so the temple of Jerusalem is the middle of the map. Everything else that he knew about the world is in relation to the centre. Shobana thought that it would be interesting to see, if she could make a geographically and spiritually accurate map from the view point of an Indian Bharatanāṭyam dancer in Britain and that's how the piece started.

In this production Shobana focused on making the audience feel the journey of her creative effort. The journey with different dimensions of likes and dislikes, one's comforts and discomforts and even or uneven harmonious perceptions. The sense of journey emphasises the movement dynamics to the audience. Shobana says *"The roots of Bharatanāṭyam goes back many thousands of years; it's very difficult with the dance form to know exactly how it was danced thousands of years ago. Because the dance itself is a dynamic art form, Bharatanāṭyam is the tenacity which has actually changed. During the British Empire the dancers were actually banned from dancing. So this part of Bharatanāṭyam actually is extremely modern"*.

Shobana draws a connection of how Bharatanāṭyam takes a position in the contemporary setting with its respective objectives like quality in technique and language to go beyond the cultural roots. Along with this observation she states how Bharatanāṭyam is assumed in the United Kingdom to be a dance form which cannot go beyond its cultural roots.

In this production Making of Maps, Shobana depicts as a choreographer the immense freedom in Bharatanāṭyam with geometrical graphs. She describes the dynamics as a straightline body with an uplifted torso, gradually arriving to Ballet posture which is called Demi pair position. The common postures of Bharatanāṭyam and Ballet used in Making of Maps are pure objective patterns that use the space with an intention of not completely belonging to anyone.

Bharatanāṭyam hand gestures used in this work are mainly to enhance the whole dancing frame with inclusion of non-specification of its true meaning. Shobana says *"when westerners watches any form of Indian dance, they give a very undue of*

importance to the hands, because it's something that seems very strange and exotic, because one does want to really see it".

According to Shobana, the meaning of the hand gestures not importantly mean the same in all the contexts. She widely designates through various elements of Bharatanāṭyam and its nuances to match appropriately for her creative vision.

4.6.1.2. Music and dance in Making of Maps:

Music and dance in this work is conceived with a great amount of co-ordination with the musicians Alistair MacDonald and Ramamani. Experiences and vision by the choreographer and the musicians has been narrated below to bring out the understanding of the creative construction.

Below stated content is the conversation between the Choreographer Shobana Jeyasingh and music composer Alistair MacDonald.

Alistair MacDonald:

The music composer Alistair MacDonald says – When Shobana first approached him to write the music for making of maps, the idea she had was visual, she has imagined being an Indian person in London, what happens when we look at the window, what things do you see and what sounds we hear, how could one create sounds shaped and how could one create a map perhaps in sound? She also wanted to use music of Ramamani a Carnatic vocalist in India. She knew that before they started, one of the problems that they had was how to incorporate music. He then started to find sounds that translated into a sort of soundscape. The sounds which are very straight, people talking in shops then loud sounds of Indian music. A fragment of the recorded version of Ramamani music during rehearsal time was used to create a sense. The

musicians were present in the soundscape. When the music happened it wasn't surprising.

Shobana:

Music for 'Making of Maps' was actually given to two different composers, because she realized early that one composer was really not enough to do the music for this piece, because in a way it has to travel from Britain to India and back.

Alistair:

He worked on various rhythmic patterns based on R.A. Ramamani's music. The music material flows rather than being tied to some sort of beat in between those two extremes. As we watch the dance, this strengthens the idea because of dancer's rhythm. But the piece overall is structured into sections which alternates between very rhythmic and very energetic flowing in between something which is much more metrical.

Shobana:

Traditionally, Indian dance and Indian music relate in a very organic and structured way, in that after the logic of the dance is very much influenced by the logic of the music that is how it is traditional with Alistair. It was a sort of relationship that is complete and because the brief she gave it to Alistair was in fact to listen to the sounds around him like an Indian, but for him this was very difficult, because he is not an Indian. He had to actually compose all these sounds, the sounds of train, the sounds of church bells, and sounds of people walking on pavement and also stretches of Indian film songs, so it's all a kind to create an audio of British Indian culture.

Alistair:

The link between the music and dance is to do a quality of gesture and phrase, rather than always being tied beat by beat to the dancer's feet.

Shobana:

With Ramamani, music was supposed to be very different, because Indian classical music being what it is has to actually follow a very particular principle of composition. So the rhythm structure of the whole piece had to be set before by Shobana and the composer, because one of the features of the way traditionally an Indian choreographer works with Indian music is that the choreographer also has to take part in composing, they have to set the rhythm pattern.

The choreographer is present in the decision process, Shobana thinks that is one of the big difference between how choreographers work in the west with western contemporary dance and how Indian dance choreographers work. An Indian dance choreographer really wants to be part of all the decisions that composer makes. The choreographer has to be there in some ways choosing and making those very important creative decisions.

Alistair:

With technology, one is limited to the system of musical hierarchies. Western harmonic or Indian Rāga, Tāla can create whatever musical gestures one likes through using any sound and being able to find sounds and using them. He says, technology is not culturally specific; one doesn't limit the rules and regulations in work process, so it's quite interesting to be able to do music and sounds from different cultures in one soundscape.

4.6.1.3. Analysis of choreography:

The dance piece begins with a formation of circle, where the dancers enter the stage with a rhythm pattern of 44 beats. The beats are demonstrated not by the musical instruments but intellectually portrayed with just the dancer's memory. This formation draws an inward movement into the stage and then leads to the first sweep which brings the dancers right into the centre and then the third sweep gradually takes them off the stage.



4.6.1.3.1. Dance movements at different levels

Most of the dance movements in this work travel with the time signature, which is called 'Takadimi' in Bharatanāṭyam for four beats with different speeds. The group

dancer's coordination gradually moved in duos and solos. This section came together in a strong dance sentence with the four beat patterns 'Takadimi' and portrays a movement where the dancers roll on the floor which is unconventional in Bharatanāṭyam. The creative movements consist of various geometrical graphs with an interaction with eye contact.



4.6.1.3.2. Duos movements on the floor



4.6.1.3.3. Solo dance movements on the floor

The music culminates with sections of improvisations with violin, voice and flute. The rāga Keeravani which added life to the rhythm of drum beats is performed. Shobana used mostly Bharatanāṭyam movements along with contemporary ones to bring out her vision of Indo British understanding. She has chosen the dancers who are well trained in Bharatanāṭyam and other techniques as well. The expression of Shobana's choreography portrays the abrupt sounds and melodies to resemble her perception of connections with India and London.

The costumes designed for this work are with a combination of Indian contemporary styles. The frilled bottom which depicts a Dhōti and a pleated fabric with a T-shirt and a traditional accessory to cover the waist brings the tinge of both classical

and contemporary styles. The knotted hair style with subdued make up suited the concept. ('Making of Maps' video enclosed, see appendix - 5)

Chitra Sundaram an eminent Bharatanāṭyam dancer in the United Kingdom comments on Making of Maps put it “it makes you feel that you have unlocked the mind of the choreographer and that is exciting.”⁶⁷ Familiarising the unfamiliar and appearing on the ever-present TV screen, the film medium offers to de-mystify and de-exoticise South Asian dance. More importantly, it can take South Asian dance to the audience-an alternative to waiting for the audience to come to it. And in doing this, film holds a vital key to opening up South Asian dance to far wider viewing in the United Kingdom than it has experienced to date.

4.6.2. Conclusion:

The following are the major components of Shobana Jeyasingh's contribution to Bharatanāṭyam to create her own mark in Contemporary style in the United Kingdom.

- **Shobana Jeyasingh used Bharatanāṭyam technique to express her multicultural background to create her own contemporary dance style.**
- **Shobana Jeyasingh imbibed the symmetrical dance postures and hand gestures of Bharatanāṭyam to create a new meaning of her vision.**
- **Shobana Jeyasingh portrayed many diversified techniques in her experimental works and Bharatanāṭyam is purely used for the purpose of dance vocabulary rather than as a medium of cultural identity. However**

⁶⁷ Anita Dawood Nasar. Filming into the mainstream. Pulse Spring, 2002: 14.

Shobana Jeyasingh played a vital role in positioning Bharatanāṭyam in a larger picture in the art spectrum in the Diaspora in the United Kingdom.

Shobana Jeyasingh's 'Making of Maps' has been chosen for the analysis mainly to discuss the relevance of her multinational upbringing. Through Bharatanāṭyam she created her own image in the contemporary style with a combination of technology, which is a salient feature in her production 'Making of Maps'. Shobana Jeyasingh's multinational back ground and international stature moved her voyage of Bharatanāṭyam to contemporary dance with abstract themes yet retaining Bharatanāṭyam vocabulary, Bharatanāṭyam technique and Bharatanāṭyam terminology.

Chapter - 5

Conclusion

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

ōm pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidaṁ pūrṇamudacyatē

pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamēvāvaśiṣyatē ॥

ōm śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ॥

(Īśōpaniṣat, Opening Verse)

As this verse indicates, everything new, everything complete, every change, every stylistic variation, every path emanates from the art itself and merges back into it. This is what is found as an inference from this study.

This thesis is an endeavour to explore study, understand, analyse and draw inferences from Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United Kingdom. The methods used to investigate this research topic drawn upon observations, interviews, case studies and interactions. Chapters are marked based on the initial process, evolving trends and the material available and collected. The analysis identifies various processes, which have become more open-ended, cut-across by concerns such as ethnicity, race and renaming.

5.1. Importance of the Thesis statement:

In the contemporary world any artist who is trained in an Indian art form in India looks out for an opportunity not only to perform, express, or communicate with-in the soil of the homeland, but also a desire to deepen their understanding of classicism

and traditions outside India. This implies a need to witness the transition and analogy in the study and practice of Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora.

United Kingdom is one of the core regions in art appreciation, which identifies the need and importance of encouraging art as a strong medium for the nation's development. The research work focused on the United Kingdom as area of study and specifies the transformation of art and its influence on the cultural fabric of the nation.

5.2. The salient findings:

This thesis defines and reviews - approaches to practice, performance and perception with regard to Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United Kingdom. It identifies these approaches through critical analysis as areas, where academic contribution can be made and aims to provide proposed explanations for the areas of study chosen. The thesis deliberates upon and also explains in sufficient detail the work under taken in the United Kingdom with Bharatanāṭyam as a prominent medium and feature in the art and artists scenario in Diaspora. This research work is a monograph which sets itself out as a source of knowledge and information that is consistent and arched by a coherent narrative. The research work involves a combination of artists work, study, appropriate methodology, analysis, experimental design, data collection and the drawing of conclusions. These create the outlines of possibilities for future research directions.

