

**From Informal Gurukulas to Inclusive Institutions:
Tracing the Process and Impact of
Institutionalization on Kuchipudi Dance**

A dissertation submitted to the **University of Hyderabad** in partial
fulfillment of the award of a **Ph.D. degree in Dept. of Dance**

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Epigraph

I am a dancer. I believe that we learn by practice. Whether it means to learn to dance by practicing dancing or to learn to live by practicing living...In each it is the performance of a dedicated precise set of acts, physical or intellectual, from which comes shape of achievement, a sense of one's being, a satisfaction of the spirit. One becomes in some area an athlete of God.

Martha Graham

Dedication

*Gururbrahma gururvisnuh gurudevo maheshwarah
Guru sashat parabrahma tasmai sri gurave namah*

Guru is Brahma, Guru, is Vishnu, and Guru, is Maheshwara,
Guru is Parabrahma himself.
The Brahman, the absolute.
Salutations to such a guru.

Dedicated to all my Gurus- past, present and future.
Beginning with my mother,
Tekumalla Syamala Sitarama Swami, my first and forever Guru

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It is incredibly exhilarating to be able see the fruition of this work. Looking back, I realize that the seed for this project has been incubating for a long time, almost forty years, and has taken all these years for it to develop, mature and be delivered at the appropriate time. This journey began, with a mother's passion for classical dance being transmitted on to the daughter --with many long hiatuses in between. The varied experiences of learning, performing and teaching with gurus, artistes and students has culminated into this dissertation and the process has been immensely enriching.

This work would not have been possible without the passion, training and direction nurtured in me by my formative gurus. My mother and first *guru* in dance, Tekumalla Syamala Sitarama Swami, who initiated me into this wonderful and exhilarating world of dance and has throughout been my life-coach, philosopher and guide. Then, I consider myself to be fortunate, to have been a disciple of *guru* Vempati Chinna Satyam, from a young age and to have received the *Natya Visaradha* from him. He inspired and motivated me to give my best in whatever I do and never be satisfied with the mediocre. These two people have been the guiding force in all my artistic endeavours.

Even before I met her, Anuradha Jonnalagadda-Tadakamalla, has been a source of inspiration to me. I had heard, through fellow dance artistes, that she was pursuing research in Kuchipudi, and had thought how wonderful it was to be doing a PhD in dance; not knowing that one day I would enroll in a graduate program and later as a research scholar, under her. I could not have asked for a better supervisor, as she has always been guiding and assisting me with her expertise and constructive counsels. She gave me the freedom to pursue

research at my own pace, all the while giving significant intellectual advice and encouragement. From letting me into her personal space, her home, with her warm hospitality, to allowing me to explore her private library, from which I gained many useful insights for this work, I now share a valuable personal affinity with her, which is a wonderful side-effect of this work.

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To the University of Hyderabad, I would like to express my thanks for giving me this opportunity, support and assistance to pursue research in the field of Dance, which has eventually resulted in this dissertation.

During my travels to different locations within and outside the country, many individuals and institutions have helped me along the way in gathering material and information, generously contributing their time and knowledge to the work presented in this dissertation. I travelled to most of the districts in present day Andhra Pradesh, right from Srikakulam in the north to Rajahmundry, Guntur,

Vijayawada up to Kurnool city and was able to visit the Government Music and Dance colleges to collect data. At Hyderabad, I was able to meet most of the ex-lecturers of Dance from the Government Music and Dance colleges, like N Suvernalatha, L Vijayalakshmi; and, those involved with Kuchipudi over many decades like dancers Manju Bhargavee and Raja Reddy, and scholar Sunil Kothari. At Ahmedabad, Gujarat, I met Smitha Shastry; Rathnapapa Kumar in the USA; Lanka Annapurna at Vijayawada; Hari Ram Murthy and Bala Kondala Rao at Visakhapatnam; Sadanand Menon at Chennai; Kaladharan V at Thrissur; V Jayarama Rao at Delhi and Vedantam Ramalinga Sastry at Kuchipudi village, who guided me to the people who were able to disclose information and also divulged his knowledge, which has proved to be very important to this work (a complete list of all the names is given in the Bibliography).

The trip to Vijayawada, where my gracious hosts BVS Prasad and his wife Saraswathi, introduced me to their artistes' friends, who in turn gave me some very interesting leads, which proved to be very informative. The visit to the national capital New Delhi was possible because of the large-hearted friend Anuradha Sen and her daughter Nargis Vasundhara who made me feel very welcome at their home. This enabled me to spend considerable time at the Sangeet Natak Akademi and other libraries like Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), Central Secretariat, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Nehru Memorial Museum, Teen Murti House and the National Archives.

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T Parvati Vardhini

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Preface

The Kuchipudi dance forms transition into various genres – *Kalapas*, *Yakshaganas*, solo dances to dance dramas – over the last few centuries and its historicity has been chronicled by various scholars; and, the delineations of this art form have been ever-changing while responding to the exchanges with other art forms along with societal vagaries and the vicissitudes of time. The trajectory of the art form from a rural theatrical practice into a “classical” dance form has been discussed by many scholars from various perspectives; yet, the actual process and its corollaries have not been delved in detail from all viewpoints. This work will bridge this space in the prevailing erudition by bringing the influence of institutionalization on the art form to the center stage.

The efforts of the first generation non-hereditary artistes of the art form and their contemporary hereditary Kuchipudi gurus, whose engagement with the form occurred through the process of institutionalization, has had a deep impact in the manner in which the trajectory of the art form has panned out in the twentieth century, but this has not been given enough space in the existing scholarship. Combining ethnographic interactions with present day hereditary and non-hereditary artistes of Kuchipudi, with historical evidence and expertise culled from previous scholarships, this work attempts at understanding the process of institutionalization and the corresponding transformations in the art form.

To place this process in context, this work traces the displacement of traditional knowledge systems in India through the introduction of western education system and the establishment of dance institutes at a pan-Indian level. Reconstruction of the traditional dance forms, recognizing them as the “classical” dance forms of India and post-independence moves by the governmental agencies, such as the

Sangeet Natak Akademi, had numerous effects on regional art forms, including the Telugu art forms. This work, therefore, will attempt at understanding how the process of institutionalization in Kuchipudi has manifested itself within the village, its art and beyond. It views this process as one that gains prominence by its presence not only in the cultural history of the region, but also its political and sociological discourses.

With an approach that encompasses the various crucial aspects of the form, including but not limited to its performance culture, training methodologies and transformation as an inclusive dance form, this work attempts to comprehend the bearings institutionalization has had on the art form. In this process, which was aided by the hereditary artistes of the Kuchipudi village like Vedantam Parvatisam, Vedantam Prahlada Sarma, Vempati Peda Satyam and Vempati Chinna Satyam and a prominent few non-hereditary artistes of the time, the art form went beyond the physical boundaries of not only the Telugu speaking region, but also beyond those of the country. The ensuing changes that occurred during this course has been delved into in this dissertation. This work hopes to add to the existing scholarship on the evolution of the Kuchipudi art form and enable further understanding of what the form is today.

Prologue

Learning Kuchipudi dance during my formative years under the tutelage of Vempati Chinna Satyam in his historic institution, the Kuchipudi Art Academy, Madras, has left me with some very graphic memories. The class would begin at 9 o'clock in the morning and go on until 1 or 2 in the afternoon, depending upon the mood of the Master (as Vempati Chinna Satyam was called by his senior students). The *shlokas* and fundamentals would be taught by a senior student of the Master, and he would take over after the basic dance items were practised. Dancers, juniors and seniors alike, would take their positions with disciplined silence, practice and, once the piece was done, would sit down panting silently. It would take a while for their breath to return to normalcy. All of us would become very alert and perform to the best of our abilities in his presence. If we fumbled or made a mistake, he would make us repeat the sequence any number of times until we got the movement right, and to his satisfaction. We were taught a new lesson only when we could perform the previous one flawlessly, until which time we had to practise the preceding piece. What we felt for him, amongst other things, were both awe and fear, not knowing which was more. He never raised his voice; but a small nod or the narrowing of his eyes was sufficient to make us happy with pride or burst into tears, respectively. For his students he

was a larger than life figure, reminiscent of the character, Sankara Sastry¹ in the film *Sankarabharanam*. The Institute, an extension of his personality by itself, forever reverberated with the sounds of the stick which Master would strike on a wooden platform to keep the rhythm, in tune with the sound of the *jathis*² or the song being sung by the vocalist, and of at least twenty pairs of feet hitting the floor in unison; and, the energy and passion that would emanate from the sweat drenched artistes dancing with utmost conviction and joy would be enough to light up a whole building.

I had been training in Kuchipudi for a while, when I happened to watch the performance of a hereditary Kuchipudi artiste who was considered the best and the most popular of the times; and to my complete astonishment, I found it to be entirely different from what I was learning from my Guru, Vempati Chinna Satyam. The difference was more than incidental and reflected in the numerous defining aspects -- the technique, the stance, the music and the costume that the artiste had donned. Being a teenager, I voiced my bewilderment to my mother, my first dance guru and the most accessible source regarding dance. My confusion was, if the dance form I was training in and the art form I watched him perform were both Kuchipudi; then why their (the hereditary artistes) style was so different from ours? To this, however, I did not receive a satisfactory answer. What I learnt and performed, within

¹ The classic film, released in the year 1980, and the character of Sankara Sastry (played by JV Somayajulu), a Carnatic musician was portrayed with great intensity and dignity.

² Strings of syllables, without any specific meaning, but rendered in a set rhythmic pattern, that accompany pure dance.

Kuchipudi circles is even till today called the “Vempati Style;” and that practiced by those who haven’t been initiated into the Vempati style is called the “old/traditional style.” At that point of time, I took pride in the style that I had practiced and was very condescending of the Kuchipudi dance that was being performed by the hereditary artistes of the Kuchipudi village. This patronizing attitude, which I shared with most of those who were part of the same school as me, continued for several years, so much so that I would not even watch the dance programmes of anyone other than Vempati and his students. Now when I look back, I realize that my unawareness stemmed, amongst other reasons, from not being exposed to the historical drifts of Kuchipudi as an art form, being aware of merely chosen bits and pieces of it until then.³ It was only when I joined the Masters (MPA) programme at the University of Hyderabad that the enormity of my ignorance struck me hard. Those two years expanded my horizon and gave me insights into the processes that led to the revival of the Indian dance in the early twentieth century, and more importantly, the arrival of the “classical” Indian dance forms on the cultural map of India. It was this *understanding* of the *misconception* that I had of Kuchipudi (which still remains with many of those who are engaged with the form) that egged me on to contemplate on the diversity that exists between the two styles – the “old/traditional” style and the “Vempati” style.

³ Rumya Putcha, “*Revisiting The Classical: A Critical History of Kuchipudi Dance*,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2011).

When I began reflecting upon my experience of watching that hereditary artiste's performance of Kuchipudi many years ago -- which I felt was a different art form altogether -- I began to compare my own training in Kuchipudi dance at the Kuchipudi Art Academy under Vempati Chinna Satyam with the training methodologies followed at other schools of both hereditary and non-hereditary Kuchipudi gurus. I pondered over the differences in their systems of training and numerous questions arose in my mind: why do so many styles exist, or as we like to call them, *banis*, in the same art form and what is the commonality amongst these styles? How did my learning at the Kuchipudi Art Academy in Madras differ from the other training systems and what was it that brought about the difference? Did the change in the geographical location and in time have any decisive say in the evolution of the art form? Did the institutes have an influence on the evolution of these different styles of the dance form. In an attempt to find answers to questions such as these, I begin my journey in exploring the changes in the system, methodology of training, evolution of new themes and many more aspects of this dance form called Kuchipudi.

First entry in my personal notes

01-01-2013

Chapter I

Training Recontextualized: Establishing Institutes To Disseminate Indian Dances

The acharya is he who, having invested the student with the sacred thread, adopted him into his family and brought his mind into assonance with his own, teaches him Veda, together with its secret meaning and also the practical application therefore, through experiential demonstrations.¹

Bharatvarsha,² as India was known in the ancient times, has since been a repository of wealth and heritage, and had been a centre for the transmission of knowledge. The Mongols, the Greeks, the Mughals, the Portuguese, the French and the British -- people from all over the world came to conquer this country; but it withstood numerous such transgressions and retained its spirit. The strength that the land drew from, in order to be so, is often ascribed to its strong foundation of spiritual learning and education which are rooted in the

¹ Kachappilly, Kurian. Gurukula: A Family with Difference – An Exposition of the Ancient Indian System of Education (2003).

http://www.academia.edu/4378166/Gurukula_A_Family_with_Difference_An_Exposition_of_the_Ancient_Indian_System_of_Education.

² Bharata was picked to be the name of the country, India in 1950, but there is no historical evidence that the name Bharata, was used in actual life before 1950. The name Bharata came from King Bharata, referring mainly to two figures – Bharata Chakravartin or Emperor Bharata – and it has been used as a self-ascribed name by some people of the Indian subcontinent and the Republic of India. The designation Bharata appears in the official Sanskrit name of the country. The name is derived from ancient Hindu Puranas, which refer to the land that comprises India as *Bharatavarsha* and uses this term to distinguish it from other vrsas or continents. The Sanskrit word *bharata* is a *vrddhi* derivation of *Bharata*, which was originally an epithet of Agni. The term is a verbal noun of the Sanskrit root *bhr-*, “to bear/to carry,” with a literal meaning to be maintained (of fire). This term also means “one who is engaged in search for knowledge.” The Srimad Bhagavata Purana mentions, “He (Rishab) begot a hundred sons that were exactly like him... He (Bharata) had the best qualities and it was because him that this land by the people is called *Bharatavarsha*.” The Bharatas were also a Vedic tribe mentioned in the Rigveda, notably participating in the Battle of the Ten Kings. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_For_India.

culture of the land. This regard for experiential knowledge was credited to the region's prolonged recognition as a centre of learning. Knowledge was imparted in the *Guru-Shishya parampara* at *Gurukulas*³ and *ashrams*, which were established centres of learning.

It is important to emphasize that indigenous education was carried out through *pathshalas*, *madrassahs* and *Gurukulas*. Education in these institutions -- which were actually kept alive by revenue contributions by the community including illiterate peasants -- was called *shiksha* (and included the ideas of *prajna*, *shil* and *samadhi*). These institutions were, in fact, the watering holes of the culture of traditional communities. Therefore, the term 'school' is a weak translation of the roles these institutions really played in Indian society. (Dharampal 2000, 17-18)⁴

Acquiring knowledge and skills under the tutelage of a *guru*, while being a part of his household, living with him fulltime, assisting him in doing the household chores and other tasks as and when required, was considered the method to make learning holistic. Observing and absorbing all that the *guru* taught through such a process imbued an all-round development in the *shishya*, the seeker of knowledge. In the *Guru-Shishya Parampara* or the teacher-disciple descent, the teacher was held in high regard and given the status of almost a god. This institution was supposed to be insulated from the social and political structures,

³Apart from Gurukulas and ashrams, there were other educational institutes where knowledge and skills were imparted: *Parishads*, *Goshis*, *Vidyapeetas*, *Ghatikas*, *Agraharas*, *Mathas*, *Brahmanapuri* and *Viharas*.

⁴ Dharampal, *The Beautiful Tree: Indigenous Indian Education in the Eighteenth Century*. Goa, Other India Press Mapusa, 2000.

as acquiring knowledge was beyond these hierarchies. It kept religion, dogmatic practises, governance and administration away from the realm of acquisition of knowledge.⁵

Originally, the aim of education was to achieve enlightenment, liberation or *moksha* and was free for all the classes/castes of the society. One's inclination and capacity were the only criteria for learning. Those who showed an aptitude for learning the scriptures were known as *Brahmins*, those interested in warfare became *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishya's* were those interested in business or accountancy, and the rest were *Shudras* who either learnt some skill that interested them or remained manual labourers. Training the students in the social, cultural and economic responsibilities enabled them to enrich the cultural heritage that they inherited and developed their character so that they led a principled life.

In the Vedic system of education, the students were taught the four *Vedas*, six *Vedangas*, *Upanishads*, six *Darshanas*, *Puranas*, *Tarka*, *Sastras* and other related texts. Vocational training comprised of the sixty-four arts; and, music and dance were a part of that training. Those trained in these arts would become the practicing agents of culture, such as the sculptor, the architect, the potter,

⁵ Joseph Prabhu (a Professor of Philosophy and Religion at California State University, Los Angeles), on the subject of education for nobility, describes "Outside the religious framework, kings and princes were educated in the arts and sciences related to government: politics (*danda-nitti*), economics (*vartha*), philosophy (*amiksiki*), and historical traditions (*itibasa*). Here the authoritative source was Kautaliya's *Arthasastra*, often compared to Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* for its worldly outlook and political scheming."⁵ Prabhu, Joseph (2006), "Educational Institutions and Philosophies, Traditional and Modern", *Encyclopaedia of India (vol. 2)* edited by Stanley Wolpert, pp. 23–28, Thomson Gale.

the wheelwright, the weaver, the perfumer, the painter, the musician and the dancer. The seekers begin their training in their childhood and are engaged in lessons on *dharma*, interpretations, cultural ethos, mathematics, geometry, writing, as well as traditional practises like "agricultural sciences, metallurgy, charioteering, stone working, leather working, carpentry, shipbuilding and rope-making... even linguistics (*desa-bhasha-vijnanam*), pedagogics (science of teaching) and humour (*hasya*) formed departments by themselves" (Sahana Singh 2017, 29).⁶ For instance, "[t]he art of constructing altars of various dimensions and shapes for conducting *yagna* was regarded as significant and this required the teaching of solid Geometry" (Sahana Singh 2017, 4). The rules of initiation, period of training and type of training differed for each of these professions.⁷



Source: "The Educational Heritage of Ancient India: How an Ecosystem of Learning was Laid to Waste." Chennai: Notion Press.com, 2017.

Figure 1. 1: Ancient centres of Learning in the Indian Subcontinent

⁶Singh, Sahana. "The Educational Heritage of Ancient India: How an Ecosystem of Learning was Laid to Waste." Chennai: Notion Press.com, 2017.

⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upanayana>

With the changing times, many centres of higher learning, such as Takshashila (Pakistan),⁸ Mithila, Odantapuri, Vikramshila and Nalanda (Bihar),⁹ Vallabhi (Gujarat), Pushpagiri and Ratnagiri (Odisha), Somapura, Jagaddala and Bikrampur (Bangladesh), Nagarjunakonda (Andhra Pradesh), Ujjaini (Madhya Pradesh), Varanasi¹⁰ (Uttar Pradesh), Sharada Peeth (Kashmir) and Kanchipuram (Tamil Nadu) were established. These were urban institutes, where subjects like medicine, logic, philosophy, grammar, metaphysics and arts and crafts were taught. These institutes¹¹ attracted students from near and far lands like Nepal, Tibet, Thailand, China and Central Asia. Such institutes of higher learning flourished until 12th century AD; and thereafter, with the onslaught of the Muslim invasions, these centres were destroyed and burnt down. But the inherent vitality of the ancient Indian system of education, saw these centres of learning move to more amicable areas of the country. Most of them shifted to the southern peninsula (Altekar 1944, 112-113),¹² to places like Sringeri, Hampi and Kanchi. Thus, the *Guru–Shishya Parampara* had survived, but only barely.

⁸Takshashila University, was in the present-day Pakistan. Here 16 branches of learning were taught in different schools. Students used to come here to learn subjects as varied as Painting, sculpture, handicrafts, medicine, political science, Vedas, grammar, agriculture, commerce, music, dance etc. Kautilya, Panini, Charaka, Jivak were some of the students who graduated from this University.

⁹ Nalanda, established by the Gupta dynasty in the 5th Century. The syllabus was imparted in a structured and planned manner. It had a large library, where thousands of manuscripts on various subjects were kept.

¹⁰ Varanasi was known for its theology classes.

¹¹Chinese traveller Fa-Hien (405 CE) and Xuanzang (630 – 643 CE), a monk from China, give detailed accounts of their visits to Takshashila and Nalanda (Sahana Singh 2017).

¹²Altekar, AS. “Education in Ancient India.” Benares India: Nand Kishore & Bros., 1944.

Traditional Knowledge System Displaced

Support for the publication of books in Sanskrit and Arabic should be withdrawn, support for traditional education should be reduced to funding for the Madrassa at Delhi and the Hindu College at Benares, but students should no longer be paid to study at these establishments. The money released by these steps should go to fund education in Western subjects, with English as the language of instruction. “*Minute upon Indian Education*” (1935)¹³

The British introduced the western system of education in India and made English the medium of instruction for their own political convenience and interests. Lord Macaulay,¹⁴ the architect of English education in India, was largely responsible for unsettling the then existing indigenous system of education.