Chapter one sums up the purpose of the thesis “Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora, under the scope of The United Kingdom”. It begins with a research question, i.e., to develop insight into a global view with a specific purpose using an empirical methodology, which was a complementary feature for this research work. The analysis

and research has greater significance because of the appropriate methodology employed of using interactions, data collection from libraries, interviews and observations in the field of performing arts.

The chapter two traces the journey of the art form Sadir to present-day Bharatanāṭyam with illustrations and analogies of the transition that took place during this journey. It also revealed the etymological meaning of the term Diaspora and located the dance form Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora. The chapter also identified a brief explanation about the Oriental fascination of East and West cultural exchange. It adds to the narratives of how Indian artists contributed in using Indian classical dance forms as one of the features of their creations. It further revealed the emergence of the name South Asian Dance for Bharatanāṭyam. The contribution of the Institutions and Organizations in shaping the art form is revealed, and role of the strategic need to satisfy the funding conditions in the United Kingdom.

Chapter three focused on ethnicity and its impact on Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora. The urge to retain ethnicity and yet match or relate to the contemporary situation in Diaspora makes for a cross cultural innovation, resulting in various experiments among the existing and upcoming artists in the United Kingdom. Further, the study identifies some artists and their work in the United Kingdom, and analyses a set of dance works which incorporated the spirit of Indian art in combination with creativity and innovation using Bharatanāṭyam as a main tool. It also throws light on important dimensions related to tradition, education, therapy, and creative/contemporary work in Diaspora. This is aided with illustrations of eminent dancers like Dhananjayan's to portray the blending of Indian dance with global reach.

The chapter four that includes various artists' works as case studies is a major part of the thesis. The case studies of Pushkala Gopal, Shanta Rao, Bisakha Sarker, Anusha Subramanyam and Shobana Jeyasingh draw a clear understanding of specialization in Bharatanāṭyam with relevance to their respective potential and contextual requirements. Their work resulted in making a mark with remarkable contributions in Diaspora.

Pushkala Gopal's specialization in Bharatanāṭyam focuses on passing on traditional values to the younger generation with consistency and excellence. Her way of channeling tradition has become her identity in the scene of Diaspora. Shanta Rao extended her knowledge and understanding in Bharatanāṭyam to various groups of educational institutions, communities with a challenging approach and use of narratives. This quality of hers helped to create her identity with excellence. Bisakha Sarker's enduring contribution to the world of art as an artist adept in Creative dance, Manipuri and Bharatanāṭyam. Her work has had a great impact in the United Kingdom which reveals the depth of her intense creative impulse. Her work demonstrates her command on her craft which shows a great sense of effortlessness and spontaneity. Her work identity is recognized not only in real life but also in the digital world. Anusha Subramanyam through her creative talent in Bharatanāṭyam and proposals engages in dialogue and breaks stereotypes or perceptions for all audiences. This naturally became her central entry point in the cultural scenario in Diaspora. Her expressions with element of art and culture in combination with Bharatanāṭyam and contemporary movements manage to change national stereotypes in the eyes of public, spreads a new message by transforming pain into joy. Shobana Jeyasingh's approach is innovative and experimental with the combination of Bharatanāṭyam vocabulary and

contemporary styles. Her technique of using dominating contemporary movements with subtle Bharatanāṭyam terminology emphasising, connecting the abstract to a meaningful storyline constitutes a significant contribution.

The core of the thesis carries the art form Bharatanāṭyam as a spirit from general to specific and gradually specific to general. This aspect implies that an Indian art form takes a prominent role in Diaspora with a relevance to the context and therefore takes the shape of universal approach with a specific study.

The order of structuring the case studies brings out a picture of the artist's craft from origin, tradition, education, communities, therapy and contemporary movement, all with a common passion and soul.

The hypothesis formulates the basic study and the kind of research aspects involved to analyse Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora under the scope of the United Kingdom. The structure of the chapter sequence brings a gradual understanding to study and analyse the works of different Bharatanāṭyam artists and their craft. Therefore the hypothesis gets relevance with the research outcome.

5.3. Future scope:

The main findings in the research work related to Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora create a ground to discover all that is worthwhile in connection with it. The tradition of practicing Bharatanāṭyam began with a spirit of Vēda-s and Śāstra-s and became channeled into a particular form of expression resulting in the expression of spirit through many artists' own customized ways. The research work describes the contribution by different artists in the field of Bharatanāṭyam in Diaspora in the United

Kingdom, states their findings and challenges and therefore the significant results that encapsulate the common understandings about the art field.

The need to serve or cater to a given purpose and context opens up the possibility of rediscovering one's potential in a creative format. This has led to the shaping of individual creative identities as artists.

This thesis has made an earnest endeavour to study the trends, influence and impact in Bharatanāṭyam, during the period 1970 to 2012 mainly by studying major artists and their contributions and their ability to expand the circumference of Bharatanāṭyam to embrace other human activities.

However, the scope of this thesis excluded many younger generation Bharatanāṭyam dancers who were contributing to the field with their creativity and innovation. Future studies may throw light on these areas.

As an artist there is a tremendous social responsibility not to create an evil impact on human mind, the appreciation of art begins with a quality of appreciating anything beautiful. Art conceived for social welfare or self-expression is subjective, but the artist's journey is always connected with the audience in whatever, wherever and however forms it is presented.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX - 1

Format of the questionnaire used for the interviews

I. Personal Details :

- 1) Name of the artist :
- 2) Name of the Gurus/Institution you are trained :
- 3) Academic qualifications :
- 4) Do you perform only Bharatanatyam or any other dance form :
- 5) Under which Bhani (style) you are trained? Are you still doing the same style?
- 6) Since how many years you have been performing in the United Kingdom?

II. Professional Details:

A) Teaching:

- 1) Do you run any institution or do you work for any organization, please share your experiences regarding the institution / organization and its establishment. :
 - Date of establishment:
 - Place of establishment:
 - No. of students trained in your institution till date:
 - Presently how many students are enrolled:
- 2) Do you have any foreign students?
 - If so, what do they feel about Indian art? :
 - What is their perspective towards the classical dance Bharatanatyam?

- How do they treat classical dance Bharatanatyam? (as an art, culture or religion), briefly elaborate their view :

- 3) How frequently do you take / have dance classes?
- 4) Do you teach the traditional Items?
- 5) How do you feel teaching Bharatanatyam in United Kingdom when compared with India?
- 6) What are the challenges you deal with as a teacher?
- 7) Which syllabus do you follow in your institution? Is there a set syllabus?
- 8) How serious do the students feel learning classical dance?

B) Performances:

- 1) What kind of performances you prefer? Bharatanatyam, Fusion, Contemporary or Creative dance?
- 2) How frequently do you give performances?
- 3) What kind of music you choose for your performances? Live, recorded, both or do you sing?
- 4) Do you perform with live orchestra / pre-recorded version?
- 5) When you are performing for British audience, what kind of items do you choose? How do you present Bharatanatyam to make them understand our culture better?
- 6) How do you feel performing Bharatanatyam in United Kingdom? What differences you experience when compared with India?
- 7) What are the challenges you deal with as a performer?
- 8) Do you give the equal importance to the Nritta (technique) and Abhinaya?
- 9) Do you invite guest artists from India or other places; if so how frequent does it happen?
- 10) Why do you invite guest artists from India?
- 11) Do you think dancers here get the same invitation / reception in India?
- 12) What is the media you prefer for advertising your programmes?

- 13) How do you design your brochure? Do you prefer the brochure with synopsis or without for presenting a program?

III. Creative Works:

- 1) What are the solo items choreographed by you? Briefly elaborate:
- 2) What are the dance dramas choreographed by you? Briefly elaborate:
- 3) Choreography is a part of Communication, How do you communicate with the audience through your choreography?
- 4) Is it challenging to create new works in classical dance in United Kingdom to better understand the British audience? If so, explain what kind of challenges you are facing to give better performances?
- 5) Is there any influence of western dance on Bharatanatyam in Diaspora (United Kingdom)? If so, please explain? For example, do you speak English sentences in the middle of an item...

IV. Perception:

- 1) How do you feel the perception of the audience in United Kingdom towards the practice, teaching & performance? Do you feel any difference when compared with Indian audience? If so, specify the reason.
- 2) As audience who do you think are the better –from different viewpoints: understanding, appreciation, criticism, reviews, offering chances etc., Indians / British? Please explain briefly:
- 3) Do you conduct any workshops in schools? If so briefly explain your experience and the response from the students?
- 4) Are there any special organizations that offer funds to present Indian dance programs? If so, please specify the names?
- 5) In order to be part of the native British public arena, Bharatanatyam had to undergo massive changes in the music, Aaharyam (costume, ornaments), vocabulary, stage crafts and the themes which help in fulfilling the interest of not only Indian audience, but also attract a wider South Asian and British

audience? If you agree with this, can you please share your experience in this aspect?

- 6) What is your opinion on the existence of Bharatanatyam in Diaspora?
- 7) What is your objective behind imparting dance to the Diaspora in United Kingdom?
- 8) What is your advice for the young aspiring artists?

V. Any other comments you want to make regarding Bharatanatyam Dancers in Diaspora, in general and under the scope of United Kingdom?

APPENDIX - 2

Dhananjayan's interview - An overview

V.P Dhananjayan & Shanta Dhananjayan also known as the Dhananjayans is a legendary Bharatanāṭyam dancing couple of India. The Dhananjayans left Kalakshetra in 1968 to build a career on their own. With their particular emphasis on imparting Indian tradition and culture to their Bharatanāṭyam students, they started their own dance school “Bharatakalanjali” in 1968 in Adyar, Chennai. People used to call it as mini Kalakshetra with the teaching method, syllabus and the life inspired by Kalakshetra. Interview video CD of this interview is enclosed.

Dhananjayan's views on modernization:

- Issues of Innovation & tradition within the classical dance styles in Diaspora:
He speaks about his disagreement with the oft-heard argument that traditional Bharatanāṭyam is boring. He says “I have never found that I have to create ‘new items’ to attract crowd. The charm and beauty of a system such as Bharatanāṭyam is that there is constant change and innovation within its tradition that forms a natural and integral change as it is disseminated otherwise it would die.”
- Kalakshetra and its place in world:
He says until Kalakshetra style had not been established outside, it remained in the four walls of Kalakshetra, with little external exposure. People used to have a wrong idea that Kalakshetra style was very stiff and wasn't very prevalent. People had a lot of prejudice and had the idea that Kalakshetra is only a dance drama institution but not a repertoire oriented Bharatanāṭyam institution. It was

a step taken by Dhananjayans by performing outside to give an exposure to people about what Kalakshetra is!

He says they are the pioneers in establishing and bringing out the Kalakshetra methods of teaching and performances. Until then there were not many people performing. One dancer he quotes is Yamini Krishnamurthi, but she never recognized Kalakshetra as her institution, though she studied in Kalakshetra.

- Dhananjayans and their performance:

The Dhananjayans (Bharatakalanjali) first tour to South East Asian countries was in 1970. Before that they had travelled to Australia, Singapore, and Malaysia as part of Kalakshetra. Kalakshetra's first foreign trip to Singapore and Malaysia was in 1966. Those days Kalakshetra had not been trying for foreign tours or propagating the Kalakshetra style. In 1966 they were invited by the Government of India to the Adelaide festival, they participated as a Kalakshetra troupe but the performances were all group dance drama and variety shows not focused on solo repertoire.

It was the Dhananjayans (Pioneers) as pioneers who propagated Kalakshetra as it is. Due to them people started understanding what the real quality of the Kalakshetra technique is. They become the pioneers in that during 1970s.

In 1973 they got an invitation from Theatre "De Lavi" in Paris, which is a very big international festival. They performed repertoire oriented Bharatanāṭyam which really caught the eyes of the connoisseurs who started understanding how to distinguish the better technique of Kalakshetra.

In 1976 the Dhananjayans went to the United Kingdom as Bharatanāṭyam performing couple to present a repertoire. Until then the United Kingdom thought of Bharatanāṭyam as being only for female performers. Balasaraswathi and a few other dancers performances had given the impression that the art form belongs only to female or dēvadāsis. Also, institutional training was not known at that time in the United Kingdom.

The Dhananjayans then sent Pushkala Gopal to the United Kingdom for training on a British Council scholarship. She started teaching Bharatanāṭyam in a small scale and connected with the London Academy of Indian arts. Through that, the Dhananjayans went to the United Kingdom and performed Bharatanāṭyam repertoire oriented performances, which were of 3 hours duration and conducted workshops extensively. That was a big revolution for the United Kingdom people. There were many reviews about a male performing Bharatanāṭyam on the stage. He says Udayshankar & Ram Gopal represented Oriental dance but not Bharatanāṭyam in Europe. It was Pushkala Gopal who started teaching traditional Bharatanāṭyam in the United Kingdom.

There after the United Kingdom audience had an exposure to the fact that Bharatanāṭyam is very technically oriented, it has all the aspects of both male and female techniques, and that it encompasses not just dance drama oriented but repertoire oriented performances also. Uday Shankar did dance dramas mostly in a nice theatrical setup and not just pure dance. Ram Gopal did Oriental dance but not repertoire oriented performances. Dhananjayans confirms that what Ram Gopal did was one Bharatanāṭyam Alārīppu, with other items being Oriental with exotic costumes of Siam, Indonesia, and mixed attire. However, he established an Indian male dancer technique.

Later on couple of other young dancers went and started performing in the United Kingdom. Still people used to think of Bharatanāṭyam as mainly a solo dance not meant for group. Here, where Pushkala convinced the London Academy of Indian arts to produce a group performance using the local artists (locally trained), resulting in the Jungle book. They did not want Krishna or Rama oriented stories all the time and thought of doing a contemporary theme. The United Kingdom audiences were under the wrong notion that Indian dancers can't do anything with Contemporary themes. The Dhananjayans came into the limelight with the idea of Jungle Book, which is set in India and propagated in the western countries, because of Rudyard Kipling's stories. Rudyard Kipling commented in his books that "East is East West is West, never the twain shall meet", but the Dhananjayans wanted to take a challenge to negate this. After many deliberations with the Akademi, Pushkala assigned Dhananjayan's to do Jungle book. In Jungle book they wanted to bring all Indian classical styles ("Bhāratanaṭyaṁ"- Bharatanāṭyam, Kathak, Kathakālī, Odissi, Mōhinīaṭṭam and Maṇipūrī) together. Dancers from these styles were in London and because it was funded by the British Council, the theme was contemporary and the technique was 'Bhāratam'. They wanted to involve all Bhāratīyas, those who are practitioners of 'Bhāratanaṭyaṁ'. The Dhananjayans say 'Bhāratanaṭyaṁ' is a comprehensive term for all Nāṭyaśāstra - based styles like Bharatanāṭyam, Kathak, Kathakālī, Odissi, Mōhinīaṭṭam and Maṇipūrī.

With much of careful planning about the production and choreography of Mowgli, the Dhananjayans evolved according to the characters involved. Their movement envisaged the whole choreography, and they presented the Adventure of Mowgli to many accolades. Dhananjayan says that apart from Uday Shankar's Oriental

dance drama style, Mowgli was the first dance drama in the United Kingdom that did not compromise on the technique and with maintained the identity of the dance styles. That was the beauty of this production. People could see every single style as it is, yet they all merged together as one single technique as ‘Bhāratīya-s’. It was a thematic group production/dance drama/ballet. Jungle book – The Adventure of Mowgli became a hit and dancers in the United Kingdom (Indian dancers) understood and realized that with technique they could do group productions comparable to western ballet. In fact critics in their reviews appreciated this as being equivalent to western ballet. The special feature for this appreciation was because of facial expressions where as in ballet physical structure is emphasized. This is one unique feature of Indian Classical dances in comparison with Western ballet. So that is how London opened up for Indian Classical arts, as it was a big revolution for the European community.

Mowgli production went on for three seasons with almost 299 performances. The Dhanajayans had to train the local artists and mentor them. Out of this group emerged some of today’s prominent artists like Shobana Jeyasingh – a Bharatanāṭyam dancer, who was trained for this production and Prathap Pawar – a Kathak teacher in Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan. Prathap played the character of tiger (Sher Khan), with a usage of Kathak rhythm technique for the character. Dhananjayan’s son Satyajith did the role of little Mowgli. Akram Khan who was about seven then, was selected in an audition to be the other little Mowgli since there was a law in the United Kingdom, that a child couldn’t do more than two shows a week. Adult Mowgli was played by Dhananjayan himself in Kathakālī style. They had an ensemble incorporating all major styles into a dance drama. In this production the audience could witness Bharatanāṭyam, Mōhināṭṭam, Kathakālī, Kathak and Odissi creating a revolution with

five styles. That is how London was opened up and since then, the Dhananjayans have been continuously going to the United Kingdom to conduct workshops with Pushkala's initiative. Therefore Kalakshetra style has been slowly established as the best style for any theatrical productions. There was still a notion that westerners couldn't accept the Indian style of dancing when compared with the precise dance style like ballet. When Dhananjayans presented Kalakshetra style, people thought it was closer to the technique of ballet not knowing that Rukmini Devi streamlined the whole technique usable for any kind of presentation.

Group Production:

Jungle book - the adventures of Mowgli (1984):



3.2.2.1. Photo Jungle Book – Mowgli

The Adventures of Mowgli, intended for audiences of every cultural background, is an action packed dance story based on Rudyard Kipling's magical book titled Jungle Book, a story rich in adventure, colour, drama and pure fun. This charming Indian jungle story retold in dance and mime was choreographed by Dhananjayan for the Academy of Indian Dance in London. It has the distinction of being the first production presented by the Academy.

Premiering in London on March 17, 1984, the story of Mowgli was choreographed with artists based in Britain. It incorporated different styles such as Bharatanāṭyam, Odissi, Kathakali, Kathak and free form that went down so well with the British audience, that it was staged for three seasons in England over three years from 1984 to 1986. At a stretch eighty shows were presented and later on, in the next two seasons Jungle Book was presented nearly 150 times, in mainstream theatres in the United Kingdom.

In terms of foresight, the production eschewed grand mythological, religious and historical themes. The general perception of Europeans and people connected with Indology and Indian art was that Bharatanāṭyam was a solo dance and could not be used effectively to make theatrical productions. Indian in content, classical in execution, Jungle Book was a presentation with innovative and creative movements deployed to bring in the beauty of Nature. It was a trendsetter because it gave other people also the enthusiasm to break away from tradition and adapt novel themes. Some of the participating dancers from this production made good on their experience and broke into new fields. The composer and choreographers transcended stylistic boundaries, joining and blending the styles in a way as to preserve the clarity and brilliance of the classical and yet introducing the freedom of modern expression.

The choreography was done first. After that, Pt. Vijayaraghava Rao scored the music. A large scale pre-recorded score using traditional Indian and western instruments and a synthesizer was created without lyrics. Words were eliminated to make the production more universal and to give emphasis to the music, which gave expression to the whole delineation of the drama.

Lots of new movements for animals were introduced because, except for three humans, the rest were animal characters. The Nāṭyaśāstra describes movements to depict animals and birds. New movements in dance were used to create character identities to suit the animal parts, with some of the classical Aḍavu-s interspersed here and there. Dhananjayan had to invent a wolf characterization since the animal does not feature in classical dance. For the strides of the panther, steps were borrowed from folk theatre. In short, The Adventures of Mowgli demanded skills of an actor.

The simple décor consisted of an exotic tree with movable branches, designed by Jan Blake, which changed its colours and shape for different scenes and different seasons. The whole story moved around the tree. The costumes were Indian with appropriate decorations or additions to suggest the animal characters.

Director / choreographer	:	V P Dhananjayan
Music	:	Pt. Vijayaraghava Rao,
Artistic Advisor	:	Pt. Ravi Shankar,
Kathak choreographer	:	Pratap Pawar,
Costumes	:	Shanta Dhananjayan

Synopsis:

In the forests of India, a long, long time ago, lived a boy raised by a kind hearted mother wolf and taught the ways of the jungle by an old bear named Baloo. He was happy with his animal friends, living amongst the trees and flowers, with but a single enemy, the tiger Sher Khan, One day, he happened to meet Sita.

This story of love, evil and adventure, the colourful characters like the panther Bhageera, the snake Ka, the wolves, the monkeys and so on, has a universal appeal to the young as well as the old. The message is, if animals can do noble deeds in certain situations, why not humans and this became the elevating factor in the show.

"Jungle Book gave European audiences the idea of how Indian classical dance can be explored to make theatrical productions. It was quite a challenge. This collaborative venture was an achievement in enterprise and effort, but then creating Jungle Book in a classical dance form by itself was a challenge."

Q: Have you developed any methodology to teach in the west?