There is a sense of widespread neglect and decay in the field of indigenous education within a few decades after the onset of British rule. This is the major common impression which emerges from the 1822-25 Madras Presidency data, the report of W. Adam on Bengal and Bihar 1835-38, and the later Punjab survey by G.W. Leitner. If studies of the detailed data pertaining to the innumerable crafts, technologies and manufactures of this period, or for that

¹³http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/macaulay/txt_minute_education_1835.html

¹⁴The purpose of the company was to educate the elite group which would educate the general public later, and thus fulfilling the goal of educating the masses in general.” He explained the same by observing that, “the aim of education in India was to anglicize the Indians through English education and to make black coloured Indian English in their way of living, behaviour, thought, culture, traditions and morality. Such persons were likely to serve as the connecting link between the British Government and the general public.

matter of social organisation were to be made, the conclusions in all probability will be little different. (Dharampal, 60)

Thus, the British rule,¹⁵ in addition to the destruction caused by the preceding Mughal invasions in the Indian subcontinent was responsible for the decline of the indigenous education system over a period of nearly thousand years. At the end of this prolonged period which resulted in eroding the faith of the people in their own culture and traditions made them alien to their own customs and practices. As scholars opine, these English teaching institutions played no role in promoting rational outlook or independent thinking and merely produced dozens of graduates who were “sufficiently Westernized to be alienated from their own culture and tradition,” (Mukherji 1966, cited by Meena 86).¹⁶ But the unforeseen result of this imposition of English language was that it infused a sense of unity amongst the educated Indians which bound them together and fostered a spirit of Indian nationalism which resulted in many of the intellectuals and cognoscenti taking it upon themselves to preserve and

¹⁵ The most well-known and controversial point which emerged from the educational surveys lies in an observation made by William Adam. In his first report, he observed that there exist about 1, 00,000 village schools in Bengal and Bihar around the 1830s. This statement appears to have been founded on the impressions of various high British officials and others who had known the different areas rather intimately and over long periods; it had no known backing of official records. Similar statements had been made, much before W. Adam, for areas of the Madras Presidency. Men like Thomas Munro, had observed that ‘every village had a school. For areas of the newly extended Presidency of Bombay around 1820, senior officials like G.L. Prendergast noted ‘that there is hardly a village, great or small, throughout our territories, in which there is not at least one school, and in larger villages more. Observations made by Dr G.W. Leitner in 1882 show that the spread of education in the Punjab around 1850 was of a similar extent. (Dharampal 2000, 18).

¹⁶Meena, Dr Hareet Kumar. "Educational Structure and Process of Colonization in Colonial India." *American International Journal of Research in Humanities, Art and Social Sciences* (2015). ISSN (online): 2328-3696.

resurrect the native art forms of India, in other words, “to seek space in public sphere” (Kaladharan 2011, 207).¹⁷

It will be seen, over the course of this Chapter, that the dynamics of teaching had been metamorphosed from the traditional centres to the institutions; however, the *Guru-Shishya Parampara* could not be fully done away with. Especially in the performing arts, despite the establishment of modern institutions based on the western system of education, the *guru* still played an important role. In short, this kind of institutionalization did not diminish the *guru*'s role by any degree.

Institutionalization of Dance in India: A Perspective

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, defines Institutionalization as “to cause (a custom, practice, law, etc.) to become accepted and used by many people: to establish (something) as an institution; to make into an institution: give character of an institution, to incorporate into a structured and highly formalized system (institutionalized values).” Institutionalization was the consequence of rapid industrialization and urbanization and as Mayer and Scott¹⁸ have explained “Institutions are visible structures and routines that make-up organizations and are a direct reflection and effects of rules built into

¹⁷Kaladharan, V. "From Meditative Learning to Impersonal Pedagogy: Reflections on the Transformation of an Indian Gurukula." *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences* 20.1 (2011): 207-218.

¹⁸ Meyer, John W., and Richard Scott. 1983. *Organizational Environments: Ritual and Rationality*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

a wider environment.” In Sociology, Institutions¹⁹ are activities which are repeated or continuous within a regularized pattern that is normatively sanctioned. Sociologists have classified institutions into four major categories: political, economic, cultural and kinship. Political institutions deal with the competition for power while economic institutions deal with the production and distribution of goods and services. Cultural institutions deal with religious, artistic and expressive activities and the traditions of the society which are publicly celebrated, and kinship institutions focus on the question of marriage, the family and the rearing of the young.

As already mentioned, numerous traditions, customs, norms, laws and some conventions go into the making of an institution. When these aspects are accepted by many people, and in turn become mandatory, it eventually leads to institutionalization. That is, when a sizeable group of individuals decide to follow certain social and religious conventions which, in turn, are passed on to their children and further on to their succeeding generations. Certain cultural practises like wearing a particular kind of attire for special occasions or eating food in a certain prescribed order or celebrating festivals, have all descended through generations. Most institutions are made by men, while some claim to have divine origin as the source of their power to gain sanctity.

¹⁹ In this work the terms institute and institution are being used interchangeably and as nouns; and, the term institutionalization is used as a verb, meaning to make a group of activities or processes as a formal organization that can be universally recognized.

According to Michel Foucault, “the aim of the disciplinary practices followed in the army, schools, hospitals, prisons and manufactory are to increase the utility of the body. Similarly, in institutions, discipline is very essential to put systems in place.”²⁰ Institutionalization, in dance, follows systematic and structured training practices which are repeated continuously, in turn making the body more efficient, responsive and flexible.²¹

Institutions are seen as “necessary for the survival of society [in this case, survival of dance forms, and so,] they draw the loyalty of its members.”²² Hence institutionalization as an idea and a concept seeped into the collective national consciousness and was viewed as an emphatic move towards integrating dance forms into the web of layers that would combine to define the uniform national cultural identity. For the performing arts in India (including music and dance) from the 1920s to the late 1940s, was a very important phase, as many Indian dance forms were being rediscovered and reconstructed to suit the contemporary needs of the nation in its search for a cultural identity. Recognition for these forms was garnered by teaching them at institutes and the dance forms themselves evolved rapidly.²³ Some dance forms metamorphosed by adopting new techniques and by drawing inspiration from

²⁰ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Pantheon Books (1975).

²¹ While observing the training sessions of the students at Kalakshetra and Kalamandalam, I found this to be true and my own personal experience at Kuchipudi Art Academy only re-emphasized the validity of the observation.

²² Stewart, E.W., Glynn, J.A., 1979. *Introduction to Sociology*. Singapore: McGraw Hill.

²³ Consequently, Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Kathak and Manipuri gained national recognition even before the country gained independence. The other forms, such as Kuchipudi, Odissi and Mohiniattam acquired national recognition much later, only post- independence.

the other art forms. In a conscious move, popularity for these dance forms was generated by encouraging many girls and women from the non-hereditary and middle-class families to enrol into these institutes. Mrinalini Sinha (2006, 191),²⁴ points out, “the universalizing ambition in making women into a political constituency on the basis of their gender worked in ... complex ways. It required the incorporation of the poor and of the working-class women – even the female sex worker – to mobilize a construction of women as both the agents and the objects of reform,” (discussed in detail in chapter IV of this dissertation). By the time India had achieved independence, a few dance institutes to propagate and impart training in Indian art forms were already established, albeit with the influence of the western system of education. At these institutes the students were also taught allied art forms like music, instrumental music, theory, literature to complement their learning of dance.

The very first institute for arts in the country which included dance was Shantiniketan School founded by Rabindranath Tagore, in 1901. Tagore says the following about founding Shantiniketan (Ghosh 1978):²⁵

The idea with which I undertook to found Shantiniketan Asram, did not aim at anything further beyond entertaining and elevating the common human mind. What is known as culture is something

²⁴ Sinha, Mrinalini. “Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire.” Duke University Press Books, 2006.

²⁵ Ghosh, Santidev. “The Place of Dance, Drama and Music in Gurudev Rabindranath's System of Comprehensive Education.” *Music and Dance in Rabindranath Tagore's Education Philosophy*. New Delhi: Sangeet Natak Akademi, 1978. 31-60.

variegated, it polishes and purifies the mind; from the primitive dimness of an ore-like form, it ultimately helps the mind to attain its own value. This culture has numerous diversified branches. A healthy normal mind wants to absorb all those diverse inspirations. (Ghosh 1978, 32)

Later in 1919, Rabindranath Tagore, founded the Visva-Bharati University and introduced music and art courses in the curriculum. Many of his staff members opposed this move, as they felt that these were only meant for entertainment and “not deemed suitable for higher studies at university level,” (Ghosh 1978). Gurudev, as he still is popularly addressed, is believed to have responded to that comment by saying as follows: “In our country learned people are afraid of indulging in merry making. Enjoyment according to them disturbs the vital activities of man. If “Visva-Bharati” is formed, teaching of Indian music and art must be its principal treasures. This should be our pledge” (Ghosh 1978, 47). Seventeen years after its establishment, in 1936, dance was introduced in the curriculum of Visva-Bharati University. Manipuri and Kathakali, along with Ceylonese dances, were taught here. While this was happening, other regions in India also witnessed the establishment of similar institutions by individuals and all of them were engaged in offering training in dance. Some of them acquired great distinction in the following decades.

The School of Hindustani Music and Dance was founded by Nirmala Joshi, in 1936 at Delhi, to teach Kathak and Hindustani music. Almost parallel to this,

Uday Shankar²⁶ established his institute, Uday Shankar India Culture Centre, at Almora in 1939; he had, by then, gained fame for himself across the western world as a dancer representing the Indian ethos. He taught Manipuri, Bharatanatyam and Kathakali at his Institute. Kapila Vatsyayan comments: “Uday Shankar’s great contribution to Indian dance is not only the development of a new style but also giving a new vision to his colleagues and disciples” (Vatsyayan 2015, 34).²⁷ In the same year, 1936, when, dance became a part of the syllabus of the Viswa-Bharathi University; down South in India, Rukmini Devi Arundale established the Kalakshetra and taught Sadir, or as she exclusively called it Bharatanatyam, in Madras. A pioneering effort was however done by Kerala poet Vallathol, who started the Kerala Kalamandalam, in 1930 to teach Kathakali dance. In the year 1941, Madam Maneka founded Nrityalayam at Kandala (Maharashtra) to train students in the North Indian dance form, Kathak.

By the end of the British Raj, the middle class was well entrenched and was looking for a way to establish its identity. It was at such a juncture that these institutes came in handy to serve that purpose of: “Teaching dance and music to young women who come from ordinary middle-class backgrounds, who are

²⁶ Uday Shankar, initially went to England to study painting under Sir William Rothenstein in London. After meeting Anna Pavlova, he choreographed Radha-Krishna dance, modelling it on the miniature paintings and murals of Ajanta and Ellora. He became Anna Pavlova’s dance partner and inspired by the postures (*bhanganimas*) in the paintings, depicted sculptures through the human body in his dances.

²⁷ Kapila Vatsyayan in Conversation. Nartanam XV (2):34.

not consumed with a fervour or passion of nationalism, but who wish to study the art for either a professional purpose or for the general purpose of a rounded education” (Vatsyayan 1980, 97).²⁸ And, with women entering the field in large numbers as performers in areas dominated by men till then (excepting for Bharatanatyam and Odissi), these dance institutes catered to a larger number of people outside the hereditary families. Parents did not hesitate to send their daughters to these institutes as they felt their children would be safe as opposed to the hereditary artistes with ambiguous backgrounds; and, an element of respectability was also attached to these centres. Thus, these were the notable schools that imparted training and taught Indian traditional dance forms to people from non-hereditary backgrounds, and had played a pivotal role in crediting Indian dance with a “respectable” status in the late and post-colonial India.

²⁸Vatsyayan, Kapila. *Asian Dance Multiple Levels*. Delhi: B R Rhythms, 2011.

No	Name of the Institute	Year of Establishment	Key Founders	Place	Art Forms
<u>1.</u>	Shantiniketan, Visva-Bharati University	1901 1919	Rabindranath Tagore	Bolpur, West Bengal	Manipuri Kathakali Ceylonese Dances
<u>2.</u>	Kalamandalam	1930	Vallathol Narayana Menon	Cheruthuruthy Thrissur, Kerala	Kathakali Mohiniattam
<u>3.</u>	Kalakshetra	1936	Rukmini Devi	Adayar, Madras, Tamil Nadu	Bharatanatyam
<u>4.</u>	The School of Hindustani Music and dance	1936	Nirmala Joshi, R N Haksar, Shivraj Bahadur	Delhi	Kathak
<u>5.</u>	Uday Shankar India Culture Centre	1939	Uday Shankar	Almora, Uttar Pradesh	Kathakali Bharatanatyam Manipuri
<u>6.</u>	Nrityalayam	1941	Madam Maneka	Khandala, Maharashtra	Kathak Manipuri Kathakali

Table 1.1: Pioneering Dance Institutes in India which have contributed to its Renaissance

Institutionalization: The Case of Kuchipudi

Kuchipudi, the form that is currently recognised as the classical dance form of the Telugus, originally belonged to a village, named Kuchipudi. It was practiced by a handful of hereditary Brahmin families that dwelled in this village. As an art form that was passed on from one generation to the next, it was taught, at their homes, by the Brahmin *gurus* to the young Brahmin boys of the other hereditary families of the village. Though the *shishya* was not residing with the *Guru*, the homes of the *Gurus* were

somewhat akin to *Gurukulas*. The *Shishyas* would go and learn the fundamentals from one *guru*, *Kalapas*²⁹ from another and the *Yakshaganas* from an expert in that area. Training in music would be given by yet another *guru*. Thus, the system of an “institution,” in a very rudimentary sense, already existed in the Kuchipudi village at the homes of the Kuchipudi *gurus*.³⁰

Kuchipudi art form, as practiced and propagated from the village was a rural theatrical form and over a period, the artform³¹ transformed itself from its original performing practise of *Kalapas*, *Yakshaganas* to the present-day solo and dance drama format by the mid twentieth century. According to oral history, of the performance practises of the Kuchipudi *Bhagavatulu*, the *Kalapas* are the earliest, *Bhamakalapam* and *Gollakalapam* being performed extensively. Though it is only from the mid 18th century that evidence of the performance of *Bhamakalapam* is available, it can safely be presumed that the *Kalapams* were the core performing practise of the Kuchipudi *Bhagavatulu* until very late 19th century. And then they started exploring the genre of the *Yakshaganam*.³² Chinta

²⁹ The traditional repertoire of the Kuchipudi Bhagavathas, initially was the *Kalapas*, *Bhamakalapam* and *Gollakalapam*. Later, *Yakshaganas* were introduced by Chinta Venkataramayya (1870s) to combat the influence of the Parsi theatre.

³⁰ Information was provided by P Kesava Prasad, P Rattayya Sarma, C Seetaramanjeyulu and V Ramalinga Sastry at Kuchipudi village.

³¹ In this dissertation whenever the term artform is used in the context of Kuchipudi, it refers to all the genres of the form -- *Kalapas*, *Yakshaganas*, solos and dance dramas. When the term dance form is mentioned, it refers to the solos and dance drama genres.

³² Besides these genres the *Pagati Vesams* were performed by the Kuchipudi Bhagavatulu, during daytime. Presently, all these genres co-exist, but the solo and dance drama are prominently seen, and the Kuchipudi dance form is identified with them.

Venkataramayya pioneered this genre and the very first *Yakshaganam*, *Bhakta Prablada* was presented around 1880s.³³ This genre was mostly an answer of the Kuchipudi *Bhagavatulu* to the cultural onslaught of the Parsi theatre.³⁴ *Yakshaganas* required a large cast of actors/dancers and Venkataramayya brought about many new innovations into the performance practise of Kuchipudi dance. By 1930s, most of the *Yakshaganas* had been choreographed; and, by that time the solo genre was also being popularized by Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry in the idiom of Kuchipudi. Sastry forayed into this genre, teaching the individual items which were already a part of the Kalapams and Yakshaganas, both to the hereditary and non-hereditary artistes. He did so, in addition to teaching the various dances he had learned elsewhere and those that he had composed himself. Later, one of his students, Vempati Chinna Satyam, started a Kuchipudi dance school in Madras³⁵ (presently Chennai) and taught the form to women in large numbers; and, he was instrumental in bringing national and international recognition to the art form. He was also responsible for introducing dance dramas into the Kuchipudi performance practice. Talking about Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, Chinna Satyam states as follows:

³³ Sarma, MN. "Kuchipudi: Gurus, Performers and Performance Traditions." Ranga Sampada, 2016. The author admits that the dates are controversial and this *Yakshagana* must have been staged between 1886-1887 (Sarma, 116).

³⁴Refer to Jonnalagadda (1996), Putcha (2011) and Thota (2016).

³⁵ During the course of this work the city of Chennai will be known by its old name Madras.

Everything was new and his own. The old items like ‘Dasavathara Sabdam’ were very few. They were introduced to either give rest to the senior lead actor or to initiate new talent. All the items he did were more or less his own. He borrowed heavily from all over. From Marathi, Tamil, Sanskrit, traditional Telugu songs - everything he can lay his hands on. He was also a great experimentalist. In fact in the transition days, he was doing “*Madhuranagarilo*” and other light songs. But if he were to go only in that line he would not have been remembered now. What he did was entirely in the classical mould. He was responsible for giving ‘solo’ its rightful place in our dance scenario. (*Nartanam* 2002, 29-30)³⁶

Josyula Seetharamayya gives the reason for so many Kuchipudi Bhagavathas learning from Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry:

That was because of two reasons. One was that it was new and was thrilling.....There was a second and more important reason: this new dance might earn for us our livelihood. More and more individuals wanted to learn that so they could make a living. Anyway chances in *yakshaganas* were dwindling. These reasons prompted all of us to go to Sastry garu. (*Nartanam* 2002, 42)

From all these accounts, it seems that by 1930s, Kuchipudi dance was at crossroads, as *Yakshaganas* performances were on the decline and the Kuchipudi artistes were looking for something new to sustain themselves. It is at this juncture that they learnt this novel and innovative *vyastha nrityam* (solo

³⁶Vempati Chinna Satyam. *Nartanam* 2 (2):29-30.

dance) to find a new source of income. After learning from Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, they started teaching it outside the Kuchipudi village, either on one to one basis or by opening institutions and imparting the art to larger number of students. Hence, for the purposes of this study, Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry emerges as a key figure because most of the *gurus* of the twentieth and twenty-first century were his disciples.³⁷ These disciples established institutes of their own, across the combined Telugu States and some outside the State and have been teaching the solo genre of Kuchipudi, mostly to the non-hereditary aspirants. Therefore, Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry's style of Kuchipudi got extensively propagated and this *parampara* has been carried forward into the twenty-first century, making it the most visible style owing to it being the most viable style to be taught in institutions to non-hereditary men/women to perform solos. Like it happened with the other dance forms, when Kuchipudi came out of the native place and wanted to establish itself as a classical dance form in the urban centres, it became possible only by founding institutes of dance; thus, a journey began, treading new paths. George Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) sees "traditions, customs, norms, laws and institutions as inheritance that have achieved legitimacy (if they have indeed achieved) by standing the test of time."³⁸ By this parameter, Kuchipudi

³⁷Tandava Krishna, C R Acharyulu, Vempati Peda Satyam, Vedantam Jagannadha Sarma, Josyula Seetharamayya, Vempati Chinna Satyam, Nataraja Ramakrishna, P V G Krishna Sarma, Vedantam Prahlada Sarma, Korada Narasimha Rao, Yeleswarapu Nageswara Sarma, Uma Rama Rao to name a few.

³⁸ International Encyclopaedia of Political Science.

practitioners had established their institutions by nineteenth century itself. But the concern here is about the nature of the institutions that were newly negotiated in the twentieth century. So, the scope of this research can be defined in the following questions that are raised:

- i) Did institutionalization in Kuchipudi come about as a conscious, collective chosen action or was it the outcome of societal and new State's need for its own cultural identity?
- ii) What are the national and state level cultural policies which aided this transformation?
- iii) What was the role of Kuchipudi Art Academy, one of the earliest and long standing Kuchipudi institutions in establishing Kuchipudi as a classical dance form and in expanding its teaching methodology and repertoire? What was its impact on the introduction of new solo numbers and dance dramas in Kuchipudi?
- iv) What changes did institutionalization necessitate in the teaching-learning methodology, repertoire, performance, and other aspects of the form?
- v) What was the role of the students of the first generation from these institutes, who went on to establish their own teaching centres and propagated this dance form nationally and internationally?
- vi) What form did the art of Kuchipudi assume by late twentieth century owing to the establishment of these various institutions in different

places across the country and world over? Did the context influence the content and core?

The answers to numerous questions of this nature will unfold in this work. As major innovations happened in institutionalization from, early to middle of the twentieth century, in the dance form, this work will be focusing on this time period.

Review of Literary Works

Kuchipudi art form has been investigated by many scholars and the genres of its antiquity, evolution and performance have been explored thoroughly. Some of the earliest written works in the dance form were by both non-hereditary scholars who were connoisseurs of the art form and the hereditary Kuchipudi artistes -- to educate the people-- when the dance form was gaining currency. They recorded the history and technique of Kuchipudi dance in books and wrote articles in journals on this art form. Some of the major articles in this field were in journals³⁹ and magazines, both in English and the Telugu language, like the Music Academy Journal, Marg, *Natyakala*, *Dhanka*, *Kinnera*, *Suryaprabha*, *Kalakshetra Quaterly*, *Bharati*, *Gruhalaxmi*, *Jagriti*, *Natana* to mention a few. Among the articles by the hereditary artistes published in these journals, majority were

³⁹ All these articles were accessed at the private library of Anuradha Jonnalagadda.

written by Vempati Peda Satyam.⁴⁰ One of his articles titled “*Kuchipudi Natya Sikshana Kramam Sampradaya Siddamaiyana Sikshana Vivarana*” gives us an idea of the hereditary Kuchipudi training system and repertoire. These journals and magazines help in giving an overview on what was happening in the Kuchipudi dance field at the state and national level from early to the middle of the twentieth century. Some scholars from the hereditary families of Kuchipudi village like Chinta Ramanadham,⁴¹ who pursued research, “succeeded to some extent in bringing out a connected narrative, of the development of the form” (Jonnalagadda 1996, 19). But the lacuna was “that they did not deal with the solos and the changes that occurred, if any, during its transformation from dance drama to solo,” (Jonnalagadda 1996). Vedantam Parvatisam’s *Nritya Taringini*, *Kuchipudi Melakartalu*⁴² and *Bhagavathula Kuchipudi*, which is an autobiographical account by the author, are some of the first books written by hereditary artistes from the Kuchipudi families. Others like Vedantam Prahlada Sarma,⁴³ Hemadri Chidambara Dikshitulu⁴⁴ and more recently, Vedantam Ramalinga Sastry⁴⁵ and Bhagavathula Lakshminarasimham⁴⁶ followed him. Their writings give a linear narrative of the history of the art form and biographical sketches of the lives of the Kuchipudi artistes.