A: *Westerners are very receptive towards clear cut technique, and clean lines, so it was very easy to train the ballet trained dancers rather than our own Indian dancers, but the problem with western countries is that their face is not mobile, whereas our children are very expressive. We needed to compromise on 2 things which are the facial expression which is the vital level source of our dance, and their physical cleanliness. So in bringing them together and making they understand both techniques we had to adopt certain techniques and evolve a new method of teaching dance, which worked well. Some of the westerners who took part in this started developing their facial expressions,*

we taught them some eye exercises and helped them imitate our expressions. These ways were a good training ground for the westerners to know how to express through the face, because they didn't have that technique in western dance. Bharatanāṭyam has the judicial combination of all these aspect; it's a judicial combination of the "body, mind and spirituality" which no other styles have.

Q: What is your opinion about Bharatanāṭyam technique in different aspects? e.g., Contemporary, classical, authentic/education/ body condition/therapy etc...

A: 'Nāṭya Vēda and Āyurvēda' they go together – so Nāṭya is also has been considered as a therapeutic technique at ancient times. So it is wonderful and very good and also our physical movements, Nāṭyaśāstra is called Sāmpūrṇa Yōga, Yōga is used for all therapeutic uses (Āsana-s), and the physical technique of Bharatanāṭyam gives access to Yōga Āsana-s. Yōgāsānās which are done in slow pace with breathing are supposed to be employed in our Aḍavu-s system and the Aḍavu-s is done in rhythm. Yōga doesn't use that kind of rhythm, where as we use music and rhythm to make the movement applicable to the Sahṛdaya-s /audience.

Yōga is very personal; it is used to attain the unification of concentration through body in the bodily exercise. Body is instrument for all (good) deeds -

शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम् (śarīramādyam khalu dharmasāadhanam)⁶⁸ –

without body we can't do anything.

⁶⁸ Kālidāsa. Kumārasambhavam . Chapter 5, Verse 33: 92.

The body becomes a tool for you to bring all your senses together. That is where Yōga is, there 'Yuj' i.e., join. Same thing in Nāṭya the three spiritual aspects, all the three dimensions come together in Nāṭya. With the usage of mudra's which are very close to the tantric movements when certain movements/fingers are joined, there is a physical union in the body, and some scientific changes are taking place in the body's nervous system. When we bring two hands together there is a cyclic system that is working within us, which is good for the body & mind - that is where the Yōga & rhythm come together making for a very therapeutic technique to heal certain elements. In ancient times we can definitely say that practitioners of Nāṭya were very healthy all the times. They lived very long; this must be because of the system/technique/ the practice. One follows a proper practice of body kinaesthetic, it definitely has therapeutic effects - e.g., many experiments done with handicapped children, mentally challenged people (with mudra-s, abhinaya and music) show good results. All of this helps them to understand the life better and, make their life happier.

Dhananjayan says that our dance (mudra-s & expressions) helps the physically challenged children. They have many ideas & feelings in their mind and these mudra-s & expressions will help them to communicate without any language. Nāṭya has that communication system; it's developed like that, so that is where Nāṭyaśāstra has become such a unique text for Nāṭyavēdam as well as Āyurvēdam.

He says with artists work in the United Kingdom e.g., Shobana Jeyasingh the name of contemporary genre dance becomes near entertainment for us. He

expresses his opinion that in this context dance has to lift the audience into a spiritual level, to make them experience the spirit.

He says contemporary dance is very superficial, nearly physical which only an entertainment is, so that is where Bharatanāṭyam becomes also an elevating entertainment

दुःखार्तानां श्रमार्तानां शोकार्तानां तपस्विनाम् ।

विश्रान्तिजननं काले नाट्यमेतद्भविष्यति ॥११४॥

duḥkhārtānām śramārtānām śokārtānām tapasvinām /

viśrāntijananam kāle nāṭyametadbhaviṣyati //

(Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra, Chapter I, Verse 114)

Meaning:

Finally he says Bharatanāṭyam - educates, elevates and entertains everyone. That is the beauty of Indian classical art forms, 'Art brings hearts together'.

Dhananjayan's aim as an artist is to educate people through Bharatanāṭyam as good human beings with character moulding. The artist's conduct and character must be the main quality of any artist; all the physical, mental and spiritual discipline should make them a better human being. All the artists can't be performers but they can be good rasikās through the training of Nāṭya, they become good citizens and human beings of the world, which is the purpose of the art.

APPENDIX – 3

My experience as a guest artist of Annapurna Indian Dance Company

I worked with Annapurna Indian Dance Company in year June and July 2011 and in July 2012 as a guest artist from India. I am herewith sharing my experience and observations with the work of Annapurna Indian dance company in the United Kingdom. I have taken part in their school and community workshops and performances.

Chaos to Clarity:

We reached the school at 8.30 AM and we were rushed into the assembly hall. I was dressed in my dance costume and jewelry. Lot of eager kids curiously looked at me, some even strangely. The staff looked at us to do something purposeful. And I had no clue what I was expected to do! Shantha Rao introduces us, the team, with a big Namaste. And then followed a lot of on-the-job learning – Brief Introduction on India, Indian Culture and Indian Classical Dance – some dancing – some abhinaya – some interactive sessions – some Indian drumming – some more dancing! She was so skilled at her job that it was like running on autopilot. I was little tense and excited, I did an invocatory piece on Lord Ganesha, the song was in English but I tried to lend a hand in every task she did, not just with the dancing. But children being children, with extremely low attention spans, started wandering away; our grip on their interest was slipping. It was only when Shantha Rao brought them back on track, that I understood that this was not an easy task. It required command, skill, an understanding of what is relevant in their culture and a loud voice! I was still lacking in all those at that point. Children in India are very differently tuned. This cultural difference can often land one

in sticky situations. That day I learnt that one needs to be tactful in dealing with children with short attention spans and it doesn't have to be through shouting or punishing or even cracking jokes and breaking the ice. It requires being attentive and resourceful and my first day with Annapurna Indian Dance taught me exactly that.

A professional Indian drummer, Prathap, and a senior Kathak dancer Sandip Mallick, together they displayed techniques through which one can simplify Indian classical arts for presenting to the western world. I often wondered with all the technicalities and rigorous structure of my dance form, how would I let the outside world in? How would I educate them, help them acquire a taste? Shanta Rao's workshop included a beautiful segment when the Kathak dancer, with the tapping of his feet adorned with hundreds of bells, imitated the sounds of a train! This was imagination at its best! The thought further blossomed into a realization that I must apply my dance to something universal, as it is important to capture the imagination of the audience, however small or big. Slowly I got a clear picture of how Annapurna Indian Dance was demystifying Indian culture through simple acts like these.

There was no question of monotony while working with Annapurna Indian Dance. The project I worked with Annapurna Indian Dance Company was "Healthy Halifax", and through this project we visited Schools, Communities, Old age groups, Scout groups, Refugee groups etc. Each school and community was different from the other, each experience more memorable than the previous. My experience differed every day with every group of children that we dealt with; some children were extremely responsive, while some were not. Some withdrew into themselves while some reacted violently when requested to participate. This was an eye-opener for me, seeing how the norm of respecting the child's wishes was upheld and at the same time

efforts were made to introduce them to various subjects. I was filled with immense pride when these children responded to our demonstrations of dancing and drumming, gave us their unwavering attention for a good span of forty five minutes! Again, my belief about simplifying Indian Cultures to reach out to the world was solidified.

Another workshop Shanta Rao said to ‘I’m going to park the car and join you in 5minutes. You go and introduce yourself’. This was probably her way of testing the artist, by throwing in the field in low risk situations and seeing how one handles it. Sandeep and I entered the class room; there was a big group of children along with their class teachers. What was I supposed to say? What was I supposed to do? How was that I break the ice? I was a little nervous, all alone in that room. Then I decided to go with the flow –NAMASTE! I’m Himabindu from India! And they all had warm smiles on their faces. And soon the workshop flowed smoothly... and I realized how my simple presence could make someone’s day better! We got the music on, made them do a little dancing, made a wonderful mango salad – in other words, we were hands on! And that is when I saw that the tiniest of things can sometimes make such a large impact.

Healthy Society:

Some of the schools I visited along with Annapurna Indian Dance Company were a shining example of what an ideal education system must be. I could see that the children were not only dignified, cultured and respectful but they were highly attentive, individualistic and responsive. Art, music, literature – these things united the people like us in these workshops and performances. Without knowledge and respect for other cultures, this can never be possible. I am so thankful to Annapurna Indian Dance Company and all the schools and communities that I worked in the United Kingdom for

helping in propagating that knowledge and respect which unites people, makes a better world worth living in.

My stay in Halifax was eventful, inspiring and full of learning. From interacting with people from various ethnic, social and religious backgrounds I gained a lot of experience. Annapurna Indian Dance Company is doing some brilliant work in a small town like Halifax, which did not even have a registered Indian Community Association or a welfare group. Making small but steady contributions is the enterprising sixty four year old Shantha Rao and the company has now become one of the oldest, most reputed and trusted names in Halifax and a true inspiration for me and any artist.

Annapurna as an organisation that despite the impact of the political and economic climate, makes a real difference to people and communities, working at grass roots to bring diversity, racial harmony and understanding between cultures. For many years it had been delivering a large number of projects in schools but recently the company's emphasis has shifted to more well-tailored researched projects, such as the Healthy Halifax project.

On the performance side, it has toured nationally with large scale shows involving international Indian artists and has engaged with new partners such as Walk the Plank in delivery of fresh and innovative projects. Achieving this level of success involves many people.

The artistic director, Shantha Rao, always brings energy, passion and professionalism to the Company. Her dedicated approach and determination has

resulted in a more strategic and focused Company. Although Annapurna now generates over 50 per cent of its own income it has developed the work with the continued support of funding bodies including Arts Council England, West Yorkshire Grants, Calderdale Council and The West Yorkshire Police community Trust Fund.

It has been another highly successful year for Annapurna Indian Dance Company in which the work has made huge impact and differences to the lives of many people especially in West Yorkshire.

APPENDIX – 4

Interview video's of the case studies

4.1: Pushkala Gopal's Interview video enclosed

4.2: Shanta Rao's Interview video enclosed

4.3: Bisakha Sarker's Interview video enclosed

4.4: Anusha Subramanyam's Interview video enclosed

APPENDIX – 5

Videos of the projects analysed:

- 5.1. Artists explaining the sound of rhythm through the ankle bells
- 5.2. Artists explaining the hand gestures of Bharatanāṭyam
- 5.3. A short dance piece on Ganesha
- 5.4. Artists demonstrating the rhythm through mathematics with different counts
- 5.5. Artists demonstrating simple dance piece with control of dance elements
- 5.6. Artist making the children to enact an Indian story
- 5.7. Artist engaging children with simple melody, rhythm and hand gestures
- 5.8. The Healthy Halifax Project
- 5.9. Community work- Artist engaging youth communities
- 5.10. Dance and Disability project
- 5.11. Dance of the Night Sky
- 5.12. From the Heart
- 5.13. Making of Maps

APPENDIX – 6

Reviews and production brochures of Annapurna Indian Dance Company:

Tomorrow in your big-value **Courier**



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The colour and beauty of distant lands are being imported to Calderdale by a Halifax dance company. Pauline Hawkins finds out more

Dancing hands with a powerful message for us



The highest form of expression: dancers Shantha Rao and Devika Narendra Rao, of Annapurna Indian Dance. Indian dancers use beautiful colour and expressive hand gestures to tell stories with a message

Picture: Gerry Troyna

IT may be winter outside but in the skilful hands of Indian dancers the world is alive with prancing deer, vibrant birds and beautiful lotus blossom.

Schoolchildren across Calderdale and beyond have been captivated by the imaginative gestures that the dancers use to tell stories from their traditional roots.

And it is thanks to a Halifax mum – former teacher Shantha Rao – that the rich artistic heritage of India is delivered to the doorsteps of schools, community groups and performance venues.

Shantha, who was born in India but moved to Yorkshire

with her doctor husband 22 years ago, has developed her company, Annapurna Indian Dance, from humble beginnings.

Now based at Dean Clough, Halifax, she draws on a wealth of experienced and beautiful dancers whose dexterity can tell a tale in rhythm rather than rhyme.

Artistic director Shantha, who also uses colourful puppets in her dance and storytelling, says: "Most of the dancers are trained in India and have Indian heritage. Indian philosophy runs in their veins."

"It is a cultural thing, rather than religious. Dance is regarded as the highest form of expression in our culture and the dancers are respected. Some do not get married, they sacrifice their lives for dance. They have powerful messages to give to people."



Shantha has also reached many people through a story she wrote – *Krishna and Kaliya* – which was published by education resources company Scholastic in the spring.

In the colourful brochure, she presents the story of a pure river that was tainted by the presence of snake king Kaliya, leading to the near-destruction of the surrounding wildlife until Kaliya is banished by a young boy, Krishna.

"The snake is an allegory – the story is all about industrial waste and how we pollute the water," she says.

Her latest success is the performance across West Yorkshire of Dances From the Distant Lands, a project funded by West Yorkshire Grants.

Shantha says: "Dances from the Distant Lands is a unique education project with the aim of introducing pupils to the joyful spirit of India, to raise inter-cultural awareness and to promote racial harmony through dance."

"It attempts to bring the true flavour of the rich traditional dances and stories of India, with demonstrations of its many different popular dance styles, ranging from classical to folk with accessible storytelling and stunning costumes."

Twenty schools across the county have been visited by dancers as part of the project, including Carr Green Primary School, Brighouse and Tuel Lane Infant School, Sowerby Bridge. Pupils have seen four differing traditional dance styles, including the lively "karagam" dance, performed outside the temples of southern India during the annual harvest festivals. "I am extremely proud of the project," Shantha says.

It was well received by schools, with Carr Green reporting: "We all thoroughly enjoyed the performance and



workshops. Great for children of all ages."

And David Wright, head teacher of Shay Lane Primary School, Wakefield, said: "At the end of their performance they asked me if they could have some more time and, of course, I said 'yes'."

"Little did I realise that the consequence of that reply was that I would be dancing an Indian dance with the

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Taking centre stage: the Annapurna dancers put on a show for pupils at Tuel Lane Infant School, Sowerby Bridge



I can do it too! Five-year-old Keelan Scott copies the Annapurna dancers and Priya Sundar does balancing act. Below, Shantha Rao dances with a puppet

other teachers! The children thought it was hilarious and I have to confess we all enjoyed doing the dance."

Annapurna Indian Dance has performed at prestigious venues including London's National Gallery and principal dancer Devika Narendra Rao (no relation to Shantha), based in Leeds, performed at the Commonwealth Games baton ceremony in front of the Queen in October

Now Shantha is looking forward to a busy 2010, which she hopes will allow her to develop the cultural link between her birthplace and her adopted home even further. "I am looking for partners to support me. Annapurna is a local company going national and Calderdale should be proud of it," she says.

● Schools or organisations can contact Shantha on 01422 365103



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Dancing to life

Shantha Rao is a traditional Indian dancer and storyteller and artistic director of Annapurna Indian Dance Company. As a trained teacher herself she specialises in bringing alive the well-loved epic stories from the ancient mythology of India. This kind of partnership can make dance from India accessible for the RE curriculum: dance, music and storytelling is enjoyable and full of meaningful interpretations. REtoday asked her some questions:

Can you give an example of the music that is spiritually inspiring to you, and say something about the piece?

This is a difficult choice, considering there are so many wonderful musicians and composers out there! As I am a dancer, I am constantly in search of interesting music that inspires me to dance and tell stories.

Personally, my favourite is the ancient 'Mantras', written in Sanskrit, which express gratitude and for personal and global blessings. A well-recited composition of Mantras creates wonderful sound vibrations and magic in the listeners. Here is one of the popular traditional Mantras, which has a beautiful and profound message:

*Bhumi Mangalam, Udaka Mangalam
Agni Mangalam, Vayu Mangalam
Gagana Mangalam, Surya Mangalam
Chandra Mangalam, Jagat Mangalam
Jiva Mangalam, Deha Mangalam
Mano Mangalam, Atma Mangalam
Sarva Mangalam, Bhavatu Bhavatu Bhavatu
Sarva Mangalam, Bhavatu Bhavatu Bhavatu
Sarva Mangalam, Bhavatu Bhavatu Bhavatu
Om Shanti Shanti Shanti
Om Shanti Shanti Shanti*



The magic of Hindu dance

The meaning of this is: 'May there be tranquillity on earth, on water, in fire, in the wind, in the sky, in the sun, on the moon, on our planet, in all living beings, in the body, in the mind and in the spirit. May that tranquillity be everywhere, and in everyone.'

At Annapurna Indian Dance Company, we have produced a CD called *Namaste! Greetings from India*, which includes this track. Often I use this track as our final dance piece but occasionally I also use it in schools when children are walking into the assembly to watch the Indian dance show.

In your faith tradition, what place does music have in family, community and worship? What would the faith miss if there was no music?

Music is a very powerful means of communication in any culture, and it always has a very special place in all the three areas you have mentioned – family, community and prayer.

Practising music (or dance) is also an intensely personal journey that has evolved out of a strong desire to express the abstract feelings within us and eventually to understand ourselves. I am convinced that it is all about self-discovery and experiencing that special feeling of true inner liberation.

As a dancer, I feel that vibrant dancing to music, which has a highly evolved arrangement of complex rhythmic patterns, is simply one of the most exciting and satisfactory experiences in my life

Singing to the Gods is certainly one of the most important aspects of the Hindu faith. Devotional singing, known as *Bhajans* (a genre of vocal music) is very popular in temples and family celebrations. There is a rare charm in listening to popular *Bhajans* using several varieties of simple percussion instruments rhythmically. Personally, I always feel a sense of joy, and it has helped me connect with other community members.

Musicians are highly respected by the people and a lifetime of practice goes into the making of a musician. Often, there is a mystic bonding between musicians (and dancers) and the many deities. This is a highly enigmatic concept to understand. Awareness of this affinity yields many hidden secrets which make up the very essence of the art forms and can reveal their foundation in faith.

Every region in India has a famous poet or a composer who has left behind a rich heritage of poetry and music reflecting some of the finest philosophies and ideas of the people. For example, in the north, Poetess Meera composed intimate and passionate poems on the flute-playing Indian deity, Lord Krishna. In the south, Saint Poet Purandaradasa left an absolute treasure of intelligent poetry and music called 'Devaranamas' which has touching messages for the people.

I must also mention here the significance of music in classical Indian dance, a signature mark of the Hindu faith. Dancers often have a great personal bonding with the Lord of Dance known as Shiva, whose rhythmic dance of life symbolises the eternal cycle of life.

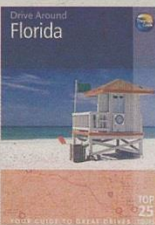
Hindu faith would certainly miss a very colourful element of celebration without music and dance!

ARTS

Book review

Drive Around Florida
By Mick Sinclair
ISBN: 978-1-84848-015-5

FLORIDA brings about ideas of Disney World, nature parks, golf courses, water sports, historic sites, party places, beaches and lots of sea food. And whilst many travel to Florida, not everyone gets to experience all that is on offer in one trip. With this handy little guide you can get more out of your visit by knowing where to go and in what order. This guide really breaks up the areas of Florida, making it more accessible for the travellers to plan their trip. The ones who just want to relax on the beach might take a look at the Gold Coast, Palm Beach or Key West sections, whereas the city goers might be more interested in Tampa or Tallahassee. It also draws out suggested tour routes on the many maps they show you, which gives you direct knowledge of all the top places to head for. A must have for anyone visiting Florida or someone who is interested in the area.



REBIRTH: Annapura on the ultimate journey



Great hereafter

A RICH EXPLORATION OF REINCARNATION

by ISHA PRASHAR

WHETHER it's a particular dance form, style of music or acting, most classical Indian performances will focus mostly on one particular art form.

Shantha Rao, who is the artistic director of the Annapurna Indian Dance Company, had other ideas and worked tirelessly to introduce the rich culture of India to a multi-cultural audience by blending and balancing aspects of old Indian traditions to create a more diverse and accessible show.

That ability to mix and blend different art forms is very apparent in the company's upcoming show *The Indian Hereafter*, which is based on storytelling, dance, chanting and original bhartanayam music. *Eastern Eye* caught up with Shantha to find out more about the multi-dimensional show, the key to being a good dancer and discuss the challenges of running an Indian Dance company in England.

What is *The Indian Hereafter* about?

The Indian Hereafter is based on the ancient Indian belief, theory and practice of reincarnation. We are looking at the idea that the soul survives on after the death of the physical body. A whole cult exists on the philosophy of birth and rebirth based on our deeds called karma. The performance is an exploration of a compelling and an irritable human urge in all of us to find out what the journey of the soul really is in between life and rebirth. We have chosen the story of a wonderfully rich and powerful tale from the epics of India, the *10 Incarnations*. This is a story, which has endless layers of profound meaning with a deep relevance to our own current human experience. It also reveals the philosophy of the good eventually triumphing over the evil. In a strange and abstract way these stories reflect the evolution of mankind both physically and mentally and a journey from chaos to creation, from ignorance to knowledge and from imperfection to perfection every step of the way.