⁴⁰ Many of his articles and contributions to the field of Kuchipudi will be discussed in the following chapters.

⁴¹ Chinta Ramanadham, “Kuchipudi Natya Bharati,” (Ph.D. diss., Kuchipudi, 1988).

⁴² For more see chapter III of this dissertation.

⁴³ Vedantam Prahlada Sarma, *Kuchipudi Nritya Manjari* (1991).

⁴⁴ Hemadri Chidambara Dikshitulu *Kuchipudi Kalasagaramu (Nrityasastramu)*, (Rajahmundry, 1989).

⁴⁵ Vedantam Ramalinga Sastry, *Telugulo Kuchipudi Nataka Vikasamu* (Vijayawada, 2006).

⁴⁶ Bhagavathula Lakshmi Narasimham, *BLN Vysalus (Pushpak Viman Yatra)*, (Hyderabad, 2011).

Non-hereditary individuals, like lawyer turned Kuchipudi dancer/writer, Ayyanki Tandava Krishna⁴⁷ and Banda Kanakalingeshwara Rao⁴⁸ have frequently written articles, in journals and worked tirelessly to propagate and popularize the form. Banda Kanakalingeshwara Rao, was instrumental in recording the Kuchipudi *Kalapas* and *Yakshaganas* in the All India Radio Station, Vijayawada, from the year 1957. Dance-scholars like Uma Rama Rao⁴⁹ and CR Acharyulu⁵⁰ have written articles and published books on the different aspects of the form. S V Joga Rao⁵¹ and V Appa Rao⁵² from Andhra University contributed to the theoretical corpus of Indian dance, by publishing scholarly articles and speaking about the dance form at various forums. Nataraj Ramakrishna⁵³ wrote copiously about Kuchipudi and was a vociferous champion of Kuchipudi dance, in its early years of struggle to establish itself as a “classical” dance form. Through his works, writer Arudra⁵⁴ raised certain fundamental questions on the “authenticity of the existence of Siddhendra Yogi and the document, especially Machupalli Kaifiat which refers to Kuchipudi and scholars identifying it to Kuchipudi of Divi Taluq. He opines that it is to the Kuchipudi village situated near Vinukonda that the particular reference was

⁴⁷ Tandava Krishna, “Kuchipudi Dance,” Andhra Pradesh Souvenir, Andhra Association, Delhi Nov 1, 1956.

⁴⁸ He was the force behind establishing Siddhendra Kalakshetra, in Kuchipudi village

⁴⁹ Uma Rama Rao, Kuchipudi Bharatam, or Kuchipudi Dance: A South Indian Classical Dance Tradition (New Delhi, 1992).

⁵⁰ CR Acharyulu and Mallika Sarabhai, Understanding Kuchipudi (New Delhi, 1992).

⁵¹ S V Joga Rao, “Andhra Yakshagana Vangmaya Charitra,” Rajahmundry, 1961.

⁵² V Appa Rao, was invited to the first dance seminar conducted by SNA, in 1958, to talk about Kuchipudi. He along with Kanchanamala represented Kuchipudi dance. Published a book on the works of Kshetranya.

⁵³ Dakshinatyula Natya Kala Charitra, Nrityanjali.

⁵⁴ Dance Traditions of Andhra, Samagra Andhra Sahityam

made in the Kaifiyat” (Jonnalagadda, 1996, 21). That argument has been negated later.

Kapila Vatsyayan, the maverick Indian scholar, who has numerous articles and books to her credit, included Kuchipudi in *Traditional Indian Theatre - Multiple Streams*,⁵⁵ but refused to include Kuchipudi in her book *Indian Classical Dance*,⁵⁶ by saying, “I have not trained in Kuchipudi.” *Kuchipudi: Indian Classical Dance Art* written by Sunil Kothari,⁵⁷ a scholar and dance critic, published this book documenting the Kuchipudi dance and its *gurus* with pictorial inputs from photographer Avinash Pasricha.

Nartanam, the quarterly journal of Indian Dance, started by GM Sarma, an admirer of the Kuchipudi dance form, has proved to be a huge repository of information on dance studies for research scholars. The issues on individual *gurus* like Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, Chinta Venkataramayya and Vempati Chinna Satyam give a linear view on the evolution of the Kuchipudi dance form, from *kalapas*, *yakshaganas* to solo numbers and dance dramas; these have been recorded in their biographies. While organizing Kuchipudi dance festivals in multiple cities in India, GM Sarma published the Kuchipudi Mahotsav Souvenirs which are very informative. These Souvenirs include articles by scholars on topics related to various dance forms.

⁵⁵ Kapila Vatsyayan, *Traditional Indian Theatre- Multiple Streams* (New Delhi, 1983).

⁵⁶ Kapila Vatsyayan, *Indian Classical Dance* (New Delhi, 1992), Preface.

⁵⁷ Kothari Sunil, *Kuchipudi: Indian Classical Dance Art*, 2001.

Kuchipudi: Gurus, Performers and Performance Traditions by M Nagabhushana Sarma (2015), a reputed scholar, teacher and former editor of Nartanam, is the most recent book published on Kuchipudi art form. As the title suggests it is an ethnographic account on all the hereditary Kuchipudi *gurus* and performers. This book has devoted separate chapters on all those *gurus* who started teaching outside its native land and mentions the antecedents of establishing Siddhendra Kalakshetra at Kuchipudi village.

The scholarly works on Kuchipudi dance have contributed immensely in building a body of research work, thereby enabling future scholars to build upon their works. The first major and scholarly study was done on the Kuchipudi dance form by Anuradha Jonnalagadda⁵⁸ in her *Traditions and Innovations in Kuchipudi Dance*. Beginning with the evolution of the dance form from *Kalapas* to *Yakshaganas* to solos and the dance dramas and giving ethnographic accounts of the hereditary *gurus* and performers. By tracing the historicity of the dance form with supporting evidences by way of revenue records, partition deeds and tracing the family trees of the hereditary Kuchipudi families, she has provided many authentic proofs. Journals and articles, books in Telugu and English which are about or mention Kuchipudi dance have been documented in this thesis. It discusses thoroughly the changes in the *nritta* technique that the form underwent from the hereditary

⁵⁸ Anuradha Jonnalagadda, “*Traditions and Innovations in Kuchipudi Dance*,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Hyderabad, 1996).

practitioners to the changes brought about by Vempati Chinna Satyam at Kuchipudi Art Academy, Madras and the evolution of the solo numbers and the introduction of dance dramas by Vempati Chinna Satyam. Being the first seminal work on Kuchipudi dance in English language, it is the foundation on which other scholarly works, by Indian or Western scholars, are built upon. Its importance to this research cannot be underscored enough, as it gains many insights from it.

An extensive empirical work in Kuchipudi by Davesh Soneji,⁵⁹ *Performing Satyabhama: Text, Context, Memory and Mimesis*, investigates the Kuchipudi and conventional performance practices of *devadasis*. It highlights certain contradistinctions in the performing practices of the highbrow male Brahmin histrionics and the lowbrow female dance customs of Andhra Pradesh.

In *Revisiting The Classical: A Critical History of Kuchipudi Dance*, scholar Rumya Putcha,⁶⁰ mentions the influence of regional and linguistic reorganization of the States in 1956 on the Kuchipudi dance in a very clear and lucid language and it [State's reorganization] being instrumental for Kuchipudi dance gaining recognition as the classical dance form of Andhra Pradesh. She tries to understand the relevance of the dance form by studying the "imaged histories and identity politics" to the Telugus in India and the diaspora all over the

⁵⁹ Davesh Soneji, "Performing Satyabhama: Text, Context, Memory and Mimesis in Telugu Speaking South India." (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2004).

⁶⁰Rumya Putcha, "Revisiting The Classical: A Critical History of Kuchipudi Dance," (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2011).

world. This work mentions the institutionalization of Kuchipudi dance and traces the linear history of Kuchipudi from 1675 AD to the present day and examines the *Nattuva and Natyamela* performance traditions and genres of Andhra Pradesh. It also focuses on the advent of Kuchipudi artistes like Vedantam Raghavayya and Vempati Peda Satyam who went to Chennai to choreograph for films and the influence of Kuchipudi on Telugu cinema that had paved the way for Kuchipudi to establish itself as a classical dance form in Chennai. She opined that Vempati Chinna Satyam's Kuchipudi Art Academy, launched in 1963, strengthened this further by standardizing the teaching methodology and repertoire of the dance form. It further mentions the differences in the hereditary style of Kuchipudi as against the urban sophisticated Kuchipudi of Chinna Satyam at the Kuchipudi Art Academy, Chennai.

Aesthetics, Performativity, & Performative Maya: Imagining Gender in the Textual and Performance Traditions of Telugu South India by Harshita Mruthinti Kamath⁶¹ explores the gender, aesthetics and performativity of *Satyabhama*, the consort of Krishna and a popular female character synonymous of Kuchipudi dance form. The work scrutinizes how the constructed gender is used as a tool in depicting the character. She brings out the contrast between the performance of a female and a male playing the role of *Satyabhama*. The reconstruction of

⁶¹Harshita Mruthinti Kamath, "*Aesthetics, Performativity, & Performative Maya: Imagining Gender in the Textual and Performance Traditions of Telugu South India*," (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2012).

Madhavi/Madhava or the role of *Sutradhara*, to suit the *Chennai Sabha's* as opposed to those performed in the rural areas, is discussed in this dissertation.

Another scholar who has done extensive research on Kuchipudi and its interaction with Telugu cinema is Katyayani Thota.⁶² Her work *Stage To Screen, And Back: A Study Of The Dialogue Between Kuchipudi and Telugu Cinema* has examined the lives of hereditary Kuchipudi artistes who worked in Telugu cinema and their role in transforming Kuchipudi into a mainstream classical dance form, both in the movies and on the proscenium. She has thrown light on hitherto unknown facts, like the need for the Telugu films directors to establish *Telugutanam*, in their films which in turn paved the way for the introduction of the Kuchipudi artistes and their art into Telugu movies. This work also discusses the politics of language and gender and their indirect influence in turning Kuchipudi into a classical dance form of Andhra Pradesh and the background for founding of a teaching institute in Madras, in the form of the Kuchipudi Art Academy by Vempati Chinna Satyam and traces the mutual influences of the Kuchipudi art form and the Telugu cinema on each other.

In the light of the research provided by the previous scholarship, this study aims to explore the origin and the process of institutionalization of Kuchipudi

⁶² Sree Katyayani Thota, "Stage To Screen, And Back: A Study Of The Dialogue Between Kuchipudi and Telugu Cinema," (Ph.D. diss., University of Hyderabad, 2016).

dance form; the reasons for this occurrence would be investigated into. Both the Government and the private institutes offering this dance form would be examined. Though some scholars did mention about the institutionalization, no in-depth study on the topic has been so far done.

Objectives of this Study:

- To trace the history of institutionalization of Indian dance forms in general and the Kuchipudi dance form in particular.
- The socio-political factors that led to the institutionalization of this art form.
- To bring out the contributions of the hereditary *gurus* to this process of institutionalization.
- To look at how this process has been furthered by the non-hereditary practitioners and their contribution to the dance form, within and outside the country.
- To study the impact of institutionalization on Kuchipudi dance form's pedagogical and performative practices.

Methodology

The methods adopted in investigating and collecting material for this research have been multifarious:

- i. Historical method
- ii. Ethnographic interactions

By visiting libraries in the Universities across the combined Telugu States and being able to access State and National archives in the State and the national capital enabled this research to gather the published and unpublished articles, books and dissertations. The World Wide Web (www) on the internet proved to be a very useful tool in collecting data on a wide- range of issues connected with all the artforms. All these have contributed to comprehend, understand and analyse the available material related to the study, thereby build up viable arguments and put forth the inferences in the subsequent Chapters.

Being able to watch and examine the videos of the dance dramas and solo dance numbers of the old and new choreographies of Vempati Chinna Satyam has helped to analyse and arrive at a new perspective on the dance form. It gave a glimpse of the changes that he brought into his choreographies over a period of time. The older dance compositions of Vempati Peda Satyam, Pasumurthy Krishnamurthy and Vedantam Raghavayya helped in tracing the evolution of the dance and improved the understanding of the art form.

The historical method helped in gathering information on the origin of institutionalization of Kuchipudi dance form. Where in the Indian nationalistic agenda met the linguistic aspirations of the Telugu State, the destiny of the Kuchipudi dance form seems to have taken a decisive turn.

Ethnography⁶³ is the recording and analysis of a culture or society, usually based on participant-observation and results in a written account of the people, place or institutions. For this purpose a questionnaire⁶⁴ was prepared and as and when required questions from it were raised to elicit information during personal communication with the informants. This questionnaire was mailed to practitioners of the artform, who had established institutions and had been teaching the dance form for a minimum of twenty years as this time period is necessary for an institute to incubate and be able to train students and to create new productions, across the country and abroad, but very few responded to it. While visiting the Kuchipudi village and meeting a few of the *gurus*, performers and villagers, this study could record their views on institutionalization. By talking to fellow research scholars, performers and educators in the field, different perspective of the form has been gained. Also, personal training in the form facilitated in enhancing the understanding of various genres within the dance style.

⁶³ Definition taken from the Glossary of Terms written by Simon Coleman and Bob Simpson.

⁶⁴ Questionnaire given in the Appendix.

As the study would bring out the circumstances which led to the institutionalization of this art form, it would highlight the contributions of those pioneering hereditary *gurus*, who were instrumental in establishing training institutions in Kuchipudi dance. These institutions proved to be the pivotal points from where artistes and teachers/*gurus* emerged. In turn these artistes were responsible for taking the art form outside the Telugu speaking States and spread it far and wide. Kuchipudi dance was propagated on the national and international terrain through institutionalization of the art form that happened from the 1950s onwards. This work further discusses the positive and negative aspects of institutionalization of the form, plugging the lacunae that might be present in the dance institutes, thus formed.

Chapter Digests

The historic importance given to the transmission of knowledge in the Indian culture and the genesis of modern teaching/learning systems in the Indian subcontinent are relevant, as it forms the base for the present-day institutionalized system of pedagogy. This work analyses the education system since ancient times in India and its gradual decline during the British rule. Further, the necessity of having performing arts as the cultural symbols of the country during the independence struggle and post-independence, the existing cultural atmosphere in the country and some of the pioneering dance institutes were studied. Hereditary Kuchipudi *guru* Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry's

contribution to the dance form is scrutinised and the effect he had on institutionalization is investigated. Justification of the topic, its relevance has been discussed and a survey of literature have been undertaken, subsequently. The scope of the topic and the research methodology adopted is also explained in the first chapter titled “Training Recontextualized: Establishing Institutes To Disseminate Indian Dances.” A brief outline of all the chapters will now be presented to give an overview of the dissertation.

The second chapter, “Of Identity, Activism and Policies: Kuchipudi Gains Official Patronage” gives a historical overview of the influence of the socio-religious reforms during the nation’s freedom movement and the rise of the middle class which became the patrons of the country’s performing art forms. It was this segment of the society that encouraged its girls to learn the native forms of music and dance. In the post-independence times with the formation of the State of Andhra Pradesh on the basis of language, its role in choosing Kuchipudi as the representative dance form of the Telugus and the patronage the form received has been discussed. In the context of the cultural policies of Central and State Governments and their impact on the institutionalization of Kuchipudi dance in the state through the Government Music and Dance colleges and the training system adopted by these colleges is analysed. The impact of the Certificate and Diploma courses offered by these institutes and

centres of higher learning (Universities), established later in time forms part of the discourse.

As the form was slowly gaining currency in the early part of the twentieth century, many of the Kuchipudi *gurus* began teaching outside the village. Many of the popular institutes and academies teaching and performing Kuchipudi are in the private realm. The works of some of the pioneering Kuchipudi *gurus* who were instrumental in founding Siddhendra Kalakshetra and formulating a syllabus and systematising the teaching process, in particular of Vedantam Parvatisam, Vedantam Pahlada Sarma and Vempati Peda Satyam are explored in the third chapter titled, “Originations From the Native Soil: Hereditary Artistes in the Process of Institutionalization.” The efforts and works of other hereditary Kuchipudi artistes, who popularized and propagated the art form, by establishing institutes outside Kuchipudi village, with special reference to Vempati China Satyam and his Kuchipudi Art Academy, Madras are examined in this chapter. Further, to comprehend the changes that occurred in the teaching methodology and repertoire of the dance form, a comparison of the syllabus prepared by Vempati Peda Satyam in the 1960s and another one formulated by a group of Kuchipudi *gurus* in 1983 under the aegis of Andhra Pradesh Nritya Akademi have been analysed.

In the twenty-first century, many non-hereditary men and women learnt this dance at institutions established by the hereditary artistes at the Kuchipudi

village, at Madras and Hyderabad. Later, some of the non-hereditary artistes went on to have successful performing and teaching careers, both in India and abroad. Their contributions and efforts to the art form have been highlighted in the fourth chapter titled “Kuchipudi Institutionalization: Non-Hereditary Artistes and Newer Contexts.” Apart from this, the impact of institutionalization on certain aspects of the dance form such as the styles and patronage has been analysed in this chapter.

The concluding chapter emphasizes the effects of institutionalization, the proliferation of dance institutes and its manifestations in different ways, on the Kuchipudi dance form and thus is titled “Corollaries of Institutionalization.” It attempts at understanding the recent trends that have been occurring in the form, in terms of preferences of the aspirants.

This dissertation builds upon the existing corpus of knowledge evident through research in the field of dance to support its argument of the effects of institutionalization of Kuchipudi dance, and the ensuing changes that the art form underwent in the process. It engages in constructivism of all the available facts and corroborates its findings with field visits and ethnographic experiences. By doing so, it demonstrates the inherent resilience of the hereditary artistes to respond to the changing times and to be able to pool in their combined creative genius with their artistic resources and evolve a new genre time and again to sustain themselves. It essentially argues that, as a

performing art form, Kuchipudi has been continuously reinventing and repackaging itself spreading out into a newer terrain - the urban arena. In the twentieth century this process has continued through institutionalization of the art form, wherein the solo genre was consolidated. This led to the expansion of the dance form, in all the spheres -- artistically and geographically – and the boundaries were extended to make the dance form more inclusive by allowing women and people from various class and caste backgrounds into its fold and creatively, through genres that were being newly explored. These developments owe to individuals who turned towards institutionalization as the only way forward.

Chapter II

Of Identity, Activism and Policies: Kuchipudi Gains

Official Patronage

To the extent that a convention is adopted by ever larger numbers of people, and comes to be collectively binding, it is eventually thought of as an ‘institution.’ This movement from informal to formal is termed ‘institutionalization.’ As it entails a shift from individual to social and from freedom to constraint, it can be viewed as a transition from ‘nature’ to ‘culture...’⁶⁵

The previous Chapter examined the process of establishment of institutions to propagate indigenous dance forms of India, which catered to the larger vision of a cultural identity for the country. As a result of the impact of the Bengal art renaissance⁶⁶ many leaders,⁶⁷ who were involved in the political liberty and social reforms of the country, got involved in the rejuvenation of the country’s indigenous art forms. This Chapter majorly discusses the events that led to the convergence of the nationalistic agenda with that of the regional cultural developments. It investigates the role of ‘classical dance’ that emerged as a cultural marker of various regions, which holds true for the Telugu land too, its development, patronage and dissemination. The focus will be on the evolution of the Kuchipudi dance form from a rural theatrical practise to a

⁶⁵Immergut, EM.<https://www.sowi.hu.berlin.de/de/lehre/lehre/compol/publ/pdfs/Immergut2011.pdf>

⁶⁶The Bengal renaissance was a cultural, social, intellectual and artistic movement in the Bengal region of pre-independent India in the 19th and early 20th century. The main proponents of this movement were Debendranath Tagore, Akshay Kumar Dutta, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Michal Madhusudan Dutta, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and Swami Vivekananda. For further readings read Bengal Renaissance by Anusua Chowdhary. https://www.academia.edu/3383405/Bengal_renaissance

⁶⁷ They include, E Krishna Iyer, Poet Vallathol, Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu, Harindranath Chattopadhyay.

“classical” dance form. The term “classicization” (Chatterjee, cited by Subramanian 2006) is described as “elevation of select aspects of culture, specifically as part of a deliberate and negotiated process of national culture formation.” Therefore, the multiple processes that the Kuchipudi art form had to undergo in order to get the ‘classical’ tag, and the role the various governmental agencies, like the national Akademies at the centre and the cultural agencies at the State level, had to play in order to persevere for this cause are deliberated in this Chapter.