Is it more about telling the story or showing off different styles of dance?

It is an ambitious attempt to narrate one of India's well-loved stories using a variety of media. The story of *10 Incarnations* is full of allegories and symbolism, reflecting a search for inner liberation and self-discovery for ultimately unlocking the enormous potential within us all. The challenge was to bring these abstract concepts as well as the thought processes behind them using different art forms of storytelling, dance and music.

And what is on offer for the audience?

The audience will see a well-researched and presented piece of work by the company. We performed this last year at the *Halifax Ghost Story Festival*. It has wonderful dancing, storytelling, singing and beautiful costumes. The audience

can listen to music that makes their heart ache, watch dances that are performed with soulful devotion and spiritual discipline and listen to stories that will stir their souls and imagination.

It is choreographed by upcoming dancer/choreographer Archana Vyasa. Both Archana and the principal dancers Santosh Menon and Himma Bindu Uppari are trained at the prestigious Kallakshetra College of Dance from Chennai, India. Resident dancer Priya Sundar will be narrating the stories and the production also involves upcoming dancers Ridhi Joshi and Nidhi Joshi, both from Leicester, and Swaroop Menon from London.

Original music is composed by well-known bhartanayam dance guru Chandrasekhar Navda from Mangalore, India. There is also live Vedic chanting from the Manchester-based musician Rakesh Joshi.

How did you balance music, dance and chanting to create a distinctive piece?

It is a very ambitious project from Annapurna Indian Dance Company. The job of balancing all these different media is never easy. As artistic director it has been such an innovative project for me and a challenge. I have tried my best and poured every ounce of my passion and patience into minute details and every aspect of this production.

What do you think is the key to being a good dancer?

Hard work, perseverance, passion and a determination to achieve perfection. A dancer should be open-minded, free and open to all the thought processes and continuously aim to sharpen one's inner awareness.

Most people have been practicing their art for years. Do you find you are still developing your movement and skills?

Of course it is the universal truth that one should keep practicing for many years to master the quintessence of the art form. The road to perfection is never-ending. We are still beginners in this journey!

What is the biggest challenge of performing Indian arts in England?

The biggest challenge as an artistic director for me in producing and presenting the rich Indian ancient stories is making it accessible for the people who have never watched Indian dance before as well as those who are connoisseurs. It requires a deep sensitivity and clarity and risk taking at all levels to make this happen. My ambition has always been to present the deepest concepts and define the philosophy and system of Indian people in such a way that it will have a resonance in the cutting edge contemporary life of the people.

What other projects does your company have coming up?

One of the most ambitious project Annapurna Indian Dance Company will be presenting next year is called *Tales From Mystical India*, which is a garland of rich dances and sparkling stories using dance, music, puppetry and multimedia to stir the souls and challenge the minds.

The Indian Hereafter will be showing on Saturday July 9 at The Leaky Pier 8, Salford Quays, Manchester, M50 3AZ. To find out more, visit www.annapurna-dance.com



Two faces of Indian dance

DESCRIBED as a stunning mosaic of choreography designed for the 21st century, *Daredevils* is a dance show created for anyone who loves varied choreography and a mix of energies. The two dancers Jaymini Sahai, based in the UK and Santosh Menon, an artist from India, will blend their talents and backgrounds bringing their audience a fresh take on traditional Indian dance styles. The show consists of short pieces in the kathak and bhartanayam, with a change in rhythm and energy for each performance. Make sure you get your ticket for this relaxed evening of sensational dance.

■ *Daredevils* is on next Friday (1) at Watermans Theatre, 40 High Street, Brentford, TW8 ODS.

Photographs courtesy Soma Vasa

A Taste of India

Forget Bollywood – Halifax is where it's at!

For the last two years people of all ages have had a little taste of India thanks to the Healthy Halifax project which, through the Community Foundation for Calderdale, gave money to voluntary and community groups to fund clubs or projects which would get local people moving more and eating healthier.

Among those groups was the Annapurna Indian Dance company which offered participants an insight into traditional Indian dance, and gave them a taste of traditional Indian food too.

All those who took part were able to work up an appetite on the dance floor before cooking up and tucking in to recipes handed down from generation to generation, with roots in the famous nature and herbal cure healing system Ayurveda.

"Taking part in Healthy Halifax gave us the opportunity to share what we do with a group of people who would probably never have dreamt of attending an Indian dance session," says Shantha Rao who runs Annapurna.

"We really focussed on the keep fit element and showed people that what we do is a really interesting form of exercise."

But she said the benefits of the programme had gone wider than leading a healthy lifestyle.

"There were benefits in terms of integration between different cultures too and the funding we received kept us, a local community group, going during the recession."

Although the Healthy Halifax Project has now come to an end, Shantha is determined to continue to share the benefits of Indian dance and food with the wider community.

"As an organisation this has given us a new platform. We are applying for funding from other sources so we can share our message across Calderdale and not just Halifax," she said.

What they said...

"I keep doing these movements in the kitchen...it is like picking stars and it gives me a very happy feeling."

"It was enjoyable exercise and worthy of the time spent."

"The children thoroughly enjoyed all aspects of the sessions and were talking about it for some time after, demonstrating the hand movements which they had learnt, seen and talking about the meanings."

"I really enjoyed it. I was in India for three months and they seemed like very healthy people. Good food and dance (or exercise) from a different culture is a great combination."

"She inspired us to learn this form of art".



CalderdaleCALL December 2011

7

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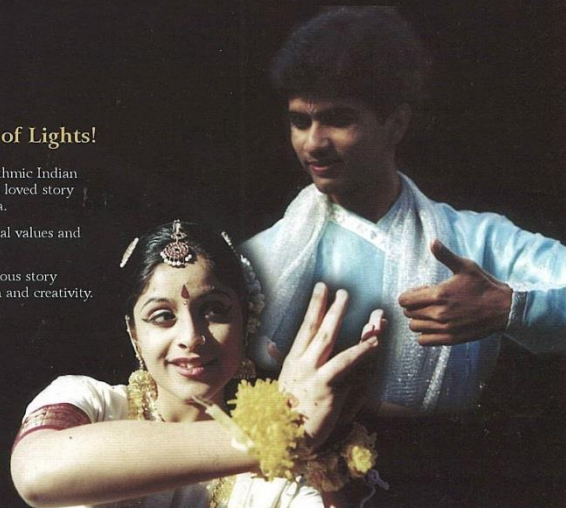
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Photos: Chris Lord

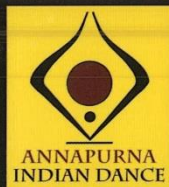


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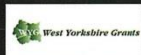
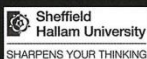
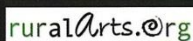
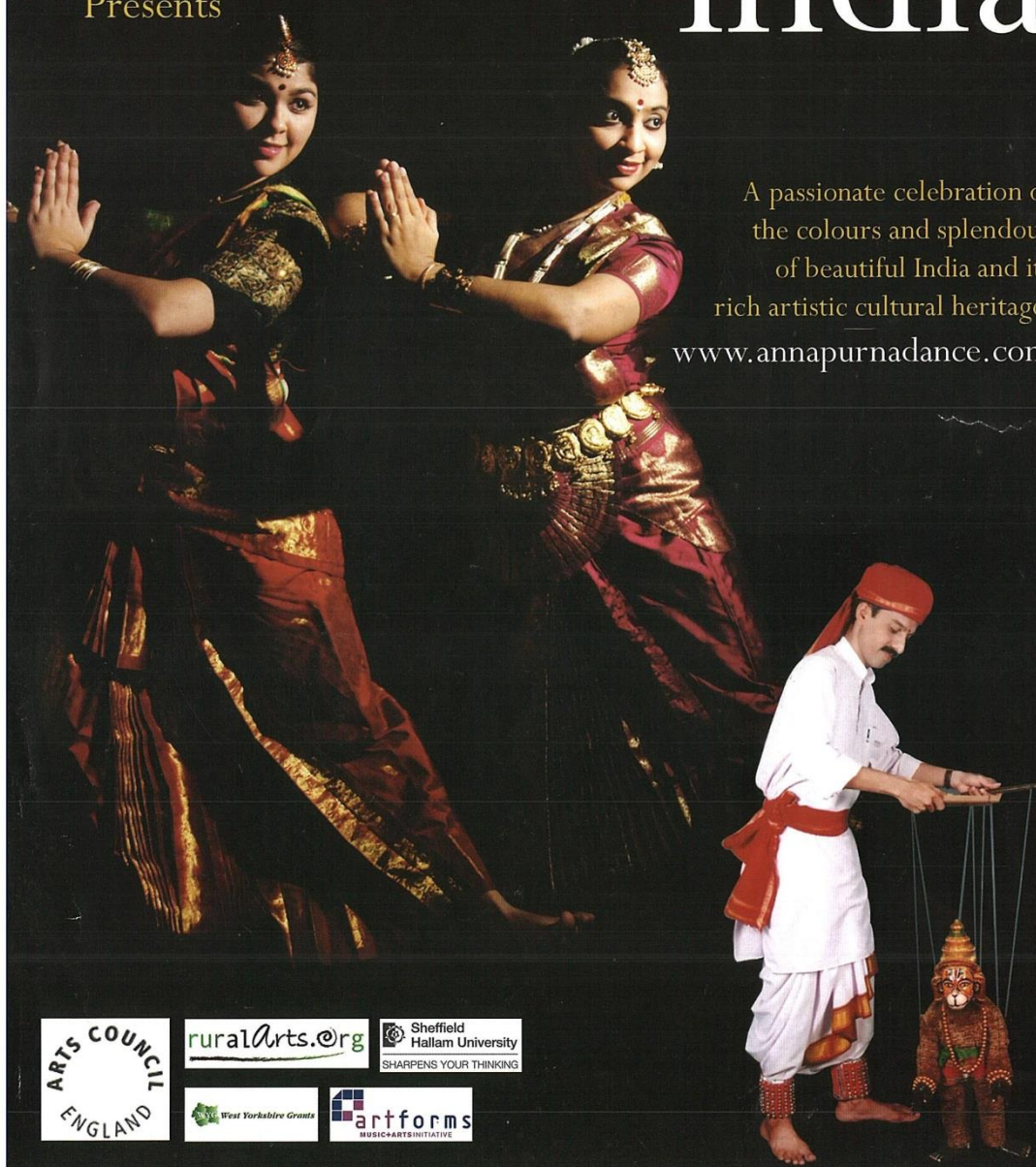


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of the festive
spirit of India
through
stunning
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rich stories"

(KARAGA - a lively dance from South India performed by Priya Sundar) Picture courtesy of Telegraph and Argus, Bradford • www.telegraphindia.co.uk



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wrapped himself around Krishna and tried to bite him with his sharp fangs. His slippery and slimy coils tightened and crushed Krishna's tender body. Krishna closed his eyes to protect them from the burning poisonous vapours pouring from the snake's nostrils.

Everyone rushed to the river bank and watched brave Krishna's struggle. They knew his life was in danger and prayed to the River Goddess to protect him.

For a time it seemed that there was no hope left. Then, suddenly, Krishna slipped out of the snake's coils. It was as if all the powerful forces in the universe had entered his body and given him the strength to fight the evil Kaliya.

Krishna grabbed hold of Kaliya's tail and began stamping hard on each of the snake's ten hoods. The thunder of his feet was so strong that Kaliya gasped for breath. He became so weak that he begged Krishna to save his life. Krishna ordered the snake king

to leave the river at once and not to harm anyone.

And so, taking all his wives, Kaliya went back to the depths of the ocean and promised never to return to the river Yamuna.

Life on the river banks slowly became normal again, and the air was filled with children's laughter. The cows grazed lazily and notes from Krishna's flute stirred the souls of the people and filled them with new hope.

SCHOLASTIC

Krishna and Kaliya

by Shantha Rao

River Yamuna was a giver of life and was full of sweet waters. Life along its banks was simple and people lived peacefully wherever its waters flowed.

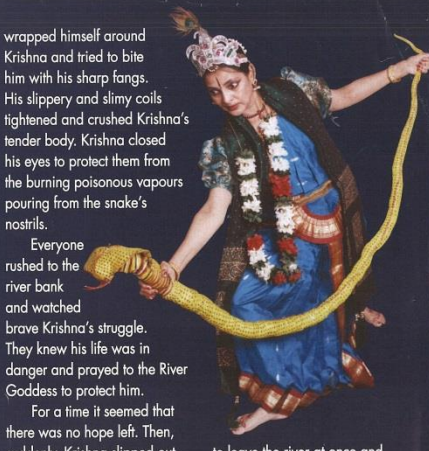

In the hot weather, they could drink its waters which were full of natural minerals. The people were proud of the clean, pure waters of Yamuna. They worshipped the river as a goddess and thanked her and prayed for her blessings.

Life in the villages
In those days, cattle were the main source of food for the people, and the village cowsheds were filled with healthy cows. The cows grazed

all day long on the fresh, tender green grass that grew on the river bank and gave milk generously.

The fields and gardens were full of rice, wheat and vegetables grown with the waters of Yamuna. So everyone had plenty to drink and eat.

The wildlife in the nearby woods – squirrels, deer, monkeys and elephants – also drank the river waters. There was life buzzing everywhere thanks to River Yamuna.

LEAFLET 1

LiteracyTime

Ages 7 to 9 • Issue 65 • May 2009 • © Scholastic Ltd 2009

Krishna and his friends

Krishna was a young boy who lived in the village. On bright sunny mornings, he and his friends took their cows to the river bank. While the cows were busy eating the grass, they spent long happy times swimming in the river or wandering in the nearby woods.

Because the weather was hot and tropical, the green woods were covered with bright yellow marigolds, hibiscuses, exotic orchids and other wild flowers. Butterflies chased each other and little crickets jumped everywhere.

The air was filled with the fragrance of scented flowers, like champak and jasmine blossom, and the sounds of the birds – the chirping of the cuckoo and

the soothing singing of the nightingale.

Often, young Krishna practised his flute in these beautiful surroundings and the notes blended in harmony with the sounds of nature around him. People would stop their work and listen as he played. Even the cows stopped chewing and sat down nodding their heads. These were moments of joy, peace, happiness, hope and harmony.

The Serpent King Kaliya

Kaliya, the powerful King of the snakes, was looking for a place to live. He was a very dangerous snake with ten fierce hoods and he breathed deadly poison from his nostrils.

One day, Kaliya sneaked into River Yamuna and made his home in the lagoons of the river with his many wives. His poisonous

breath began to damage the pure waters of the Yamuna. People boiled the water to try to make it clean, but it wasn't the same as before. They fell ill and suffered from strange diseases which had no cure.

Soon, large, slimy, bubbling patches began to appear all over the surface of the water and a thick, smoky atmosphere formed above it. The birds that flew overhead fell into the water, unable to bear the suffocating toxic air. The fish lay dead on the banks.

The tall trees in the once rich and vibrant forest were shedding leaves and slowly, one by one, began to die. Rare herbs disappeared and there were no more colourful flowers, butterflies or jumping deer.

There was no green grass left for the cows to eat so they could not give milk. And without milk, which was full of protein, the children felt weak and lacked energy.

Krishna saw the effect Kaliya had had on his friends and his surroundings. His heart was filled with great sorrow and he rarely played his flute. When he did, the music was so sad it made people cry.

Krishna saves the river

The day came when Krishna saw his favourite cow slowly dying and gasping for breath as it drank the river. He was furious – Kaliya had to be controlled before it was too late!

Fearless, Krishna climbed up the only tall tree left on the river bank and dived into the river. Deep inside the river, he saw the huge, ugly snake king rushing towards him with great speed. The snake lunged and



butterfly



bird



fish



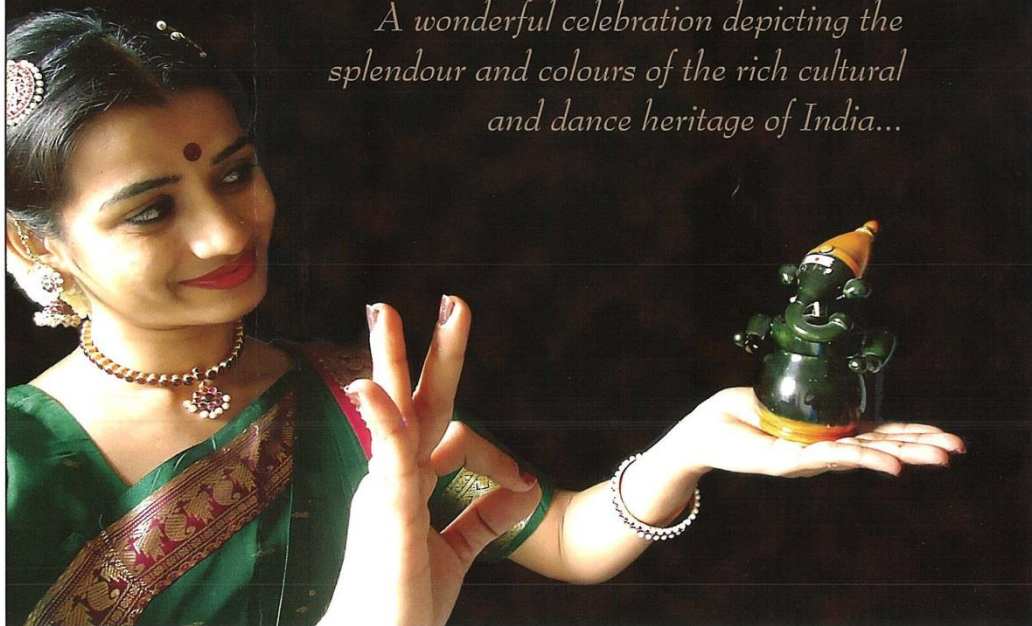
lotus flower



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GLOSSARY

Abhinaya:

dramatic dance; portions of choreography in which a dancer conveys thematic content through hand gestures, bodily postures, and facial expressions

Abhinaya Darpaṇa:

a medieval Sāṅskṛt aesthetic theory text

Aḍavu:

codified phrase of rhythmic footwork; constitutes the fundamental vocabulary of Nṛtta (rhythmic dance) phrases of Bharatanāṭyam. Aḍavu-s are used as training exercises

Ādi:

an eight-beat cycle

Agni:

agni is the Rīgvēdik God of fire and the conveyor of sacrifices of the Gods. He is also a God of divine knowledge who leads man to the Gods. He was one of the most important of the Vēdik Gods

Āhārya:

decoration including costume, jewellery and makeup

Alapadma:

a hand-gesture, where all five fingers are stretched out in a semi-circle

Alāriṭṭu:

the first rhythmic piece of the dance repertoire

Angaśuddham:

bodily perfection

Āngikābhinaya:

language of expression through the medium of the body, the face and movement

Araimaṇḍi:

plie position, basic stance in classical Indian dance

Arangētram:

debut performance

Arundhati:

the wife of the sage Vasistha one of the seven sages (Saptarṣi's) who are identified with the Ursa Major. She is identified with the morning star and also with the star Alcor which forms a double star with Mizar in Ursa Major

Āsana:

a static physical position

Āyurvēda:

an ancient medical science which was developed in India thousands of years ago

Bāṇi:

the term used to describe the dance technique and style specific to the guru/school

Bhagavad Gīta:

a 700-verse Hindu scripture in Sāṅskṛt that is part of the Hindu epic Mahābhārata

Bhāgavatam:

one of the most important classics of India which describing the life and times of Lord Krishna

Bharatanāṭyam:

a classical dance style that evolved from the earlier concert repertoire of the style of dance known as *sadir/ dāsi aṭṭam* from Southern India. The name *Bharatanāṭyam* was adopted in about 1933

Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra:

a Sāṅskṛt aesthetic theory text on dramaturgy ascribed to the sage Bharata dating from about the beginning of the Christian era

Bhāratīya-s:

of or relating to India; Indians, persons nationally identified with India; descended from emperor Bharata

Bhāva:

mood or feeling (accompanying *rasa*)

Bindi:

a ritual dot or ornamental mark on the forehead that women wear

Brāhmaṇ:

a member of the highest of the four major castes of traditional Indian society, responsible for officiating at religious rites and studying and teaching the *Vēda-s*

Chhau:

a genre of Indian semi-classical, tribal, martial and folk dance, origins in the states of Orissa, Jharkhand and West Bengal. The three styles of Chhau dance are Seraikella Chhau, Mayūrbhanj Chhau and Purūliya Chhau

Dāsiaṭṭam:

dance of the *dēvadāsi*. What we know as *Bharatanāṭyam* today springs from *Sadir Nāṭyam*, also known by names like *Dāsi Aṭṭam*, *Cinnamēḷam*, or simply, *Sadir*.