Impact of Various Factors on the Cultural Scape of the Nation

The turn of the century witnessed vast changes which impacted the cultural scene of India. They were: the rise of the nationalistic fervour which spread throughout India, emergence of the middle class which played a decisive role in various movements and the migration of people in huge numbers from the rural areas to the urban lands; all these factors had played a very crucial role in enhancing the sense of cultural identity among the people.

Proliferation of Patriotic Zeal

The introduction of Western education by the British in the Indian Sub-continent stimulated the minds of the Indian nationalists and intelligentsia. This revitalization of the Indian mind which wanted to “reinterpret tradition radically to align it with their Westernised ethos,” (Subramanian,153)⁶⁸ led to

⁶⁸ Subramanian, V. “Class and Caste in Indian Dance and Music: Textual Dictates, Artist's Affiliations and Soco-Economic Context.” *Dance of India South Asian Studies Paper, No.10*. Ed. David Waterhouse. Mumbai: Popular Prakashan, 1998. 145-159.

the birth of the Bengal renaissance; and, from this awakening, many social reform movements emerged in Bengal and over a period of time spread to the rest of the country. Aided by western science and philosophical thoughts, a resurgence of the ancient Vedic culture of India was witnessed. This led to the formation of socio-religious organizations⁶⁹ like the Brahmo Samaj,⁷⁰ Arya Samaj,⁷¹ Ramakrishna Mission⁷² and the Theosophical Society.⁷³ These organisations “emphasised and fought for the principle of Individual liberty and social equality and stood for nationalism,” (Kumar 2016, 10). The aim of these organizations was to promote social equality which included women’s rights and education and fight against child marriages. An upsurge in the number of voluntary and social service organizations, literary and cultural associations and Mahila mandalis across the country and within the Telugu speaking areas of the Madras Presidency were the indirect impact of these reforms (Kumar 2016, 9).

As seen in the previous Chapter, indigenous education was slowly phased out with the introduction of Western education in the country; it gave more

⁶⁹ Kumar, Dr K Sravana. “The Political Awakening and National Struggle in Nellore District.” *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies* 3.7 (2016): 7-22. 25 March 2018.

⁷⁰ The Brahmo Samaj was founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1828 in Calcutta. It advocated setting up schools for girls, widow remarriage and eradication of polygamy and the purdah system.

⁷¹The Arya Samaj a social reform movement by Swami Dayananda Saraswati was started in the year 1875, to promote values and practices based on the Vedas. The members of this Samaj believe in one god and do not believe in idol worship.

⁷²Ramakrishna Mission was established by Swami Vivekananda to spread the teachings of Ramakrishna Pramahansa all over the world. They operate many schools, orphanages, libraries and dispensaries through which they do a lot of social service all over the world.

⁷³The Theosophical society was founded by Madam Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. Col Henery Steel Olcott and William Quan Judge in the year 1875 in New York, USA. In India it has its international headquarters in Adayar, Chennai and its objectives are to – to promote the study of ancient Aryan religion, moral regeneration in the communities and cultivate the feelings of universal Brotherhood. Annie Besant was one of its prominent members and was deeply involved in the Indian Freedom movement.

importance to English language, European history and allied subjects. In contrast, in the schools maintained by the native educational organizations, the students were taught moral science, Indian philosophy and religious studies; and, this native character of schools began to disappear with the introduction of Western education system. “A regular department meant a prescribed syllabus, fixed time tables and printed books” (Kumar 2016, 8), and it was common for the entire country. With the invention of printing press and advent of printed material, the oral system of teaching was substituted with text- books. But, with the spread of nationalism, the strength of the freedom movement expanded and many educational institutions with a commitment and passion towards nation building were launched. The Central Hindu School (1898) was founded by Annie Besant in Banaras to impart training based on Hindu philosophy. This school was transformed into a university, Banaras Hindu University, in 1916 under the stewardship of Madan Mohan Malviya. With the same spirit of nationalism,⁷⁴ schools were established in the Andhra region; most of them had the prefixes “Hindu,” “National,” “Azad,” “Jaatiya” and “Vivekananda” to denote the patriotic fervour of the founders of these institutions towards their Motherland. Parents would join their wards in these institutes as a mark of their commitment to the national cause; and the schools in turn taught their students patriotism and the necessary skills which would help them serve the country. To instil the spirit of brotherhood and respect for

⁷⁴Mutnuri Krishna Rao, the editor of ‘Krishna Patrika’ arranged the visit of Bipin Chandra Pal to Vizianagaram, Kakinada, Rajahmundry, Vijayawada and Machilipatnam. Bipin Chandra Pal, an Arya Samajee, inspired a few educated men to join the Swadeshi movement by giving it a touch of spiritualism. The youth gave him a warm welcome wherever he went. Under his inspiration, Kopalle Hanumantha Rao of Machilipatnam took an oath to spread national education. (Innaiah, 10)

ancient Indian teachings, the leader of the Theosophical Society, Annie Besant toured the Andhra region and started many schools,⁷⁵ in places like Guntur, Nellore, Gooty, Kurnool, Vijayanagaram, Kakinada, Vijayawada, Machilipatnam, Adoni, and even in Secunderabad. It happened in the later part of the 19th century.

As mentioned earlier, with the advent of the printing press, there was a spurt in printed material in the form of books, posters and newspapers. This led to another important movement, the Library movement,⁷⁶ which contributed to the freedom struggle in the Andhra region as also in the country; it led to the growth in the number of Reading rooms and Libraries. People in large numbers began to visit these places with the sole purpose of reading newspapers like *Desabbimani*, *Andhra Patrika* and *Zamin Ryot* in the local vernacular language of Telugu. Apart from keeping people up to date on regional and national developments, these newspapers helped in infusing a spirit of nationalism.

With Gandhi's insistence on learning and teaching Hindi, as it was being touted to be the national language, many Hindi teachers in Andhra taught Hindi to students and adults alike. An important point to be underscored here is that

⁷⁵ In a year's time as many as 52 branches opened all over Andhra (Innaiah, 18)

⁷⁶ Ayyanki Venkataramanaiah, spearheaded the library movement and took it to every nook and corner of Andhra Pradesh. Therefore, hundreds of libraries were established in many towns, cities and villages in the Telugu speaking areas. He was instrumental in establishing the Andhra Desa Library Association in 1914, Bengal Library Association (1925), Madras Library Association (1928), Punjab Library Association (1929) and the All India Public Library Association in 1919 at the national level. His son Ayyanki Tandav Krishna, learnt Kuchipudi from Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry and performed it extensively with his [Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry's] son Vedantam Jagannadha Sarma and popularized the dance form.

many young girls and women started learning Hindi as it was taught in the homes of the students – girls did not have to step out of their houses in order to learn it (Sarma pers. comm).

Emergence of a New Socio-Economic Class

The cumulative impact of Western education is that it gave rise to Indian nationalism, liberty and fraternity. After a long time, the people of India had a common cause to fight for and this brought about a paradigm shift in the psyche of the people of the nation. They were able to rally together and this gave rise to a large mass movement, the freedom struggle of India. All these factors aided in the growth of the “educated urban middle class in India.” The middle class in turn became the custodians of the nation’s inherited culture:

The need of the hour lay in retrieving the tradition, re-examining, and reconstituting it in the name of artistic standards and authenticity. These standards were largely determined by the social and intellectual imperatives of middle-class elites. For instance, there was the need to transform the social base of the tradition and to validate its authenticity by seeking a strongly grounded textual lineage and stressing the spiritual aspects of the tradition. The imperative of relocation was not simply a question of patronage, of who consumed classical music and dance, or the changing locus of the arts from temple and the salon to the modern concert hall or urban soiree, but one of ownership. The tradition belonged to the nation—it was part of the national legacy and as custodians of the nation’s heritage, the newly empowered middle-class elites

were responsible for its preservation and dissemination.
(Subramanian 2006, 144-145)

It is this emerging middle-class which became the consumer, custodian and connoisseur of the Indian art forms. Most of the middle-class comprising of clerks, lawyers, teachers and other such professionals became bridges of communication between the ruled and the rulers. Educated in the western system, they were conversant with the workings of the government, as most of them were employed in the offices of the British government in India. It was this class that continued to patronize music and dance as against the conventions of the then society. They sent their sons and daughters to English medium schools for education and became patrons of art. They especially sent their daughters to learn music and dance. This class included the castes that traditionally valued learning – Brahmins and select high caste non-Brahmins. The cultural resurgence in India happened in the towns and cities where most of the middle-class were living.

Migration from Rural to Urban Areas

The Unity is to be found rather in the continuities that can be traced in the concrete media of song, dance, play, sculpture, painting, religious story and the rite that connect the rituals and beliefs of the villager with those of the townsmen and urbanite, one region with another, and the educated with the uneducated.
(Singer 1972, 47)

The shift from ritual to devotion can be seen in many of the modern cultural practises and extended itself to the urban culture. The migration of people from the villages to the towns and cities had seen a change in the lifestyle; and, in turn, it influenced their attitude towards their own culture and religion. This shift had made the people more inclined towards recreation. Hence, the Puranic and religious stories which were being represented through arts of dance and music received more patronage; and, that created a new setting where culture and religion were combined and showcased through art. It perfectly suited the urban setting where entertainment was needed in the fast paced life-style.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the continuity in culture between the village and the city is the common stock of mythological and legendry themes shared both by the villager and the city man. The same stories from the *Ramayana*, the *Bhagavatapurana*, and the *Mahabharata* are recited, sung and played in both the village and city.... the storytellers and other cultural specialists converging upon the urban centres. (Singer 1972, 75, 155)

The Kuchipudi Bhagavatulu were amongst those “storytellers” who moved from the hamlet of Kuchipudi to the urban cities, to propagate their art amongst the newly discovered student base, which was the just-emerged middle class. A large part of the student base belonged to the Telugu speaking communities of the Madras Presidency. The impact of this move in aiding the

negotiation of a unique identity for the Telugus within the Madras Presidency is immense and will be discussed later. This in turn resulted in a major transformation in Kuchipudi as an art form, in which it metamorphosed itself from a rural theatrical form, which was taught within defined confines, in terms of space, populace and gender, to a classical urban dance form that could travel beyond these limited confines.

Linguistic States and Cultural Markers: Choosing Traditions

For the purpose of this study, the tryst that the Indian nation had with independence on the midnight of 15th August 1947, and the demand for a separate Telugu speaking State hold importance and will be deliberated upon. With the nation having gained its independence and trying to go about its business of administering the country, its leaders and people were then faced with the task of having to rule themselves. Through the Government of India Act 1919, the self- rule movement, the country was being governed by elected Indian legislators, but they were not given full autonomy. With independence came the need for reorganization of states and Andhra Pradesh was the first state to be formed based on language. By early 1900's, the Telugu⁷⁷ speaking people of the Madras Presidency were bristling at what they perceived as the

⁷⁷ The slogan of separate Andhra had been heard as early as 1909. The idea that Telugu language should have a special recognition had started after the Allahabad Congress session when Prakasam, Pattabhi, Mutnuri and Konda opposing the Mailapur Brahmin group's predominance favoured a separate Andhra. This suggestion was opposed by Nyapathi Subba Rao and Macharla Ramachandra Rao as they were closely associated with the Mailapur Brahmin group. (Innaiah 2009, 13)

step motherly treatment meted to them by the Tamils⁷⁸ and wanted to separate from them. The movement for a separate Telugu state began as early as the beginning of the twentieth century.

Following the establishment of the Andhra Mahasabha and its demand for a separate linguistic state in the 1910s, activists from the districts of the colonial Madras Presidency where Telugu dominated were at the forefront of those demanding the restructuring the Indian National Congress along linguistic lines that began to occur by 1917. (Mitchell 38)⁷⁹

Eventually the Andhra State was formed in 1953 comprising of Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema and was renamed Andhra Pradesh in 1956 with the merger of the Telangana region, with Hyderabad as its capital city.

Just as the nascent State of India was beginning to gather its bearings and was trying to establish itself as a Republic to uphold its stature in the sphere of international affairs, it was its traditional art forms which helped in creating an identity for the nation. Similarly, when the States were reorganized, they needed distinctive identities and it was once again through their regional art forms that they could achieve this objective. Hence, with the formation of the new State came the need for establishing the cultural identity of the State; so, it was at

⁷⁸ All the jobs in Andhra fell into the hands of Tamilians or Maharashtrians. A very negligible number of Andhras were in jobs here. When compared to the development facilities available in Tamilnadu, Andhra was lagging far behind. The Tamilians were everywhere, either as teachers or clerks. This made the educated Andhra youth stress the need for a separate State. (Innaiah, 13)

⁷⁹ Mitchell, Lisa. "Language, Emotion and Politics in South India: The Making of a Mother Tongue." Permanent Black. 2010.

this juncture that the performing arts of the Telugus were scrutinized and Kuchipudi was selected. “It was owing to this selection, that the rural art form of Kuchipudi was chosen and presented as a ‘Telugu’ dance form – representative of the ‘Telugu’ people, their culture and their land.... They range from shifts in linguistic politics that began in the late nineteenth century to the patriarchal commoditisation of dance undertaken during the project of nationalism from early to mid-twentieth century” (Thota 2016, 40). One of the reasons for this selection of Kuchipudi could be that the Tamils had already chosen Bharatanatyam as the representative of the State by appropriating the dance form from the traditional performers, i.e. the devadasis.⁸⁰ Though this dance form soon became popular among the upper caste women of both Tamil and Telugu speaking communities, the Telugu community needed a marker of identity through an art form unique by itself. Being an art form performed by the male Brahmins in the village of Kuchipudi, this aesthetic art form was free from the stigma that the devadasi dance had; and therefore, it was readily chosen to represent the Telugu identity. By teaching it to persons from outside the hereditary community, and to a large number of women, it gave the form a moral propriety. It was a concatenation of events along with the upsurge in the linguistic parochialism that led to the selection of Kuchipudi dance as the

⁸⁰In the late 19th century, the representation of women as public entertainer and the locus of male desire did not serve the interests of the English –educated elite, who put in her place the Indian equivalent of the Victorian domestic angel, the ‘sugrihini’ or good-housewife. Female performers got stigmatized in educated discourse as ‘prostitutes’. This negated the whole arena of popular culture of which women were a very important part, not only as performers but also as a significant section of the audience. (Singh), “Making Visible the ‘petty’ and ‘grotesque’ of the Nation’s Narrative: Dialogue with Tripurari Sharma. *Feminist Review*, No.84, Post-Colonial Theatres 2006.

cultural symbol of the State of Andhra Pradesh.⁸¹ Thus, it is seen that linguistic politics had once again played a significant role in the cultural re-imagination and identity policies of a region's performing arts.

Politics involved in the Choice

Across the new independent India, regional political leaders became interested in the art forms of the region and have largely influenced the choice of the art form that would become, in the coming times, part of the cultural identity of that region. Similarly, in marking Kuchipudi as the classical dance form of Andhra Pradesh, numerous politically active individuals had a role. For instance, in the writings of the time, it can be noted that girls from respectable families were encouraged to learn the art form. Arudra,⁸² one of the scholars to have dealt extensively with the history and form of Kuchipudi, quotes political leaders like T Prakasam, encouraging young girls to learn music and dance.

Prakasam's great granddaughter, Avanthi Meduri,⁸³ an accomplished Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dancer, recounts that her grandmother often recollected Tanguturi Prakasam's words urging the people, particularly girls from respectable families to learn dance. Tanguturi Prakasam, had helped Vedantam

⁸¹ See also Putchu 2011.

⁸² "E. Krishna Iyer Centenary Issue." Music Academy – Courtesy - Sruti 9th August 1997. Though this quote refers to the female courtesan dance practices, it is evident from it that the idea that the respectability of the middle-class was to be cast on the art forms themselves, owing to the initiation of girls from these backgrounds into the arts.

⁸³ Meduri Avanthi. "Bharatha Natyam-What Are You?" Asian Theatre Journal 1988. (Meduri)

Raghavayya, Vempati Peda Satyam and Pasumurthy Krishnamurthy, the three hereditary Kuchipudi artistes who had moved to Madras in the 1940's, to establish a school, "Kuchipudi Kala Vigyana Kendram,"⁸⁴ to teach the traditional dance form of Kuchipudi. The other political leader to have artistic leanings was Bezawada Gopala Reddy,⁸⁵ the Chief Minister of Andhra State (March 1955 - November 1956) after Tanguturi Prakasam. While speaking at the felicitation ceremony of Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry at Madras on 6th September 1948, Bezawada Gopala Reddy stated as follows:

This is a great occasion for Kuchipudi tradition... the revival of the dance... Kuchipudi has been a beacon light. ... We not only need artists, but also need pundits, critics and interpreters who rightly project the greatness of the art and artists. We sadly lack such experts. I also feel that Kuchipudi has not become popular because it has not encouraged young girls to learn the art. ... I hope Sri Sastry and other exponents of this art undertake to do this soon. Experts like Sri Sastry must do this and by starting an institution to teach youngsters. Only then will the art live. We are indebted to Sri Sastry for having enlivened the art of Kuchipudi dance. (*Nartanam* 2002, 70-71)

While this quote clearly shows that the importance of girls being initiated into Kuchipudi was constantly being underscored, in every possible opportunity, measures were taken to create avenues to train girls in this form. As

⁸⁴ Author Unknown. 1958- 1978. "*Vimsatwarshikotsava Pratyeka Sanchika*." *Natyakala*. 129-130.

⁸⁵ Bezawada Gopala Reddy, had studied at Shantiniketan, he was influenced by Tagore's works and translated many of them into Telugu.

Pasumurthy Venugopala Krishna Sarma,⁸⁶ a hereditary Kuchipudi artist, mentions the following in his resume:

In 1953, campaigned vigorously (with support of signatories of about 2000 artists) and represented to the then Chief Ministers Late Tangutoori Surya Prakasam and Bezawada Gopala Reddy and helped in the establishment of “Kalakshetra” on 17.1.1954.

From these recounts, it only seems evident that Kuchipudi emerging as a cultural marker was more than a chance happening – that people other than artistes, who had specific agendas involved themselves in the process, because this selection had more to it than just artistic yearnings. The political need for an identity of the Andhra state demanded that a tradition that did not render any stigma to its identity be chosen; and, this need influenced the selection of Kuchipudi as the classical dance form of the State of Andhra Pradesh.

Cultural Activists: The Triumvirate of Kuchipudi History

This process of making Kuchipudi dance as the cultural marker of Andhra Pradesh was encouraged and promoted by academicians like Vissa Apparao, lawyer turned dancer Ayyanki Tandava Krishna and lawyer cum theatrical personality Banda Kanakalingeshwara Rao. In retrospect, the deep impact of the moves of these three people on Kuchipudi becoming the established dance form for Telugu speaking people and their land comes forth. Whether it was writings, speeches or representations on pivotal platforms, these three

⁸⁶Information collected from the personal papers of Anuradha Jonnalagadda.

individuals seemed to be aware of the value addition of such action and consciously put effort in the direction of making Kuchipudi the go-to art form for Telugu speaking people. The backgrounds of each of these three individuals, though quite unconnected to Kuchipudi as an art form, will be briefly described, along with the various important positions they held in regional bodies. It will be seen how they chose to associate themselves with Kuchipudi and manoeuvre it in a specific direction.

Vissa Appa Rao was a physicist, academician, musicologist and a connoisseur of arts. He met Nataraj Ramakrishna at Visakhapatnam where the latter had gone to teach dance (Kuchipudi) to sisters Uma and Sumathi, daughters of Vaddadi Krishna Rao in the year 1951; and, Apparao was inspired by Ramakrishna's passion for dance and invited Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, to Vizag to teach Kuchipudi dance to the sisters.⁸⁷

As a member of the All India Radio Station at Vijayawada, since its inception in 1948, Vissa Appa Rao was a part of the project in which the Kuchipudi Yakshaganas were recorded and broadcast: "The Vijayawada Radio broadcast in 1959 a talk-cum-demonstration on Kuchipudi style of Dance with Apparao

⁸⁷ "Apparao lost no time in extending an invitation to Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, one of the chief living exponents of Kuchipudi Sampradayam, to go over to Vizag as his guest and spend some useful time with him. Sri Vedantam spent quite a few weeks giving demonstration of the exquisiteness of the Kuchipudi Style Vis-à-vis the Bharatha Natyam of the South, which fortunately was recognized as a traditional art, while it was denied to Kuchipudi. An 8mm film of about 25 feet was exposed at Visakhapatnam due to the kindness of Dr. Chavali Vyaghreswarudu, renowned Orthopaedic Surgeon. Also, certain stills of Mudras and Hasthas of Kuchipudi were photographed with the help of a professional photographer opposite the Vaddadi House." Ramachandra Vissa, 1984.

giving the spoken word;” (Ramachandra Vissa 1984, 65).⁸⁸ Later, he became a member of Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Akademi and promoted the dance form at various forums. In the year 1958, at the first conference on Dance held by Sangeet Natak Akademi in New Delhi, Vissa Appa Rao presented a paper on Kuchipudi, titled, “Kuchipudi School of Dance.” Later, at the Seminar conducted by APSNA in 1959, he presented a paper on the “History of Kuchipudi,” at Hyderabad.

Ayyanki Tandava Krishna (1915-1991) was one of the first few persons from the non-hereditary families to learn Kuchipudi dance from Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry and perform extensively with Lakshminarayana Sastry’s son Vedantam Jagannadha Sarma. They performed all over the Madras presidency and were appreciated by maestros like Uday Shankar;⁸⁹ who was very impressed by their performance and asked them to come to Almora and teach dance there. Tandava Krishna – the son of Ayyanki Venkataramanaiah, the organizer of the library movement in Andhra region-- was a prolific writer and wrote many articles on Kuchipudi in many magazines. “Tandava Krishna used to attend the Siddhendra and Tyagaraja Aradhana festivals conducted by Venkataramana troupe, in Kuchipudi village and during one such festival with the concurrence of the village elders, he constructed four huts and thus began

⁸⁸ Rao, Dr Vissa Ramachandra, “Saga of Vissa Appa Rao,” 1984.

⁸⁹ *Nartanam* 2002 (2): 66 (Andhra Patrika, 23-01-1942).

Siddhendra Kalakshetra” (Narasimhamu1970, 53-57)⁹⁰. Tandava Krishna lamented that a traditional art form like Kuchipudi did not receive the due attention that it deserved:

It is typical of the irony that controls human affairs that a school of classical Hindu dance – art, which is ancient and perhaps mother of all south India Dance – art forms and perfect in its technique, should not have received until now the publicity which it richly deserves. This is the Andhra school of Kuchipudi dance - Art. (Krishna Tandava, 1956)⁹¹

The other influential member of the triumvirate was Banda Kanakalingeshwara Rao, a lawyer by profession and an actor by passion. He took on the mantle to propagate Kuchipudi dance form and in the 1959 Seminar held at Hyderabad by Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Akademi to showcase the classicity of Kuchipudi, spoke compellingly for its recognition as a classical dance form. As the producer of the Drama division, at the All India Radio Vijayawada, he was instrumental in getting the Kuchipudi *Yakshaganas* recorded by many distinguished and acclaimed musicians.⁹² The Government of India had instituted a cultural exchange scheme, an intra-State’s cultural exchange, and a Kuchipudi team under the artistic stewardship of Chinta Krishnamurthy and his *Melam*, Sri Venkatarama Natya Mandali, toured cities in Tamil Nadu in the

⁹⁰ Narasimhamu Bhagavatula Lakshmi. “Kuchipudi Natyacharyulu Mahankali Satyanarayana.” (Natyakala January 1970: 53-57).

⁹¹ Tandava Krishna, Ayyanki. 1956. "Kuchipudi Dance." *Andhra Pradesh Souvenir*. New Delhi.

⁹² M Balmuralikrishna, Srirangam Gopalaratnam, P Surya Rao, Dwaram Bhavanarayana, MV Ramana Murthy, NCP Jagannadhacharyulu, Paturi Madhusudana Sastry, Mulukutla Sadasiva Sastry, Bhagavathula Seetarama Sarma, Pasumarthi Anjaneyulu and Pasumarthi Seetharamaiah--- under Chinta Krishnamurthy’s supervision.

year 1960⁹³ and presented Kuchipudi Yakshaganas with Banda as its coordinator. Banda would give introductions in English for the benefit of the non-Telugu speaking audiences. Artistes, connoisseurs, art critics and *gurus* -- Rukmini Devi Arundale, Raghavan, Kittapa Pillai, Prof Sambamurthy -- the cultural and artistic icons of the times, were present in the audience at Madras city. They appreciated and applauded the Kuchipudi dance form of Andhra Pradesh.

Banda Kanakalingeswara Rao was instrumental in building a permanent structure for Siddhendra Kalakshetra⁹⁴ at the Kuchipudi village. He was the secretary of Siddhendra Kalakshetra and would regularly monitor its functioning. He introduced the students to *Natya Sastra* – until then *Abhinaya Darpana* was the text used by the Kuchipudi artistes. In fact, he brought the first copy of *Natya Sastra*, to the Kalakshetra and insisted that all the students learn Nandi *slokas* from it (Jayarama Rao, pers. comm.). He was so passionate about the quality and the standard of the dance form that he would prescribe certain patterns to the Kuchipudi *Bhagavatas* to adopt into their performance practice. (Kothari pers.comm.). According to Tirumala Ramachandra⁹⁵ “His [Banda’s] life’s mission is to spread Kuchipudi Natyam and bring international fame to it.”

⁹³ J, Anuradha. “Development of Dance: Kuchipudi.” *Contemporary History of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana AD – 1956-1990’s*. Ed. V Ramakrishna Reddy. Hyderabad: EMESCO, 2016. 1062-1072.

⁹⁴ Siddhendra Kalakshetra has been constructed on the site where Bhagavatula Vissayya started a small school of dance under a thatched roof. (J, Anuradha 1993, 52).

⁹⁵ “*Marapurani Manishi* – Banda Kanakalingeshwara Rao,” Andhra Sachitra Vara Patrika, 1959.

Thus, the non-hereditary people, who recognised the potential of Kuchipudi to be a “classical dance” form, to stand on par with Bharatanatyam, became self-appointed evangelists and voices for the art form, even on the national platform. They played a pivotal role in the form gaining popularity; and, it was in accordance with their vision to present the form in a “polished” manner fit for the proscenium stage that the Kuchipudi Bhagavathulu moulded their art form.

Central Cultural Bodies

In the Post-independent phase, the Indian government was interested in the preservation, development and stimulation of the country’s cultural values; the country’s performing, plastic and literary art forms and instituted autonomous bodies by passing resolutions; the Sangeet Natak Akademi (31st May, 1952), Sahitya Akademi (15th December, 1952) and the Lalit Kala Akademi (7th October, 1953) had been launched for this purpose.

The nation-wide revival of indigenous arts and traditional forms and styles of dance and music pointed to the need for national bodies in these fields to act as co-ordinating agencies and to stimulate the development of the fine arts, dance, drama, music and literature in the context of the promotion of cultural unity in the country. (Bhabha Committee Report, 1964)⁹⁶

⁹⁶A reviewing committee was constituted by the government of India, Ministry of Education, on 3rd March 1964 to review the three National Akademies (Sahitya, Lalit Kala and Sangeet Natak) and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (I.C.C.R). The chairman of this committee was Dr. H J Bhabha (chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission), thus this report is referred to as the Bhabha Committee report.

The Sangeet Natak Akademi⁹⁷ was “conceived as a ‘national organization to promote research in the fields of Indian dance, drama and music, and to co-ordinate activities in these spheres with a view to promoting the cultural unity of the country” (Bhabha Committee Report, 1964). One of the first objectives of SNA⁹⁸ was to set up regional centres in all the states of the union of India and to co-ordinate their events; be it music, dance or drama. All the endeavours of the Akademies have been assessed from time to time by instituting committees with an intention to make them efficient and fulfil the aims for which they had been set up.

The following Committees had been set up:

- i. Bhabha Committee: set up by Order dated 3rd March 1964; Report submitted on 22 October 1964;
- ii. Khosla Committee: set up by Resolution dated 19th February 1970; Report submitted on 31st July 1972;
- iii. Haksar Committee: set up by Resolution dated 24th March 1988; Report submitted in July 1990;
- iv. Sengupta Committee: set up on the order of Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism & Culture by the Ministry of Culture on 17th October 2013; Report submitted in January 2014.

⁹⁷The Sangeet Natak Akademi was the first of the three Akademies set up by the Government of India. It was set up by Resolution no. F. 6-5/51- G2 (A) dated 31 May 1952, and formally inaugurated by the President of India on 28 January 1953. In 1961 it was reconstituted as a Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 (as amended in 1957). The Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy, set up in Imphal by the Government of India in 1954, became a constituent of the Akademi in 1957. The Kathak Kendra, the National Institute of Kathak, set up in New Delhi in 1964, is also part of the Akademi. The Sattriya Kendra was set up in Guwahati in 2001. The National School of Drama which was started in 1959 was separated from the SNA in 1975.

⁹⁸Henceforth the Sangeet Natak Akademi will be referred to as SNA.

The two Committees set up by the Government of India under the Chairmanships of Dr H J Bhabha (1964) and Justice GD Khosla (1970) to review the functioning of the Akademies: Sangeet, Lalit Kala and Sahitya Akademies and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). Both of them were critical of the Akademies workings and the Khosla Committee said in its report that “A Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. H. J. Bhabha was appointed to appraise the work of these bodies, but there has been little change, as many of his recommendations were not accepted” (Khosla 1970, 12). The Khosla Committee Report was more extensive than the previous Bhabha committee report as it included the “Cultural Policies of some Foreign States” and took into account the work being done in the States within the country, “Cultural Patterns and Responses in States.” The Report was appreciative of the work being done by the State of Andhra Pradesh:

There is a separate department of Culture in Andhra Pradesh and the State Government has set up three Akademies, somewhat on the pattern of the National Akademies. There is general satisfaction with the work being done by these Akademies.... The Sangeet Natak Akademi has now a budget of Rs. 2.15 lakhs. Music conference in Karnatic and Hindustani music are held three to four times a year, a music drama and song competition is held, a folk art festival is organised and the Akademi has a mobile stage which is frequently used. (Khosla Report 1972,178)⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Khosla, GD. Report of the Committee Appointed to Review the Working of the National Akademies and Indian Council for Cultural Relations. Review. New Delhi: Ministry of Education and Socia Welfare Goerment of India, 1972.

For the first time a “High Powered Review Committee” under the Chairmanship of PN Haksar was constituted in 1988 and they submitted their Report in the year 1990. This Committee reviewed the working of the three Akademies – Sahitya, Lalit Kala and Sangeet Natak, the newly formed Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCC), Kathak Kendra and Manipur Academy and the National School of Drama. In their concluding remarks they commented as follows:

While the three Akademies have done some good work, their impact on the cultural scene has not been widely felt... On the whole they have not been able to provide the kind of stimulation and leadership expected of them. The National School of Drama too has to enlarge its vision and widen its horizons. (HPC Report 1990, 147-148)¹⁰⁰

The latest High-Powered Committee, constituted under the Chairmanship of Abhijit Sengupta in 2013, submitted their Report in 2014. The Committee investigated the functioning of the three national Akademies – Sahitya, Lalit Kala and Sangeet Natak and National School of Drama (NSD), Centre for Cultural Resources (CCRT), National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Indira Gandhi National Centre of Arts (IGNCA), and Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCC) to monitor and measure their performance.

¹⁰⁰ Haksar, PN. Chairman. Report of the High-Powered Committee Appointed to Review the Performance of the National Akademies and the National School of Drama. High Powered Committee. New Delhi: Department of Culture Ministry of Human Resource Devepment Government of India, 1990.

The Abhijit Sengupta Committee¹⁰¹ expressed its disappointment:

Why have there been so many Committees, so many recommendations and so little change? Similar recommendations seem to find place in each Report, the sameness in all. We had requested the Ministry of Culture for details of the action taken on each Report. The Ministry has provided us with a statement which indicates the action taken on the Haksar Committee's recommendations as in 2011 (Annexure IV). But in any case, many of the recommendations of that time would require a revisit today. (Sengupta Report 2014, 6)

The Sengupta Committee examined all the Akademies and made critical observations and recommendations. With regards to the Sangeet Natak Akademi it made a few suggestions:¹⁰²

- i. The Akademies schematic expenditure over 5 years indicates three trends. First, the expenditure on schemes is an insufficient part of the total funds. Second, there is from year to year a sudden uneven allocation of funds for performance. This is because of special programmes and celebrations. Third, the expenditure on performance-based programmes is much higher than on academic work. The expenditure on academic work as a percentage of the total expenditure has been coming down. We feel that the academic aspect of the mandate of SNA must not be lost sight of. Instead, it must be strengthened.

¹⁰¹ Sengupta, Abhijit. Report of HPC on the Akademies and Other Institutions Under Ministry of Culture. High-Powered Committee. New Delhi: Ministry of Culture Government of India, 2014.

¹⁰² https://indiaculture.nic.in/sites/default/files/hpc_report/HP%20REPORT%202014.pdf. Pp 42-43.

- ii. Performance Studies and Dance Studies are new academic disciplines in some of our Universities. The SNA must be aware of an increasing gap between practitioners of the performing arts and the theoreticians, and must set up a platform for debate, discussion and analysis.
- ii SNA must hold regular workshops on theoretical aspects of the performing arts. It must begin a regular programme on performing arts appreciation for the public. At a more serious academic level, courses on critical writing on dance, music and theatre must be started. The archives must be opened up for scholars who should be encouraged to use these archives. The SNA must be a vehicle for seeking a larger space in the media for cultural activities.
- v. We would also suggest that the SNA works out a long-term academic programme at the university level for providing scholarships to students. Overall, the SNA's relationship with academia must be strengthened.
- vi. The Akademi must find a way towards greater coordination with the seven Zonal Cultural Centres.
- vii. The SNA must scout for talent through the ZCCs and raise that talent to the national level.

A perusal into the workings of these Committees provides an understanding of the number of times the Cultural affairs have been shifted to various ministries under the Government of India. The Bhabha Committee was formed by the Ministry of Education; the Khosla Committee came under the purview of Ministry of Education and Youth Services; the Haksar Committee was appointed by the Department of Culture; Ministry of Human Resource

Development; and, the latest Sengupta Committee was recommended by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture. The subject of Culture was with the Ministry of Education in the early years of independence up to 1970; then it was clubbed with Youth Services. By the year 1988 there was a Department of Culture within the Ministry of Human Resource Development and in the year 2013-14 it was coupled with Transport, Tourism and Culture.

For a vast country such as India, with its rich multi-layered and multi-dimensional culture, not to have a national cultural policy even after seventy years of independence is an indicator of the state of affairs. A national cultural policy that will preserve and promote the country's inherited vibrant culture and showcase its cultural history at appropriate venues must be formulated. Most of the governmental bodies, do not have a clear-cut vision and planning for achieving their objectives; and, it is in this kind of scenario that a national cultural policy is imperative. The soft power of Indian culture, its performing arts, should be harnessed within the country and abroad and they should be showcased in all the cultural venues for them to be understood and appreciated.

Apart from this, efforts should be made by both the Central and State Governments to include the performing arts, in their curricula. This will make the students aware of the countries performing art forms and inculcate an appreciation for them. Though, the Indian Certificate for Secondary Education (ICSE) and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) have included

the performing arts in their curriculum, the State Boards have yet to include these art forms in their syllabus. A deeper study into this area should be undertaken. Thus, Culture is a subject that is pushed, shoved and shifted at the whims and fancies of various Governments in power. This accounts for the attention and status given to such an important aspect of human life as also the strongest identity of a nation, its culture.

State Level Cultural Bodies and The Foremost Institutes for Kuchipudi

Along with the centres of national importance and authority, numerous Indian States have their own cultural bodies set up to manage activities that concern the indigenous culture of the regions. As will be seen below, it is these bodies that directly impact the state-of-the-art forms that it manages and is largely responsible for the course that the art forms end up taking. Whether it is in the aspect of performance, training or even research, these bodies play a major role on the State level and define the trajectory of the art forms.

After the States Reorganization in 1956, the State of Andhra Pradesh was formed on linguistic basis and it was one of the first few states to form a regional centre of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Academy (APSNA) on 18th of November 1957, at Hyderabad.¹⁰³ One of the first activities that the APSNA undertook, in 1958, was to conduct a survey to take stock of the cultural scenario in the State and submit a Report

¹⁰³ Prior to this there was an Academy of Music, Dance and Drama (1950) in Hyderabad, this academy was merged into APSNA.

in 1960. From this Report¹⁰⁴ we can gather that there were 61 Dance institutes and 159 individual dancers in the State. It is a comprehensive report and gives us an overview of the cultural panorama of the State.

	INSTITUTIONS				INDIVIDUALS					THEATRES		
	MUSIC	DANCE	DRAMA	ALLIED FORMS	MUSIC	DANCE	DRAMA	PLAY WEIGHTS	ALLIED FORMS	TECHNICIANS	PLAY HOUSES	CINE PLAY HOUSES
ADILABAD	1	1	10	45	2	-	6	-	14	-	-	-
ANANTAPUR	2	1	17	-	3	-	23	4	-	-	-	-
CHITTOR	3	-	26	-	28	-	38	4	1	-	2	-
CUDDAPAH	3	1	31	-	9	5	44	-	-	-	3	-
EAST GODAVARI	15	7	88	2	146	18	173	32	18	3	4	8
GUNTUR	6	2	127	1	138	11	322	58	20	4	5	5
HYDERABAD	18	7	74	64	58	29	140	41	8	12	32	-
KARIMNAGAR	7	-	28	62	20	1	28	2	-	-	-	-
KHAMMAM	3	-	7	-	22	3	1	2	-	-	3	1
KRISHNA	7	9	91	4	39	17	191	76	20	3	3	7
KURNOOL	7	7	12	-	25	1	53	3	1	-	1	-
MAHBOOB NAGAR	5	-	2	-	37	8	23	-	2	-	1	-
MEDAK	1	-	14	42	10	-	5	2	10	-	-	-
NALGONDA	1	-	3	-	15	-	7	4	-	-	-	-
NELLORE	2	1	35	-	55	12	100	18	2	1	2	6
NIZAMABAD	3	-	2	13	16	1	9	-	6	-	-	-
SRIKAKULAM	3	2	42	2	77	10	125	3	15	-	8	4
VISAKHA PATNAM	11	9	77	4	75	25	69	22	6	-	5	5
WARANGAL	4	4	22	-	28	2	13	3	2	-	-	-
WEST GODAVARI	11	10	68	1	24	16	51	26	9	-	5	7
TOTAL	113	61	776	223	827	159	1421	300	134	23	74	43

Source: APSNA Cultural Survey Report

Table 2.1: District-wise report on the cultural panorama of Andhra Pradesh in 1958

¹⁰⁴ A R Krishna, Srinivas Chakravarthy. Music, Dance & Drama in Andhra Pradesh. Survey. Hyderabad: Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Natak Akademi, 1960. The survey started on the 15th of March 1958 and was completed by September 1958. Sri A R Krishna and Srinivas Chakravarthy were appointed as editors to make the survey explicit.

In 1959, a Dance Seminar¹⁰⁵ was hosted by APSNA at the Tilak Memorial Hall, Hyderabad, from the 28th of February to 1st of March 1959.¹⁰⁶ This Seminar, organised to prove the classicity of Kuchipudi dance, was titled “Seminar on Kuchipudi Dance,” and was a reaction to the 1958 Seminar that was conducted in Delhi. M Kanchanamala represented Kuchipudi dance style at the 1958 dance Seminar, at the invitation of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, Delhi. The series of events that happened there created the infamous controversy wherein, the Kuchipudi artistes felt that their art form was not considered “classical;” and another Seminar was held at Hyderabad to prove the “classicity” of Kuchipudi dance: “It would not be an overstatement to say that dance history in Andhra Pradesh was born in reaction to Kanchanamala and Appa Rao’s experiences at the Seminar, both in terms of the events that transpired in New Delhi in 1958 and the subsequent Seminar in 1959 that was held to prove Kuchipudi’s classicism” (Putcha 2013, 93).¹⁰⁷ In the Preface of the Souvenir the President of the Seminar R B Ramakrishna Raju mentions the purpose of hosting the Seminar as follows:

There is a feeling in Andhra that Kuchipudi dance style was not considered to be classical during the discussion in the Dance Seminar held in Delhi in March 1958 and so it was omitted from the list of classical dances. This caused great dissatisfaction in Andhra Pradesh. Eminent scholars who can speak with authority

¹⁰⁵Information collected from the personal papers of Anuradha Jonnalagadda.

¹⁰⁶“Souvenir on Kuchipudi Natya Seminar.” Hyderabad. 1959.

¹⁰⁷ Between History and Historiography: The Origins of Classical Kuchipudi Dance Rumya S. Putcha Copyright © 2013 Congress on Research in Dance Research Journal.

on the subject expressed strong sentiments of disapproval. There was almost an uproar from Andhra public that steps should be taken by the Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Akademi to establish that the Kuchipudi Dance also belongs to the classical school. (President- APSN Akademi, 9)

Nirmala Joshi, the Secretary of the SNA was a special invitee at the event. Eminent scholars, artistes and connoisseurs of the art form took part in the proceedings; paper presentations, demonstrations and discussions were held to prove the authenticity of Kuchipudi dance.

In an article in the Souvenir titled “Suggestions for the Revival and Development of Kuchipudi Dance,” (Kanchanamala 1959, 67-69). Kanchanamala once again reiterates the classicity of Kuchipudi dance, by stating that “Kuchipudi is a well-developed art. It is having many branches like the solo dance, Pagativeshalu, Yakshaganas. Now, it is our duty to revive these forms of our Andhra style...Secondly, Kuchipudi Bharatanatyam and Yakshaganas should be taught in a school of Kuchipudi Dance which is contemplated.” She further opined as follows:

A training college cannot be started at Kuchipudi. For it is a small village where no houses to lodge the school nor hotels or such sort of things to accommodate the students. There are no other facilities such as libraries or cultural associations for the students to learn more by reading or seeing. Because the village happens to be in a remote corner of Andhra it is not possible for any students to go

there and learn the art.... So the school or college must be started in Hyderabad which is the capital of Andhra and having all the comforts and advantages for the students (Kanchanamala 1959, 68)

Kanchanamala mentions that the Sangeet Natak Akademi was giving monetary aid to schools in Bharatanatyam, Kathakali Manipuri and Kathak. Therefore, we can also ask them to help us.

Contrastingly, Banda Kanakalingeswara Rao gave a few proposals regarding the establishment of a training centre at Vijayawada. He discussed setting up a repertory and proposed a financial plan for funding the schemes and building an auditorium for presenting the cultural programs along with a museum.