Dēvadāsi:

“female servant of God”; one of the member of categories of women who served in temples and courts as ritual officiates. These women married the God of their local temple. They did not marry a human man but lived in female headed households and were courtesans

Dhōti:

a traditional men's garment, worn in the Indian subcontinent mainly by Indian, Nepalese and Bangladeshi people

Hamsāśya:

a hand-gesture used in classical Indian dance, where the index finger touches the thumb and the other fingers are extended out

Harikatha:

a composite art form composed of storytelling, poetry, music, drama, dance, and philosophy. Any Hindu religious theme may be the subject for the Harikatha

Hindu:

refers to any person who regards themselves as culturally, ethnically, or religiously adhering to aspects of Hinduism

Hindustāni:

the Hindustāni or North Indian style of Indian classical music

Ganesha:

the elder son of the God Siva, Ganesha is the elephant-headed God, the remover of obstacles; who rides on a mouse

Ghaṭam:

a percussion instrument used in the Karṇāṭik music of South India

Guru:

mentor

Gurukula:

literally, “mentor’s house”; from Gurukula vātsalyam, “living in the mentor’s house.” The Gurukula system refers to the practice of disciples living in their preceptor’s home as part of a program of long-term intensive study including both formal and informal instruction

Guruśiṣya parampara:

mentor to a disciple; often used in the phrase “Guruśiṣya system” to refer to long-term immersion in dance for music training less than one mentor

Jāvaḷi:

a musical composition, and in a dance concert javali is strategically placed before the final piece

Jati:

a series of steps strung together

Jugalbandi:

a performed dialogue between two dance or music forms

kalahāmtarita:

a heroine separated from her lover due to a quarrel or jealousy or her own arrogance. Her lover is usually depicted leaving her apartment disheartened, while she too becomes heartsick and repentant without him

Kapittha:

wood-apple - kapittha mudra is the eleventh hand gesture of the 28 single-hand mudras (Asamyuta Hasta-s) as described in the Abhinaya Darpaṇa

Karṇāṭik:

refers to the southern region of India and also to the classical musical style from that region

Kartarīmukha:

scissors like hand gesture

Kaṭakāmukha:

deer like hand gesture

Kathak:

a North Indian classical dance form, typically performed solo

Kathakalī:

a dance drama form of Kerala in southwest India, traditionally performed only by men

Kīrtana:

a simpler form of musical composition. Words are given more importance than the musical content

Kōlāṭṭam:

an alluring and charming dance form using two sticks making rhythmic sounds, practiced by the young ladies and girls of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and other Southern states of India

Kōrvai:

a phrase of dance steps strung together

Kṛttika:

the star cluster Kṛttika sometimes known as kārtikā, corresponds to the open star cluster called pleiades in western astronomy; it is one of the clusters which

make up the constellation Taurus. In Hindu astrology Kṛttika is the third of the 27 nakṣatra-s (stars)

Kūcipūḍi:

a solo classical dance form of Andhra Pradesh, in the Deccan region of southern India

Kuravanji:

eighteenth and nineteenth century genre of dance drama

Mangalam:

the last “thank-you” and benediction piece in the Bharatanāṭyam performance

Maṇipūrī:

a classical dance practice from Maṇipūrī in north-eastern India

Mantra:

a sacred utterance, a divine sound, a syllable, a word or group of words in Sāṃskṛt believed by practitioners to have psychological and spiritual powers. It may or may not have syntactic structure or literal meaning

Mārgam:

the standard concert order for a classical solo Bharatanāṭyam performance; consists of eight genres of dance pieces performed in a specific order. The nineteenth-century musician-composers known as the Tanjavur Quartet standardized this sequence

Mōkṣa:

the transcendent state attained as a result of being released from the cycle of rebirth

Mōhinīāṭṭam:

a classical dance form of Kerala, India, performed as a solo recital by women

Mṛḍangam:

double-headed barrel drum

Mudra-s:

special hand gestures that symbolically express various ideas

Naṭarāja:

the celestial dancer, another name for lord Siva

Naṭṭuvāṅgam:

a Tamil word i.e. Naṭṭa + Angam. Naṭṭa means dancer or dance performance and Angam means body or main operating or controlling centre. The combination of this two is called Naṭṭuvāṅgam. In other words a Dancer for presenting dance with aesthetic effect always tries to keep link with Naṭṭuvāṅgam

Naṭṭuvanār:

the conductor of a dancer's musical ensemble

Nāṭya:

nāṭya corresponds to drama. Nāṭya means dramatic representation or drama with speech, music and dancing

Nāṭyaśāstra:

a Sāṅskṛt aesthetic theory text on dramaturgy ascribed to the sage Bharata dating from about the beginning of the Christian era

Nāṭyavēda:

fifth vēda (Sāṅskṛt : *pañcama vēda*) a text which lies outside the four canonical Vēda-s, but nonetheless has the status of a Vēda, is one that has been advanced in a number of post-Vēdic Hindu texts

Nautch:

dance, North Indian term

Navanṛtya :

new or contemporary dance style was founded by the late Dr. Manjushree Chaki-Sircar of Dancer's guild, Calcutta. The style was evolved by Dr. Manjushree Sircar and her daughter, the late Ranjabati Sircar, from different forms of dance and movement like Yōga, Kathākālī, Bharatanāṭyam, Maṇipūrī, Kalaripayattu (the martial art of Kerala), Thangta (the martial art of Manipur) and Chhau (The ancient masked dances of Bengal, Orissa, and Bihar)

Nāyaka:

the hero

Nāyika:

the heroine

Nṛtta:

“pure” dance; abstract, virtuous, rhythmic movement with no thematic content

Ōḍissi:

classical dance form from Orissa, north-eastern India, now performed primarily by women; historically danced by temple women and Gōṭipūvās, boy performers

Patāka:

a mudra that involves the displaying of the palm of one's hand

prauḍa:

matured in the art of love

Purāṇa-s:

are Hindu religious texts that are part of the Vēda-s

Rāga:

melodic structure

Rāmāyaṇa:

relating to Rama; the first epic poem of the Hindus, recording the adventures of Rama- the son of Dasaratha, sovereign of Oude; written by the poet Valmiki

Rangōḷi:

rangōḷi (North India) and *kōlam* (South India). Patterns drawn and coloured on the ground near the entrance to one's home as an auspicious sign

Rasika:

a term derived from Sāṅskṛt, meaning full of passion, elegant with discrimination and an expert able to appreciate especially in the fine arts

Rigvēda:

an ancient Indian collection of Vēdic Sāṅskṛt hymns. It is one of the four canonical sacred texts of Hinduism known as Vēda-s

Riṣi:

as seers or sages, who after intense meditation realized truths and eternal knowledge, which they composed into hymns

Sadir:

the immediate predecessor of Bharatanāṭyam; primarily solo female ritual and performance form based in the literary and musical traditions of Tamilnadu

Sāhityam:

lyrics of a sung poetic text

Sahṛdaya:

pleasant heart of a person

Sampūrṇa:

complete everything

Sangīta:

gītam vādyam tathā nṛtyam trayam sangīta mucyatē”, meaning the ideal mix of gītam (song or singing), vādyam (instrumental music), nṛtyam (dance), makes the definition of “Sangīta”

Sangīta Kaḷānidhi:

the title awarded yearly to an expert in Karṇāṭik music by the Madras Music Academy which is considered as one of the highest awards in Karṇāṭik music

Sānskṛt:

ancient Indian language in which Hindu scriptures and classical Indian epic poems are written

Saptarṣi:

the seven sages who are extolled at many places in the Vēda-s and Hindu literature

Sarōd:

a stringed instrument of India, one of the most popular and prominent instruments used in Hindustāni classical music

Śāstra:

treatise that is religious, philosophical, or theoretical in nature

Sattriya:

a classical art form of Assam, India

Sātvikābhinaya:

one of the four Abhinaya-s (expressional aspect of dance). This is the representation of eight psychic conditions

Śikhara:

a hand gesture used in classical Indian dances, where the hand makes a fist and the thumb is held upright

Śiṣya:

disciple

Skanda:

the name of a deity popular amongst Hindus and Buddhists, known popularly as Kartikeya (muruga) in the north Subrahmanya in the South, is a unique blend of beauty, power, valour and grace

Ślōka:

a Sāṅskṛt verse. Ślōkā-s, set to music and translated into gesture, often conclude Bharatanāṭyam concerts

Solkāṭṭu:

spoken rhythmic syllables

Svaha:

as a feminine noun, Svaha in the Rīgvēda may also mean ‘oblation’ (to Agni or Indra) and as oblation personified, Svaha is a minor Goddess, and the wife of Agni. She was originally a nymph but became immoral after marrying Agni

Tabla:

an important percussion instrument in Hindustāni classical music consisting of a pair of small drums

Takadimi:

dance syllables (4 beat rhythmic cycles)

Takadimi taka takīṭa:

dance syllables (9 beat rhythmic cycles). These mnemonic syllables referred to as bol, solkattu, or konakkol correlate to various strokes of the Tabla, Mṛdangam and Pakhāwaj as well as other classical percussive instruments

Taka takīṭa:

dance syllables (5 beat rhythmic cycles)

Takīṭa:

dance syllables (3 beat rhythmic cycles)

Takīṭa takadimi:

dance syllables (7 beat rhythmic cycles)

Tāḷam:

meter occurring in cyclical patterns

Tamiḷ:

a Dravidian language predominantly spoken by the Tamiḷ people of India, Sri Lanka and also by the Tamiḷ Diaspora

Tanjore Quartet:

four brothers who received the patronage of the Tanjore court at beginning of the nineteenth century, attributed to have composed most of the repertoire regarded as traditional

Telugu:

a Dravidian language native to India, it is the primary language in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana

Tillāna:

the last main item of the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire involving fast, interlaced rhythms

Tīrmānam:

means to conclude or an ending or a final stage. Thus the steps in this aḍavu-s are used to end a dance sequence or jati-s

Tripatāka:

a hand gesture denotes three parts of the flag

Uttama anukūla pati:

a husband who is faithful to his wife

Vācikābhinaya:

expression of speech

Varṇam:

the main item of the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire composed of both rhythmical abstract dance and lyrical, textual, and dramatic components

Vēda:

any of the four collections forming the earliest body of Indian scripture consisting of Rigvēda, Sāmavēda, Yajurvēda and Atharvaṇavēda

Vēdānta:

a Hindu philosophy based on the doctrine of the Upaniṣad-s

Vīṇa:

an ancient musical string instrument of India and one of the important instruments in South Indian Classical Music

Viraham:

a poignant pain caused by separation

Yōga:

a Hindu spiritual and ascetic discipline part of which including breath control and adaption of specific bodily posture

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