There seems to be some contradictions in the suggestions of Kanchanamala and Banda Kanakalingeswara Rao, regarding the location at which the school should be built. Kanchanamala wanted it be established at Hyderabad and Banda at Vijayawada and Kuchipudi. It was eventually built at the Kuchipudi village. At the end of the Seminar, a resolution was passed to establish a College to teach Kuchipudi art form.

It is resolved that in order to develop this art, a college should be established. To enable the preparation of a comprehensive scheme after collecting all the relevant data necessary and preparing a syllabus, etc., the following Sub-Committee is appointed. The Sub-Committee is requested to prepare the report and send to the Akademi with all possible expedition. The names of the members are as follows: -

Shri Chinta Krishna Murthy	Kuchipudi
Shri Vempati Satyanarayana	Madras
Shri Natraj Ramakrishna	Hyderabad
Shri C.V.V. R. Prasad	Hyderabad
Shri P.S.R. Appa Rao	Secunderabad
Shri Banda Kanakalingeswara Rao (Convenor)	Vijayawada

As a result of this meeting, a permanent structure for the Kalakshetram was built with the efforts of Banda Kanakalingeshwara Rao, post the tour of the Kuchipudi artistes in the Southern States¹⁰⁸ and was named Siddhendra Kalakshetra.

Banda made a strong plea for starting an institution to impart training in Kuchipudi dance. The minister sanctioned a sum of Rs. 50,000 on the spot, the initial amount used for starting Siddhendra Kalakshetram.... With the approval of the A. P. Sangeet Natak Akademi, Banda gave Rs.50,000 from the proceeds for starting the Kalakshetra school at Kuchipudi and got a matching grant from the State Government. He also got another lakh of rupees from Central Government to start a museum and a gallery.(Sarma 2016, 317)

Banda Kanakalingeswara Rao wanted to build an institution at Kuchipudi village which should be modelled on the lines of Madras Kalakshetra, Kerala Kalamandalam and Shantiniketan, to make Kuchipudi dance equally prestigious. It was believed that having a formal, well established institute

¹⁰⁸This was an initiative of the SNA to send "theatre groups in one region in touch with the groups of another so that the groups may interchange their shows." As a part of this programme the Kuchipudi troupe under the leadership of Chinta Krishnamurthy and Banda Kanakalingeshwara Rao toured Tamil Nadu from 3rd -- 13th October 1960.They performed at Madras, Madurai and Tanjavur and once again at Madras (Sarma 2016, 159-160).

would render to the form more than just accessibility, and would provide for it the required respectability, as it could be the avenue to impart training to all those interested, irrespective of gender, class and caste backgrounds. As it would have the support of the government, it would also be the one go-to place which students could enrol into without having to worry about whether it was socially acceptable. But, as will be seen below, institutes in a very rudimentary form already existed in the village of Kuchipudi even before the formalization of Siddhendra Kalakshetram.

Before any institution was established in Kuchipudi, training in the artform happened more organically. According to Pasumurthy Kesava Prasad,¹⁰⁹ every house in the Kuchipudi village was a *gurukula*, wherein the students would learn one aspect of the art form from each *guru*. For instance, they went to a certain *guru* to train in *adugulu*, the basic movement vocabulary; they would train in another feature like *abhinayam* from another *guru*; from an expert in a certain characterization they would learn that facet (*vesham*) of the form; music from an expert in music, so on and so forth. There were *melams* or troupes/professional guilds in the village, which were usually named after the leader (*Sutradhara*) of a family; the more popular ones among them were *Pasumarthy vaari melam*, *Mahankali vaari melam*, *Vedantam vaari melam* and *Chinta vaari melam*. Since Kuchipudi is a hereditary art form, most of the villagers would belong to one or the other *melam*. It was these *melams* which would be touring from one

¹⁰⁹A hereditary Kuchipudi artist and founder of Akhila Bharatiya Kuchipudi Natya Kala Mandali, 1983.

place to another. After Chinta Venkataramayya's demise, almost all the *melams* closed; and it was later under his son, Chinta Krishna Murthy's management that Venkatarama Natya Mandali was formed and he carried forward his father's legacy of conducting the *Yakshaganas* as a *Sutradhara*. The Kuchipudi artistes in the early decades of the twentieth century started going out of the village and teaching dance to non-hereditary men and women to eke out a living (Prasad pers.comm.).

While this had been the scenario until then, by 1951 itself, the Kuchipudi Bhagavatulu had got together and formed an organization with twenty students and two teachers, known as Sri Lalita Kala Natya Samithi (Murthy 1951).¹¹⁰ They would also conduct Siddhendra and Tyagaraja Aradhana Utsavas; and Vempati Peda Satyam was the convenor for Siddhendra Jayanti Utsavam in Kuchipudi village in 1951 (Natyakala, 129-130).¹¹¹ In fact, the above mentioned survey Report of APSNA reveals that there were four institutions in Kuchipudi village by 1958, which had already been imparting training in Kuchipudi art form. One of them was Venkatarama Natya Mandali, which was headed by Chinta Krishnamurthy. While another that "coaches in dance, dance-drama and Music," (APSNA Report 1960, 218), was Nataraja Natyakala Samithi, established in 1958 with Chinta Krishna Murthy as its president, the other one was Lalita Kala Kshetram, whose President was Y Sivarama Prasad.

¹¹⁰ Murthy Satyanarayana, Jonnalagadda. 1951. "*Kuchipudilo Bharatanatya Kalasala*." May 28, Andhra Prabha.

¹¹¹ Author Unknown. 1958- 1978. "*Vimsatvarshikotsava Pratyeka Sanchika*." Natyakala. 129-130.

But, the one that received the full support of APSNA was Kalakshetram, established in 1957, which “has come into existence by the efforts of Sri Banda Kanakalingeswara Rao” (APSNA Report 1960, 218), and was a branch of the Kalakshetram in Eluru, that he had established first. Vedantam Parvatisam was the dance teacher in this Kalakshetram, and both boys and girls were taught dance here which is “a rare thing with Kuchipudi acharyas,” (APSNA Report 1960). Banda was the one who is supposed to have added the prefix Siddhendra before Kalakshetra and named it as Siddhendra Kalakshetra (Sunil Kothari pers.comm.). However, there seems to be another version as to who was responsible for the establishment of this Kalakshetram. As mentioned by Kesava Prasad and other hereditary artistes of the village, it was Vedantam Parvatisam, a hereditary artiste from the village who used to go to the nearby towns of Tenali and Gudivada and teach dance there, felt that it would be better to start a school in Kuchipudi and teach dance there instead of travelling to other places. He started Siddhendra Natya Kalakshetra on 15th August 1957 at Kuchipudi village with the support of Chinta Krishna Murthy, Vedantam Ramakrishna, Yeleswarapu Sitaramanjeneyulu, Peda Satyam and Tandava Krishna. It was first started in the *Satram* (rest house) opposite to the temple, after some time they shifted it to the temple premises and still later it was moved to Bokka Kumaraswamy’s house. Finally, in the year 1960, it was relocated to its present campus in Kuchipudi village (Prasad pers.comm.).

Whichever the case may be, what seems to have happened is that Banda and Parvatisam were involved with the same institution, and of the four that were

present in the village at the time, it was this institute that received the support of APSNA and has now become the 'establishment' in the village.

Thus, it is evident that the artistes in Kuchipudi village had already felt the need to have institutes through which to teach Kuchipudi dance to both boys and girls. The early form of institutionalization had begun in Kuchipudi, both the art form and the village, before the intervention of government bodies. Despite other institutes having existed in the village, owing to the support of a government aided body such as APSNA, the one institute that had become prominent and sustained itself through the years was the one started by Banda and/or Parvatisam.



Source: Google Search

Figure 2.1: Siddhendra Kalakshetra - Kuchipudi Village (2016)

Music and Dance Schools in Andhra Pradesh

From the cultural survey Report of APSNA given above, several Music, Dance and Drama institutes existed in the State prior to its formation. In the central

government, culture was a part of the Education ministry under which the Akademies were organized, and the first minister of Education was Abul Kalam Azad. Similarly, in Andhra Pradesh, culture came under the purview of the Education department, and the first Education Minister of Andhra Pradesh was SBP Pattabhirama Rao, and the State government recognized many of the then established schools and colleges in Music and Dance, and instituted many new ones in the ensuing years after the State was formed. Over a period, twelve Government Music and Dance Colleges in the combined State of Andhra Pradesh had been instituted, which was then a unique feature, as no other State had established exclusive music and dance colleges for the promotion of art.¹¹²

They are as follows:

1. Maharajah's Government Music and Dance College, Vizianagaram (1955)
2. Sri Tyagaraja Government Music and Dance College, Ram Koti, Hyderabad (1952)
3. Sri Bhakta Ramadasu Government Music and Dance College, Secunderabad (1957)
4. Sri Ghantasala Venkateswara Rao Government Music and Dance College, Vijayawada (1960)
5. Sri Vidyaranya Government Music and Dance College, Warangal (1972)
6. GVR Government School of Music and Dance, Ashok Nagar, Guntur (1972)

¹¹²In Tamil Nadu they have a Government College where music is taught but dance is not taught there. Dance is taught only in private institutes (Akella Mallikarjuna Sarma, pers.comm.). But now they have included dance (Bharatanatyam) in their curricula.

7. Government School of Music and Dance, Nellore (1992)
8. Government Saradha Sangeetha Kalasala, Kurnool (1968)
9. Sri Jnana Saraswati Government Music and Dance College, Nizamabad (1972)
10. Government Music and Dance College, Manthani (1992)
11. Sri Vijayashankara Government School of Music and Dance, Rajahmundry (1976)
12. Annamacharya Sangeetha Nrutya Kalasala Government Music and Dance College, Old City, Hyderabad (1996)

These colleges had professionals and connoisseurs stewarding the cause of teaching and the promotion of dance and music. A brief outline of these colleges and artistes associated with them is presented to understand the importance given to them. For the purpose of our study, only the colleges which have courses in dance will be discussed. Only six out of the twelve Government colleges impart training in dance, these are:

1. Maharajah's Government Music and Dance College, Vizianagaram.

The Maharajah's Government Music and Dance college of Vizianagaram, is one of the oldest institutions established by the Maharajah of Vizianagaram, Pusapati Vijayarama Gajapati Raju, in the then Madras Presidency in the year 1919. It was originally conceived to teach music to Chaganti Gangaraju, the blind son of the Maharajah's friend. The first Principal of the college was Adibhatla Narayana Dasu, the Harikatha Pithamaha. He was followed by the

violin maestro Dwaram Venkata Swami Naidu who established the Dwaram lineage in this College along with his brothers Dwaram Narsing Rao, Dwaram Bhavanarayana Rao, Dwaram Durga Prasad (Dwaram Narsing Rao's son). All of them worked as Principals of the college and Poosarla Manorama (Dwaram Narsing Rao's daughter) retired as the Principal of Bhakta Ramadas Government Music and Dance college at Secunderabad. Certificate and Diploma courses in Vocal, Violin, Veena, Mridamgam, Nadaswaram and Dolu in instrumental music and classical dance are offered by the college. Food is provided to the poor students by the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Devasthanam of Simhachalam.



Figure 2.2: Maharajah's Government Music and Dance College, Vizianagaram

This college has produced eminent musicians both in the vocal and instrumental fields: Ghantasala Venkateswara Rao, P Suseela (play back singers in films), Nedunuri Krishna Murthy, Nookala Chinna Satyanarayana,

Srirangam Gopalaratnam (Carnatic musicians) and Saluri Rajeswara Rao (music director in films). Many other musicians and instrumental players went on to provide music in films and in the All India Radio (AIR). All of them made the name of Vizianagaram synonymous with art and culture.

With reference to dance, even before the college was established a master by the name Tanjore Govindraj Pillai had been engaged by the Maharaja, to train the female courtesans in the region; and, once the college was established, he was appointed there to teach dance to the students in the initial years. Govindraj Pillai left after a brief period and then Duvvuri Jaganadha Sarma was contracted to teach dance. Later, Smt Appala Raju was employed to teach dance and her daughter Vidya Prasanna Kumari, succeeded her. All the teachers at the Vizianagaram College taught Bharatanatyam, and to this day this practise continues. Post-independence and with the creation of a new State of Andhra Pradesh, the college was handed over to the newly formed State Government on 15th August 1955.

2. Sri Tyagaraja Government Music and Dance College, Ram Koti, Hyderabad

This college was founded by the Rani of Gadwal in the late 1940s under the supervision of Putchu Subramaniam Sastry, a musicologist, at her bungalow in Himayatnagar at Hyderabad (P. Seshai Sastry pers.comm.). Subsequently, the Nizam of Hyderabad took over its administration; and, it was handed over to

the Government of Andhra Pradesh in 1952. It is one of the oldest colleges in Hyderabad and under Sri Dantale's administration the College gained prominence. Initially, Hindustani music and Kathak dance were some of the performing art courses taught here. Carnatic music was introduced by Subramaniam Sastry (P. Seshai Sastry pers.comm.). Some of the earliest dance teachers appointed by the State government at this college were Shanti Sastry (Kuchipudi),¹¹³ Uma Rama Rao (Bharatanatyam)¹¹⁴ and N Suvernalatha (Kuchipudi).¹¹⁵

3. Sri Bhakta Ramadasu Government Music and Dance College, Secunderabad

This college was started in the year 1957 as a branch of the Music and Dance College of Ramkote, Hyderabad. It was at this college that Kuchipudi dance was introduced for the first time in the State in 1958 and M Kanchanamala was appointed as a part time lecturer. After sometime, the course was discontinued, as it was not economically viable.¹¹⁶ N Suvernalatha, Manjula Rani, Prasanna Rani, L Vijayalakshmi and Mahankali Mohan were some of the other lecturers who taught Kuchipudi dance in this college, after Kuchipudi was reintroduced.

¹¹³Daughter of Vedantam Jagannadha Sarma. She is one of the first women dancers from hereditary Kuchipudi families to learn and perform the art form.

¹¹⁴ A brief background of Uma Rama Rao's training is given in Chapter IV.

¹¹⁵ Suvernalatha had trained in Bharatanatyam under Adyar K Lakshman, and in Kuchipudi under Jagannadha Sarma.

¹¹⁶There were nine students, but it was felt that the number of students was very less and the course was discontinued.

4. Sri Ghantasala Venkateswara Rao Government Music and Dance College, Vijayawada

This college was established in the year 1960 by the then minister of Education SBP Pattabhirama Rao, with M Balamuralikrishna as its first Principal. Kuchipudi dance was taught by Josyula Sitarama Sastry, an artiste from the hereditary Kuchipudi family. After Sitarama Sastry, Lanka Annapurna, a student of Siddhendra Kalakshetra was appointed as a lecturer to teach Kuchipudi dance.

Sri Vidyaranya, Government Music and Dance College, Warangal

This college was established in the year 1972; but dance was not a part of the Schools program. Dance was introduced in the School in the year 1992 and Kuppa Padmaja was appointed as the instructor to teach Kuchipudi dance. At present Ms K Padmaja is the acting Principal of the College. The Warangal Music and Dance School was upgraded into a college in the year 2006.

5. Sri Vijaya Shankara Government School of Music and Dance, Rajahmundry

In the year 1971, a connoisseur of arts Narne Kedareswarudu, started an institution to impart music lessons at Rajahmundry. It was taken over by the Technical Education wing of the Government of Andhra Pradesh in the year 1976. Initially dance was not a part of the curriculum at the School. The

Government introduced dance as a part of the school's program in the year 1992 and appointed a hereditary Kuchipudi artist Pasumurthy Srinivasa Sarma to teach dance at the college.

The strange fact is that Kuchipudi is the representative dance form of the Telugu States; but no attempt is made to offer Kuchipudi in all these institutions. A glance at the Government Music and Dance Schools and Colleges will disclose that dance is taught in only six out of the twelve institutes. Colleges at Nizamabad, Manthani, Nellore, Kurnool and Old City college of Hyderabad do not have dance stream in their institutions. At the Vizianagaram college only Bharatanatyam is taught, and in Ramkote (Hyderabad), and Vijayawada colleges both Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi are taught. Only Kuchipudi is taught at the Rajahmundry, Guntur, Warangal and Secunderabad institutes. Until now, at various points in time, there have been either temporary or permanent Kuchipudi instructors in these colleges and there hasn't been any systematic appointment of instructors.

Other than these twelve, the two other colleges that have been established in the combined state of Andhra Pradesh are the Siddhendra Kalakshetra, in Kuchipudi (refer above), which became a part of the Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University in 1989, and a college established by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD), at Tirupati. While the former only imparts training in Kuchipudi, the latter concerns itself only with Bharatanatyam.

Of these institutes, those which offer only Certificate course are known as schools and those that offer both Certificate and Diploma courses are known as colleges. So, institutes at Guntur, Nellore and Rajahmundry are known as Pathasala's or schools, instead of colleges. Post-independence, from 1951 onwards, the examination authority for conducting the exams in these courses lay with Andhra University; prior to that it was the SSLC¹¹⁷ Board that used to conduct them. In the initial years, the Music and Dance colleges would offer Lower and Higher-grade certificates, as they were following the Madras Presidency syllabus. Much later in the 1960's they were renamed as Certificate and Diploma courses.

In the year 1961, the syllabus for Diploma course was framed. The syllabus in Andhra and Telangana was different. Andhra University used to frame the syllabus for Vizianagaram and Vijayawada colleges. The duration of these courses was altered over time; in the years 1961-1963, it was five years for Certificate and two years for Diploma courses. After 1963, the duration of the courses was changed to four years for Certificate and Two years for Diploma. In the Telangana region the courses offered were known as *Sangeetha Bhushana* for three years and *Sangeetha Visaradha* for two years. Post 1963, the duration of the courses was the same for both the regions of the State. The syllabus at these colleges is modified and reframed from time to time.

¹¹⁷SSLC--- Secondary School Leaving Certificate.

In the early years, after the formation of Andhra Pradesh State, the Technical Education department carried on the administration of all these colleges. They came under the purview of the School Education around 1976-77; and when the Government established the Department of Culture, the administration of these colleges was transferred to it in the year 1981. At present all the Music and Dance schools and colleges are administered by the Department of Culture and the examinations are conducted by Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University, Hyderabad.

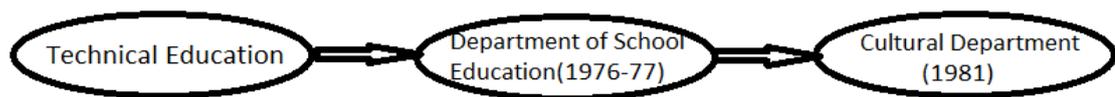


Figure 2.3: Transfer of Authority and Administration

These colleges and their workings, but naturally, have created to an extent a spread and awareness of the art forms, but also leave much to be desired. The positive impact of the Government Music and Dance colleges can be measured by the fact that many students have been trained in these Colleges and they have created awareness about performing arts in the State. With reference to Kuchipudi dance form, many girls from middle and upper middle-class families have begun to learn from these centres. A structured and systematic syllabus is followed in these institutes at the end of which examinations are conducted and certificates are given. By setting up schools and colleges in semi-urban places like Manthani and Nizamabad the Government has reached out to

people who would otherwise not have an opportunity to learn or be exposed to these art forms. P. Seshasai, a retired Principal of Music and Dance college opined that by introducing programmes like Kala Parichayam (introduction to Performing Arts) during summer holidays, these colleges have extended and reached out to students and created awareness about these art forms.

On the contrary, one instance of the manner in which the affairs at these colleges have been functioning from the very beginning became obvious with the account of Kanchanamala. Post 1958 Dance Seminar in Delhi, Kanchanamala was appointed, on contract basis, to teach Kuchipudi dance at the Government School of Music and Dance at Secunderabad. She was appointed as a part-time lecturer and it was during this period that she participated in the 1959 Natya Seminar at Hyderabad, and gave a lecture demonstration on the differences between Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi. She quit her job after six months as there were very few students learning the dance form.¹¹⁸ She met the then Education minister Pattabhi Sitaramayya and submitted a letter requesting him not to close the Kuchipudi dance department; she told him: “As this was the only place where Kuchipudi dance was being taught in the State, if you close it, how will the dance form be popularized.” Later she applied for a job at the then newly opened Tirumala Tirupati

¹¹⁸There were nine students learning Kuchipudi dance but the Director of Technical Education cited lack of students making it uneconomical to continue. The Kuchipudi discipline was closed in 1960 at the Government School at Secunderabad (Kanchanamala pers.comm.).

Devasthanams (TTD) College and was appointed as lecturer in Bharatanatyam in the month of October 1960; and, in this way her rendezvous with Kuchipudi dance ended. After 1959, nothing is heard about Kanchanamala, who completely disappeared from the Kuchipudi dance scene and later retired as a lecturer in Bharatanatyam from Tirupati in 1989. It seems that Kuchipudi lost a talented and articulate¹¹⁹ artiste, who could have represented the art form on many a platform – this points to what seems to be half-hearted attempts at creating avenues for Kuchipudi by government bodies.

Thus, such instances and the statistics regarding the employment of trainers goes to show that despite the tall claims that Kuchipudi should find as much patronage and dissemination as possible, in order to nourish the culture of the Telugu land, it is apparent that not much has been done to actually impart training in the form consistently and ensuring quality of training, across the states by the government bodies.

Academies Give Way to Universities

Post the early decades after the formation of the state of Andhra Pradesh, in 1980, APSNA was trifurcated into three bodies:

- I. Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Academy;
- II. Andhra Pradesh Nataka Academy; and,

¹¹⁹Kanchanamala is a graduate (BA-History) from National College Machilipatnam and later did Post graduation.

III. Andhra Pradesh Nritya Academy

For the purposes of this study, the activities of AP Nritya Akademi are of relevance.

AP Nritya Akademi was formed in 1981 with the objective to encourage the development of rural theatre, various folk forms, to promote cultural exchanges in the fields of dance including folk dance and also to help old and indigent artists who have rendered meritorious service in the field of Dance and Folk Arts. It was conducting training camps in Yakshaganam, Golla Kalapam, Toorpu Bhagavatamu, Mridangam. (The State of Academies and Organisations Associated with Art, Culture and Drama in Andhra Pradesh, 3)

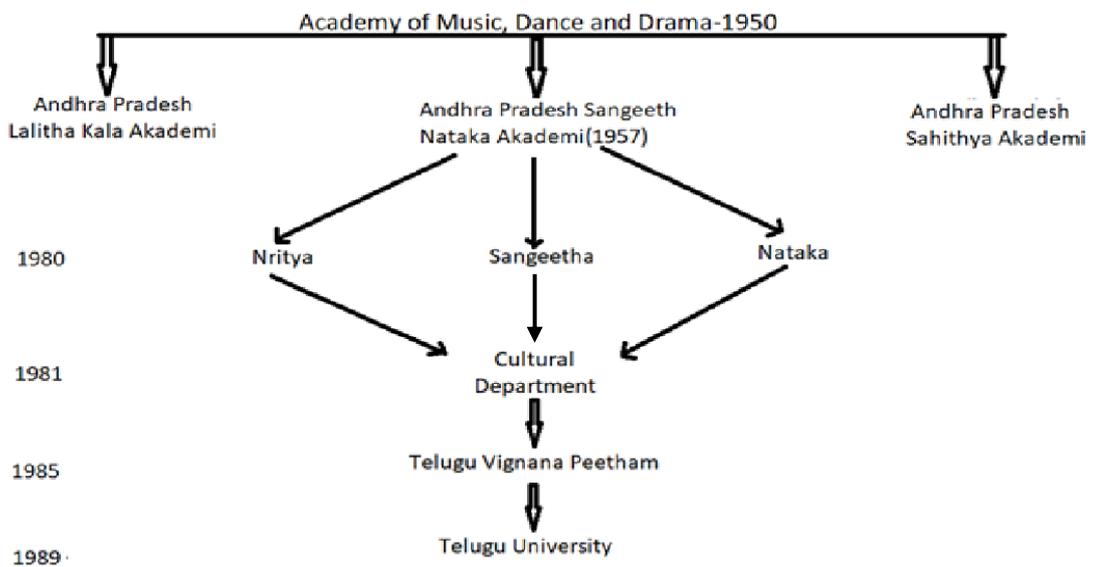


Figure 2.4: Changing Structures of Administrative Bodies for Culture in AP

In 1983, when NT Rama Rao became the chief minister of the Andhra Pradesh, the artiste's community had many expectations of him; they hoped that he

would wave a magic wand and the cultural scenario in the State would see a favourable surge in artistic and creative endeavours. One of the first things that he did was to appoint a One-Man Committee of Narla Venkateswara Rao, to critically examine the workings of the Akademies. Another Committee appointed to investigate the need to have so many academies in the State. These Committees suggested a better unified body to do the work of all the academies. As a result, all of them were dissolved and the Telugu Vigyana Peetham was established in 1985, which became Telugu University in 1989.

This created a lot of confusion and chaos in the State and the artistes were very disappointed. So much so that M Balamuralikrishna, the then Chairman of Andhra Pradesh Sangeetha Akademi took a vow not to sing any concerts in the State. He said: As long as NTR is the chief minister, I'll not give any concerts in the State (*"NTR mukhyamantrigaa vunnanathakalam rashtramlo nenu kacheri cheyyanu"*) (Prasad 2016, 126).¹²⁰ Narla Venkateswara Rao had recommended that the Akademies should be dismantled because he felt that some people had a vice like grip over the Akademies; nepotism, favouritism and corruption were rampant. In order to purge the Akademies of this malaise, he had recommended their closure without giving any alternative solution. NT Rama Rao did not have any experience as an administrator nor did he trust the

¹²⁰ Prasad, PVRK. *Asalem Jarigindhante*. Hyderabad: Emesco, 2016.

government employees, as all of them had worked for the previous Congress Government. So, he went ahead and abolished the Akademies in haste, without thinking of the consequences. This act of NT Rama Rao, made him unpopular with the artistes, connoisseurs and the public in general. Narla Venkateswara Rao was also distressed as he was equally blamed by the artistes. He bemoaned that he only wished to purge the Akademies of the rot that had set in and that he was not against the artistes or art forms. He requested PVRK Prasad to set right the wrong, by mediating with the Chief Minister. Meanwhile, NT Rama Rao was also being criticised for this act of his and he wanted to salvage his reputation and directed PVRK Prasad: I am pained by the dissatisfaction and anger shown by the artistes. Please consult Narla, we did as he suggested. What else does he want me to do? I don't want to be known as anti-arts and artistes, please do something brother. (*"Kalakarulu ee asamthrupthi aagraham peragatam naaku baadhaga vunndi. Okkasaari Narlavaaritho Maatladandi. Aayanna cheppinatte chessamu kada. Inka yemi cheyyamantaro adaganddi. Ramarao kalala vetireki ane mudra migilipokunda yemaina cheyyandi brother."*) (Prasad 2016). After hearing the Chief Minister's agony and hurt over being misjudged by the artistes, PVRK Prasad¹²¹ gave this matter a lot of thought and recollected having established a Kalapeetham at Tirupati; while he Prasad was the Executive Officer at TTD

¹²¹Indian Administrative Service Officer, former Media Advisor to late Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, former Director General Dr MCR HRD Institute and former Executive Officer Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD). Commissioner Information and Public Relations in united AP, EO TTD. In his book *Asulem Jarigindianthe* recounts his experience of working with NT Rama Rao, the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh as Commissioner Information and Public Relations when the Akademies were closed.

(1978-82). The Peetham was expected to propagate Carnatic music and train and mentor a new generation of artistes in performing arts. He thought that creating a similar institute, on the lines of Kalapeetham, would be the solution for restoring the faith of the artistes (Prasad 2016). The Telugu Vignana Peetham established in Hyderabad in 1985 was on the same lines as the Kalapeetham of Tirupati.

Thus the Telugu Vigyana Peetham was created to promote, encourage and propagate the Literary, Plastic and Performing art forms of the State. The Peetham had to be created from scratch as all the staff members of the earlier Akademies had been shifted to other departments and funds were scarce. The Telugu Vigyana Peetham was transformed into Telugu University by an Act of the Legislature, Act No. 27 of 1985.¹²² The purpose of the university was to function as a research centre for Telugu language, literature and culture and to educate students within and outside the country in these fields. Prof T Donappa was appointed as the Vice Chancellor of this University. In the School of Fine Arts Music(vocal), Dance, Theatre Arts, Folk Arts, Painting and Sculpture and Instrumental Music Departments were created. It was renamed as Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University in the year 1989. This restructuring of the Akademies into Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University, where undergraduate(BA), Graduate(MA), M.Phil and Doctoral (PhD) courses are

¹²² A facsimile of the GO issued to establish the Telugu University is reproduced at the end of this chapter.

offered today has been a long journey in the cultural scape of the combined Telugu States. Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University has campuses at Rajahmundry in East Godavari district, Srisaïlam in Kurnool District, Sri Siddhendra Yogi Kuchipudi Kala Peetham (previously known as Siddhendra Kalakshetram), Kuchipudi in Krishna district and Warangal in the Telangana region. Telugu University's main campus at Hyderabad conducts examinations in all its affiliated institutes. At its inception, the Dance Department in the University was headed by Uma Rama Rao, followed by Alekya Punjala and at present is headed by Vanaja Uday; the teaching faculty at the University consist of Bhagavatulu Sethuram, K Ratnasri, N Lingaiah and Vijayapal Pathloth.¹²³ Vedantam Ramalinga Sastry, a hereditary Kuchipudi artiste, is the Principal, at the Sri Siddhendra Yogi Kuchipudi Kala Peetham, Kuchipudi.

Prior to this, from the year 1988 onwards Kuchipudi dance has been a part of the academic curriculum at the Central University of Hyderabad. They offer a Masters (MPA) and Doctoral (PhD) programmes at the university. The Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication was initiated by Bhadriraju Krishnamurthi, the then Vice-chancellor of the University. Initially, PSR Appa Rao was both a member of Faculty and the coordinator of the course, at the SN school. One of the first person to be appointed as a Professor in the Department of Dance was Nataraj Ramakrishna and he was followed by

¹²³ Kalakrishna and Suverchala Devi are the other two faculty members who are appointed on contract basis.

Anuradha Jonnalagadda¹²⁴ (Kuchipudi) and Pasumarthy Ramalinga Sastry¹²⁵ (Bharatanatyam), as members of the teaching Faculty. M S Siva Raju and G Aruna Bhikshu,¹²⁶ later joined the department as members of the Faculty. Kuchipudi Maestro, Vempati Chinna Satyam would visit the department as a guest Faculty member. In the discipline of Dance, since its inception scholars and practitioners of the performing arts, like Arudra, Vedantam Prahalad Sarma, Sumathi Kaushal, Sharon Lowen and Vedantam Radheshyam would be invited to give lectures and conduct workshops to enrich the student's knowledge and understanding of the art forms. The School was shifted to its present location at the University of Hyderabad campus, Gachibowli in the year 2002 (Anuradha J pers. comm.). The performing arts course give a comprehensive experience of the theoretical and practical aspects of the dance forms; and, by inviting eminent practitioners of different dance forms and scholars from diverse fields related to performing arts, the students get opportunities to enhance their knowledge and broaden their perspectives. Therefore, students from different parts of the country come and join both, the Master of Performing Arts (MPA) – Kuchipudi and Bharatanatyam -- and Doctoral program (Ph D) offered by the Dance department, at the University.

¹²⁴She graduated from the first batch in the Master's course in Dance 1988-1990 and further pursued research in the University of Hyderabad.

¹²⁵ A hereditary Kuchipudi artiste.

¹²⁶Most of the faculty members have graduated from of the Universities Department of Dance.

The courses at the Government Music and Dance Colleges have paved the way for the students to extend their academic studies further and aim for Masters and Doctoral programmes in the Performing Arts. Students who have an aptitude for higher studies have a structured and systematic course in the universities which offer Masters and research PhD avenues for them. In the Telugu States of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana the following Universities offer Masters and Doctoral Programs: Hyderabad Central University (HCU) and the State Level Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University (PSTU). Recently Andhra University at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh has introduced a Masters Program in Dance (MA) and Krishna University at Machilipatnam, Andhra Pradesh has also introduced a Certificate, Diploma and Post Graduate Diploma courses in Kuchipudi; all of these are self-financed courses. A sizable number of students are graduating from these Universities and a few of them are pursuing research in this field.

The history of the Kuchipudi institutes, schools and colleges has been traced in this Chapter to provide an understanding of how clarity must be gained on the process of institutionalization of these Centres. In fact, every traditional *guru* was like an institution by himself, passionately training his disciples in the Kuchipudi art form and in allied skills, like composing music and *jathis* which enabled the students to give vocal support for dance performances. They were also adept in training their disciples in the art of make-up, carving ornaments

out of wood and designing suitable attire for the characters in their performances. As long as these single *gurus* conducted the training in this dance form, it remained exclusively within the native land.

When the form of Kuchipudi spread to the non-hereditary families and the number of the aspirants had increased, the need for institutions with systematized teaching for Kuchipudi dance form was felt intensely. The recognition of this art as a classical form of India was a shot in the arm for the dance form which started spreading into the other Indian States and the other nations of the world. The introduction of the dance courses in the government colleges and the universities further enhanced the popularity of the Kuchipudi art form and increased the number of the private institutions to cater to the interested students who are unable to go for formal courses. For any field to be successful in the long term, its most important dimension is the research done in the field to locate the lacunae and suggest methods for its growth and development. The next chapter studies the process of this institutionalization in the Kuchipudi art form and the role of the hereditary Kuchipudi artistes who established institutions to take the art forward into the twentieth century and the direction, Kuchipudi dance form has taken owing to this process.

Chapter III

Originations From the Native Soil: Hereditary Artistes in the Process of Institutionalization

The Cultural heritage may be defined as the entire corpus of material signs - either artistic or symbolic - handed on by the past to each culture and, therefore, to whole of humankind. As a constituent part of this affirmation and enrichment of cultural identities, as a legacy belonging to all humankind, the cultural heritage gives each particular asset as its recognisable features and is the storehouse of human experience.

Cultural heritage includes non-physical or intangible cultural heritage, which includes the signs and symbols passed on by oral transmission, artistic and literary forms of expression, languages ways of life, myths, beliefs and rituals, value systems and traditional knowledge and know-how.

UNESCO, 25 C/4, 1989

The Kuchipudi village, in Krishna district has an inbuilt ecosystem for the teaching/learning of the dance form. Right from the time a child is born in the village, he/she, grows up listening or watching dance, music and hearing Telugu literary works,¹²⁷ like *Bhagavatam*, *Puranas* and stories from the epics

¹²⁷Whenever Vedantam Raghavayya visited Kuchipudi village, he would read the Bhagavata Puranas and all the villagers would gather around him and listen to his discourses; and, if they had any doubts, they would get them clarified by Raghavayya (Chinta Seetaramanjeneyulu pers.comm.).

Ramayana and *Mahabharata*. In most of the homes, the women would go about their daily chores singing some song or the other, be it an *Adhyatmaramayana keertana* or a *Tarangam* of *Narayanateertha*. So, a child in the village would unconsciously, absorb and learn the songs, *jathis* and characterizations of the various *Kalapas* or *Yakshaganas* being taught there. Therefore, everyone in the village becomes conversant with the art form, whether they are performers or not. Every house was a *gurukula*; and, it is in this kind of an atmosphere that the dance form of Kuchipudi was taught in the village of Kuchipudi. The Kuchipudi *melams*¹²⁸/troupes would train their artistes in a disciplined way in all the aspects of the dance form to make them proficient enough to enact the different roles in their productions. *Gurus* like Tadepalli Perayya (1886-1942) and Bhagavatula Vissayya (1880-1959) (contemporary artistes) of Kuchipudi village used to train devadasis¹²⁹ from the neighbouring villages of Nangigadda, Ghantasala and Meduru in the beginning of the twentieth century. They would not only train the devadasis but also conduct their performances as *Sutradharas*. Thus, it is evident that hereditary artistes had interactions with artistes beyond their cultural and geographic ecosystems.

Chinta Venkataramayya (1860-1949), the progenitor of the Kuchipudi *Yakshagana*, was supposed to have made his sons promise that they would celebrate his first death anniversary by staging his productions for three

¹²⁸ Refer Chapter II.

¹²⁹ J, Anuradha. 1993. Kuchipudi Dance Who is Who. Kuchipudi Mahotsav.

consecutive days; and his sons adhered to their father's wish.¹³⁰ This celebration laid the foundation for the formation of *Venkatarama Natya Mandali*; and, all the existing *melams* in the Kuchipudi village were coalesced to establish *Venkatarama Natya Mandali* with Chinta Krishna Murthy as its head. The first anniversary celebrations of Chinta Venkataramayya, also kindled the idea of founding a formal school for teaching Kuchipudi dance in the village. By uniting all the *melams* in the Kuchipudi village and forming *Venkatarama Natya Mandali*, Chinta Krishna Murthy was able to strengthen the *Yakshagana* performance practice of the Kuchipudi artistes. Under the banner of *Venkatarama Natya Mandali*,¹³¹ the Kuchipudi artistes were able to present and promote their artistic skills before distinguished audiences all over the country. Thus, the process of institutionalization of the Kuchipudi dance form could have been initiated through the *Venkatarama Natya Mandali*. The development of the dance form through a systematized and institutionalized process by the hereditary artistes of the village and its transfer and training on to the cosmopolitan students/audiences across the urban landscape of the country could be seen, as “a process in which collectivities adapt their inheritance for changed conditions.”(Mulhern 2009)¹³²

¹³⁰ The plays chosen by Chinta Venkataramayya were *Bhakta Prablada*, *Usha Parinayam* and *Rama Natakam*. (Sarma 2016).

¹³¹Chinta Venkataramayya, took over the leadership of *Chinta vari melam*—a combined *melam* of three family groups—in 1876. In order to commemorate the memory of Chinta Venkataramayya, *Venkatarama Natya Mandali* was founded under the stewardship of Chinta Krishna Murthy. After Chinta Krishna Murthy, it was carried forward by Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma.

¹³² Hartman Andrew. What is Culture? Raymond Williams and Cultural Theory of “Customary Difference” <https://s-usih.org/2009/02/what-is-culture-raymond-williams-and/>

Re-moulding to Newer Training Methods

The performance trajectory of the Kuchipudi art form – *Kalapas, Yakshaganas*, solos to dance dramas --- has been extensively investigated by scholars -- Jonnalagadda (1996); Soneji (2004); Putcha (2011); Kamath (2012) and Thota (2016). In this Chapter, the proliferation of the form through private institutions are delved into. For this purpose, the ethnographic interviews conducted at the Kuchipudi village and in other parts of the Telugu speaking States will form an important source material along with printed matter in the form of articles, journals and dissertations. This chapter will be looking at the contribution of hereditary artistes from the Kuchipudi village, who contributed towards the dance form's, structural and theoretical knowledge in the twentieth century. Developing upon Raymond William's theorization of Culture,¹³³ in the Indian context, it can be inferred that what was happening at the pan-Indian level, the reconstruction of the traditional performing art forms, which were experiencing an organic metamorphosis was being reflected in the institutionalization of Kuchipudi dance.

The change that came about in Kuchipudi dance form was a collective effort of all the Kuchipudi artistes, who were exposed to the outside world and its

¹³³ Williams, Raymond. Traditions, Institutions and Formations. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1977 115-121. According to Williams, the historical and analytical studies of culture must include an analysis of what he calls "formations" which are recognizable as conscious movements and tendencies (literary, artistic, philosophical, or scientific).

creative influences. These artistes¹³⁴ realized the necessity of establishing institutes and teaching it to non-hereditary people (other than their own) and it will be seen in the following pages the efforts put in by them. The Kuchipudi *trayam*, as they are known, Vempati Venkatanarayana (1871-1935), Chinta Venkataramayya (1860-1949) and Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry (1886-1956) had evolved the Kuchipudi dance form with their intuitive genius's. Vempati Venkatanarayana was known for his expertise in the *Kalapa* genre. Chinta Venkataramayya, the creator of Kuchipudi *Yakshaganas* and Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry propagated the solo dance tradition in Kuchipudi dance. All the three had passed away by the middle of the twentieth century and it was left to their students and artistic heirs to carry forward their works. It was at this juncture that three artistes -- Vedantam Parvatisam, Vedantam Prahlada Sarma and Vempati Peda Satyam -- took on the mantle of taking the dance form to the next stage in its growth and expansion. Their contributions are vital to this work, as all three of them were involved in the process of founding institutions in the village of Kuchipudi and outside of it. Their chief contribution lies in systematizing and stylizing the dance form, and in designing a set syllabus for the first time; their contribution spread to the academic level

¹³⁴ "often when we look further, we find that these are articulations of much wider effective formations, which can by no means be easily identified with formal institutions, or their formal meanings or values and which can even be positively contrasted with them. This factor is of the greatest importance for what is habitually specialized as intellectual and artistic formations." (Williams 1977, 119, cited by Meduri 2008, 309)

Meduri, A. (fall. 2008). The Transfiguration of Indian/Asian Dance in United Kingdom: Contemporary "Bharatanatyam" In Global Contexts. *Asian Theatre Journal*, 25(2). 298-328. Retrieved. 09 03, 2014

too as they wrote articles and books on the art form. Hence, it is apparent that those processes that are crucial to institutionalization in any field had been initiated by them. A brief outline of their own training, artistic journeys and other avenues they ventured into would prove illuminating to assess their choices and moves in the process of systematising training of the Kuchipudi artform.



Photo Courtesy: Anuradha J

Figure 3.1: Vedantam Parvatisam with the Kuchipudi flag

During the field study of this research, it became apparent that Vedantam Parvatisam was the one person at the Kuchipudi village that most of the present day Kuchipudi artistes and *gurus* credited for their ingress into Kuchipudi dance. Parvatisam (1920-2005), had trained under Chinta Venkataramayya, Vedantam Ramakrishnayya and Vedantam Raghavayya. His musical talent was honed under Yeleswarapu Seetaramanjeneyulu, at Kuchipudi village. He was academically inclined and was interested in “writing poetry under the guidance of Yeleswaracharyulu. He also studied Hindi and

passed his “*Rashtra Bhasa*” examination early in life” (Sarma 2015, 214). His training in his own words is an indicator to the method followed by his *gurus*, in his childhood, to initiate artistes into the form:

If one is to learn the *Yakshagana* style one must first learn footwork, *theerikas*, *jatis*, *jatiswaras*, *tillana*, *sabdams* like *Dasavatara*, *Daruvulu*, *Salaam daruvu* etc. This is the foundation work essentially required. Thereafter it would be easy to sing, dance and enact any *daruvu*. This was the system we followed when I was young. Starting as *sakhis*, moving on to lady roles (heroines), the artists were then taught *pravesa Daruvu* (the item which announces the entrance of the character). Thereafter they were initiated into dancing *sabdas* like *Dasavatara* – the entire training process supervised by *Sutradhari* (the leader of the troupe). (Parvatisam 1993, 82)¹³⁵

Parvatisam took to the usual route in the performative culture of Kuchipudi by taking part in the *Yakshaganas* and *Kalapas* staged by the Kuchipudi artistes, progressing from small roles to larger ones. For a brief period of time he also engaged with theatrical troupes other than Kuchipudi *melams*, which mostly performed social and mythological themes. Parvatisam, is remembered by his students,¹³⁶ as an exacting teacher, who gave them wings to perform with a lot of freedom.

Parvatisam would make them practise everywhere and anywhere; sometimes in the classroom, at other times in the temple, or if he

¹³⁵Parvateesam, Vedantam, “Solo Dance in Kuchipudi.” Kuchipudi Mahotsav (1993): 82-84.

¹³⁶Chinta Seetaramanjeneyulu, Yeleswarapu Nageswara Sarma, Bhagavatula Ramakottayya, PVG Krishna Sarma, Pasumarthy Rattayya Sarma, Pasumarthy Kesava Prasad, Vedantam Radheshyam, Vedantam Ramalinga Sastry, Mahankali Suryanarayana and Jayarama Rao.

had some work in the fields, he would ask his students to come there and practise. If the students did not bend their knees enough (*kungu*), he would take their school bags and keep them on the student's heads and make them bend. He would insert a stick between their knees and they [the students] had to keep bending in that position. And, if by chance the school bag would fall down, the student would be beaten black and blue. Vedantam Parvatisam, would advise his students to do exactly as he taught in the classroom, but while performing on the stage do it differently. He would test the skills of his students in inventive ways; while performing the *Dasavatara Sabdam*, he would go on repeating the lyric of an *avataram* any number of times and the student had to go on performing; and in all the ten *avataras*, the student would not know when one *avatara* would end and the next would begin. He gave them scope for improvisation, and this improved their thinking ability. This way the students had to be alert at all the times and keep performing till the *guru* decides to change the *avatara*. (V Ramalinga Sastry. pers.comm.)

Vedantam Parvatisam, was one of the first hereditary artistes to start a school, outside the Kuchipudi village, in Gudivada (a small town in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh), in the year 1939. After some time, he returned to the village and started the Kuchipudi Kalakshetram around the year 1957¹³⁷ with an idea “of sharing his knowledge with everybody and not confine it to his kinsmen

¹³⁷ During the field study at the village of Kuchipudi, the artistes/gurus mentioned different years, ranging from 1948 to 1957. But majority of them said somewhere in the middle of 1950's. The APSNA Cultural Survey Report (APSNA Report 1960, 218) and the book Kuchipudi Dance Who is Who by Anuradha J mention the year 1957 as the year in which Siddhendra Kalakshetram was established. Hence for the purpose of this study the year 1957 has been selected.

alone. He started teaching Kuchipudi dance to outsiders and in this endeavour, he had the support of Chinta Krishna Murthy and other prominent villagers.” (V Ramalinga Sastry. pers.comm.). This school paved way for the establishment of Siddhendra Kalakshetra with a permanent structure in the Kuchipudi village. He worked there as an instructor and systematized the pre-existing fundamental steps of Kuchipudi dance form into a more structured format. “He was the first to record the *pataksharas* (solfa syllables) used for the basics of Kuchipudi in his book *Nritya Tarangini*” (Jonnalagadda 1996,55). This is similar to what Venkatamakhi did in Carnatic music by codifying the seventy-two *melakarta* ragas and used to make the students practice them regularly (V Ramalinga Sastry pers.comm.). Parvatisam, contributed several articles to various journals, published works on the technique and repertoire of Kuchipudi which includes *Bhama Kalapam* (1964), *Prablada Natakam* (1981), *Kuchipudi Melakartalu* (1981) and is known for his singular contribution in “preparing and compiling the basics of Kuchipudi dance and documentation of traditional dance dramas and *Pagativeshas*” (Jonnalagadda 1996). Parvatisam¹³⁸ was keen that the students of Kuchipudi dance in the village learn different facets of the art form from the experts of that particular field. For instance, artistes belonging to the Chinta family were good at *Nattuvangam*, he

¹³⁸Apart from these he wrote, *Nritya Tarangini*, *Dhurjati Kalapam -Melakartala Viniyogalu*, *Golla Kalapam*, *Bhagavatula Kuchipudi Khanda Kavyam*, *Rama Natakam*, *Chintamani*, *Usha Parinayam*, *Adhunika Kavulato Yakshaganam*, *Tripura Samharam*, *Yerukala Vesham*, *Daksha Yagnam*, *Thiruvallakeni Harishchandra*, *Krishnaleela*, *Rukmini Kalyanam*, *Siddhendra Yakshaganam*, *Savutula Poru*, *Macchupalli anu Sidhapatam*, *Idam Brahma Midam Kshtram-dance drama*, *Dindirava Tandavam*.

felt that *Nattawangam* should be learnt from them; similarly, the Vedantam family was known for their prowess of portraying *Stree vesham* and characterization, the Mahankali family was good at depicting *Rakshasa*/demonic roles and the Darbha family was good at comic and supporting roles. Parvatisam wanted the students to learn all these aspects from experts of the various families or *melams* (V Ramalinga Sastry pers.comm.). Deriving inspiration from the flag designed by Pingali Venkayya for the nation, he designed the Kuchipudi flag and he would hoist it whenever there was a programme going on in the village of Kuchipudi.¹³⁹ He is also supposed to have founded the *Kshetrayya Sangeetha Nrityasala* at Muvva village in the year 1976. Thus, Parvatisam insisted that every student who aspired to learn the form do so in a holistic way or in a multi- disciplinary system. These narratives about Parvatisam also indicate his understanding of the need of the times, the need of disseminating the art through training at various venues and to all the aspirants, whether they belonged to the village or not and also to his consciousness of identity creation for Kuchipudi.

¹³⁹ Subramanyam 2003. Ed.



Source: Sangeeta Natak Akademi

Figure 3.2: Vedantam Pahlada Sarma

The other hereditary Kuchipudi artist who becomes a key player in this work is Vedantam Pahlada Sarma (1929-1991), owing to his efforts to strengthen the institutionalization process. Initiated into dance by his father Vedantam Rattayya Sarma, Pahlada Sarma, continued his training with Vempati Venkatanarayana and Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry. To describe his training routine in his own words:

Wake up at 4 a.m. and practice *Swarams*, *Jantalu*, and *Geetamulu* with the tunes of *Akara*, *Vukara*, *Ekarams*. Then from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. to know the primary principles of *Natyam* i.e. *Adugulu*, *Jathulu*, and *Sabdams*. Interval from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. From 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. to learn *Sabdams*, *Gola-Kalapam*, *Padams*, *Javaleelu*, and *Bhama Kalapam*. From 6 p.m to practice *Talams*, *Natakams* 'Drama', *Kalapams* with '*Vachikabinayam*.' Like this I learnt this art for about 10 years. My first *Guru* was late Vedantam Rattayya, second *Guru* was Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry and third *Guru* was Sri Vempati Venkatanarayana. Even as a student, I gave performances at

different places and earned name in *Natyam*. I am well-versed in *Bhama Kalapam* and *Golla Kalapam*.¹⁴⁰

Prahlada Sarma was the only artist to perform in all the then existing four *melams*, *Mahankalivari Samajam*, *Chintavari Samajam*, *Pasumarthivari Samajam* and *Vedantamvari Samajam*, at some point of time or the other. He would portray female characters like Seetha, Chandramathi, Leelavathi, Subhadra, Sasirekha and Mohini in the *Yakshagamas*. He enacted the Dadinamma and Balintha roles with dexterity and at the same time performed male characters like Devendra, Arjuna, Krishna and Rama with flair.

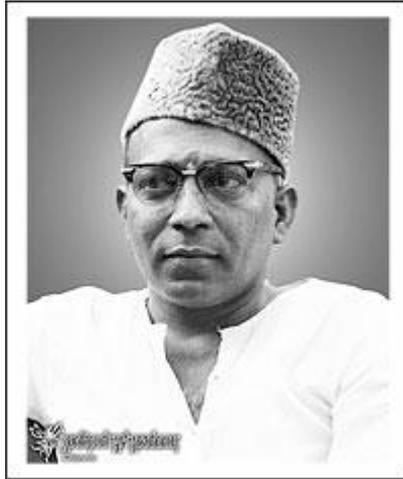
He was appointed as the Principal of Eluru branch of Siddhendra Kalakshetram in the year 1964, which was established with the funds contributed by the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi, and at the time was managed by Banda Kanakalingeswararao. Raja Reddy,¹⁴¹ while recollecting his training in Kuchipudi dance with Prahlada Sarma at Eluru, says, “Prahlada Sarma was a perfectionist.” Describing his training sessions, “he [Prahlada Sarma] first taught, ‘*baskilu*,’ ‘*Kuppilu*’ and ‘*Chakradandem*’ and would daily, make me stand against the wall for half an hour, to acquire the basic stance of Kuchipudi dance.” He advised Raja Reddy to learn “*Tandava*” and his wife

¹⁴⁰Information collected from the personal papers of Anuradha Jonnalagadda.

¹⁴¹ Raja and Radha Reddy are prominent non-hereditary Kuchipudi artists. They trained under Vedantam Prahlada Sarma, early in their careers, 1963-1964 at Eluru. They have training institutes in Delhi and Hyderabad.

Radha Reddy, to learn “*lasya*” dance items. Prahlada Sarma¹⁴² evolved a systematic and structured approach to teaching Kuchipudi dance and recorded the “*Adugulu*” (basic steps) practised by the hereditary Kuchipudi *gurus*, and “tried to describe them in the terms used by Bharata in his *Natya Sastra*. For instance, he describes the first step which is identified by the *gurus* by its *pataksharas, tehi tehidattam tatai tehittata as Ghattitaprasaritam*” (Jonnalagadda 1996, 56). *Kuchipudi Nritya Manjari* 1991 (Sarma 2016, 220), a book about Kuchipudi dance was published by Prahlada Sarma. He was a visiting faculty member at the University of Hyderabad and later at the Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University, and contributed in building up its theoretical and performing courses. Prahlada Sarma was one artiste, despite having trained in the traditional process in the village, adapted himself to the changing scenario. The training he imparted to the formal structures such as the universities enabled him to become a bridge of sorts between the two worlds.

¹⁴²Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma, Vedantam Raghavayya, Gudimetla Krishna, Yamini Krishnamurthi, D Y Sampath Kumar, K P Chandrika are some of his students.



Source: Sangeeta Natak Akademi

Figure 3.3: Vempati Peda Satyam

From today's vantage point, the person whose life's work has influenced the dance form in an extremely powerful way seems to be Vempati Peda Satyanarayana, more popularly known as Peda Satyam (1922-1982). He started learning the art form later than his contemporaries in the village -- he was 13-year-old when he was initiated into dance. He chose an uncharted terrain in the performance sphere of Kuchipudi art form, different from the rest of the hereditary artistes of the time. A childhood infection, left him with a scarred face and a voice that was not easy on the ear, and, did not allow for a great concert career in either of the prevailing performance genres, the *Yakshaganas* or the *Kalapams*, in the Kuchipudi village. It was his *guru* Chinta Venkataramayya, who advised and personally entrusted him to Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, to train under him. Here too, he had to face disappointment, as Peda Satyam recounts, "After 3 months Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, took the money and asked Peda Satyam to leave. Peda

Satyam pleaded with him to let him stay and watch Jagannadha Sarma learn.”

¹⁴³ Lakshminarayana Sastry relented on the condition that, Peda Satyam would help his *guru* by doing various house hold chores like cooking, carrying their luggage while on tours.

Peda Satyam’s learning under Lakshminarayana Sastry was more passive, watching and observing the practice and performance of Jagannatha Sarma, and reading the books he had access to. He mentions that his biggest take away from the time he spent with Lakshminarayana Sastry were the *nayika-nayaka bhavas* and *abhinaya lakshanas*. (Thota 2016, 89)

Disillusioned with his endeavours in the dance world, Peda Satyam decided to try his luck in learning painting (a skill with which he was well endowed), at the National College, Machilipatnam, in 1939, under Adavi Bapiraju, not only a renowned painter, but also a lawyer, freedom fighter, writer, poet, playwright and art director in films.¹⁴⁴ It was Bapiraju, in fact, who mentored Peda Satyam’s entry into films. His career in films began with “Meera Bai” where he performed the famous Kapalika dance; so, he first entered the film world as an artist and later settled down as a dance director. Peda Satyam went on to choreograph dance in over 300 films. In the beginning stages of his film career, he had teamed up with Vedantam Raghavayya and formed a troupe, *Prabhakar*

¹⁴³ Peda Satyam, ‘Vempati Vennakati Vishayalu’ Bharata Praja Abhimani, n.d. pp 10-12.

¹⁴⁴ The training in painting helped him in bringing out the innate aesthetics of the body in later periods, when he was working as a dance director in films.

Natya Mandali, along with Tandava Krishna and Pasumarthi Krishnamurthy. They would perform traditional numbers like *Ashtapadis*, *Tarangams*, *Javalis*, *Padams* and were inspired by watching the dances of Uday Shankar¹⁴⁵ and other dancers of the times. Peda Satyam choreographed new oriental numbers like the Hunter Dance, Radha Krishna and folk dances.

During his time in Madras, he was able to watch maestros like Uday Shankar, Nataraj-Sakuntala and Menaka Ramanarayana. He also happened to meet Ram Gopal – the famous Bharatanatyam artist; and at his invitation, went to Bangalore to teach Kuchipudi at his (Ram Gopal's) school, and in turn learnt Bharatanatyam and Kathakali dance forms there. This was the other major influence in his life, where he met and learnt from great artists like Kunj Kurup (Kathakali) and Muthukumar Pillai (Bharatanatyam), and went on an All-India dance tour with them. That experience opened up a whole new world to him, in terms of body movement exploration and also in realising the importance of an academy to impart training in an art form, which seemed at the time to be the only way to propagate the art form. This can be seen in his continuous writings on the dance form and his insistence in establishing an institution for teaching and training in Kuchipudi dance. He himself founded Schools for this purpose at Madras (Chennai) but was not very successful in these endeavours.

¹⁴⁵ Chinta Seetaramanjeyulu, a contemporary of Peda Satyam revealed that during their younger days, both of them had watched Uday Shankar perform in the neighbouring towns of Vijayawada, Machilipatnam and Gudivada. He mentions that they were enthralled and awestruck by Uday Shankar's performances. Chinta Seetaramanjeyulu reminisced during an interview with Anuradha J at Hyderabad.

In all his writings in the magazines such as *Andhra Prabha*, *Dhanka*, *Andhra Patrika*,¹⁴⁶ Peda Satyam, repeatedly reiterates the need for establishing a dance school to teach Kuchipudi dance in a systematic way. With his innate urge to impart the art form that, Peda Satyam and Raghavayya, founded a dance school with the help of “Kesari¹⁴⁷ and Bulusu Sambamurthy and named it as “Kuchipudi Kala Vigyana Kendram” (refer chapter II) at Madras, which did not last long. Along with Sowdamini, his student, dancer and subsequently his life partner, he established “Udaya Bharati Nritya Niketan” at Madras; and they gave many performances together. Again in 1948, he founded “Kuchipudi Kalakendram,” at Madras to teach and perform Kuchipudi dance with Sowdamini. He sought help to establish a dance school from the Andhra Pradesh Government; but did not receive any. To teach the dance form in a systematic manner, he framed a syllabus for Kuchipudi dance, in which equal importance was given to the learning of music and theory (discussed in detail further in this Chapter). It was his passion for the art form that made him work tirelessly for it, by way of choreographing newer dance numbers, writing articles in various journals and establishing dance institutions to teach the form. Peda Satyam was involved in the establishment of the Siddhendra Kalakshetra at Kuchipudi village and after he settled down in Kuchipudi village, taught there for some time. Vedantam Ramalinga Sastry, the current Principal of

¹⁴⁶Cited from the personal collection of Anuradha Jonnalagadda.

¹⁴⁷Tanguturi Prakasam Panthulu, the first Chief Minister of Andhra State. He was known as “Andhra Kesari.”

Siddhendra Kalakshetra and his student, describes his (Peda Satyam's) teaching methodology: He (Peda Satyam) would ask Vedantam Ramalinga Sastry, to practice the basic *adavus, tam didgidigi tai*, in the following method:

<i>tam digidigi tai –Chaturasrajaati—</i>	four <i>kalas</i> /speeds
<i>Tisrajaati ---</i>	” ” ” ”
<i>Khanda jaati ---</i>	” ” ” ”
<i>Misrajaati ---</i>	” ” ” ”
<i>Sankirajaati ----</i>	” ” ” ”

While the student was practising in the above-mentioned method, Peda Satyam would suddenly command the student to perform *tam digidigitai*, in *Khanda jaati*, 3rd speed. If the student was able to perform the step properly, only then he would deem the student to have learnt the *adavu*. Peda Satyam with his wife Sowdamini, developed the *adavu/adugulu* system that is taught in Chinna Satyam's school (Bharani Shenkar pers.comm.). They would take an existing *adavu* and then develop various combinations to it, refine it and teach it to Chinna Satyam and other students.

There are no recordings of Peda Satyam's stage performances, but his choreographies in the films,¹⁴⁸ are an enormous source, for understanding his technique. The symmetry and lines in his dance compositions have great aesthetic appeal. It is believed that he brought in the symmetry and sculpturesque quality that are seen in the Kuchipudi dances today.

¹⁴⁸The evolution of Kuchipudi in film over the course of the twentieth century offers an invaluable visible archive that indexes the ways in which gurus negotiated their own identities and reinvented Kuchipudi as classical (Putchu 2011, 120).

Rajasulochana, a dancer and actor in Telugu films, who had worked with all the Kuchipudi dance directors in films, remembers Peda Satyam to be a hard task master who would make her rehearse any number of times, till she got the movement right. “He would concentrate on the movement and his choreography was ‘*gambhira*’ (dignified),” she says. A press article¹⁴⁹ of the time commented that after Peda Satyam, entered the film field and began to choreograph dances, that “film dance” gained credibility. It goes on to describe Peda Satyam as a “creative, aesthetic and intellectual person.” Peda Satyam trained many students¹⁵⁰ at his institutes and a few of them went on to become performers and teachers of remarkable calibre. His outstanding disciple and cousin, who took the dance form to greater heights and gained national and international recognition for it was Vempati Chinna Satyam. A discussion on Chinna Satyam’s contribution to the process of institutionalization in detail is given further in this Chapter.

The expansion of Kuchipudi dance into the institution culture of the twenty-first century was actuated by these three hereditary artistes: Vedantam Parvatisam, Vedantam Prahlada Sarma and Vempati Peda Satyam; they trained many students and established institutions to pass on their knowledge. From the accounts of the hereditary artistes in the village, the three of them were not

¹⁴⁹Vyakti Shakti Natyakala Tapasvi –Vempati Peda Satyam, nn, nd pp 11. Cited from the personal collection of Anuradha Jonnalagadda.

¹⁵⁰Sumathi Kaushal and Yadavalli Rama were some of his students

acclaimed as great performers, unlike Vedantam Raghavayya or Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma but they created the “democratic spaces” for non-hereditary people to learn the art form (which was, until then the exclusive preserve of the hereditary artistes). These artistes, realized the importance of changing with the times and the world around them, and responded, by strengthening the existing performance practices and structuring them to the requirements of the time.

Another factor that acted as a lubricant in the process of institutionalization was the evolution of the solo in the artform of Kuchipudi. The solo dance form became popular in the twenty first century, with most of the Kuchipudi *gurus* teaching it to their students. Numerous reasons are cited for this transformation of the dance form; the foremost amongst them being Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry’s propagation of the solo format and most of the twentieth and twenty first century *gurus* were directly or indirectly his students.¹⁵¹ Secondly, *Yakshaganas* needed a large number of artistes and it was becoming difficult to tour with such a large troupe economically and artistically also, is the oft repeated trope that is heard regularly. But *Yakshaganas* are performed to this day regularly by the hereditary Kuchipudi artistes. So, it could be that the Kuchipudi artistes were influenced by what was happening around

¹⁵¹Tandava Krishna, CR Acharyulu, Vempati Peda Satyam, Vedantam Jagannadha Sarma, Josyula Seetaramayya, Vempati Chinna Satyam, Nataraja Ramakrishna, PVG Krishna Sarma, Vedantam Prahlada Sarma, Korada Narashimha Rao, Yeleawarapu Nageswara Sarma, Uma Rama Rao.

the country -- regionally and nationally -- and since the solo dance style was in vogue, it impacted the art form in the village. Thus, one sees that Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry's style of dance to be a major influencing factor on the institutes. Amongst his disciples, it was his son Vedantam Jagannadha Sarma at Madras and Hyderabad, and Vempati Chinna Satyam, in Madras, who went on to establish dance schools. Vempati Chinna Satyam effected major changes in the structure and technique of the dance style and developed the innovative dance drama genre in Kuchipudi style.

Thus, the process of institutionalization was started by the three artistes, as discussed above, and was aided by the individual experiments of artistes like Lakshminarayana Sastry. But it was standardized, reproduced and furthered by the next generation of hereditary artistes.

The Crafting of a Maestro

At this juncture, I would like to say, Kuchipudi dance tradition, being a living art form, growth is inevitable... But when I was involved in this process, I did not know that they would kindle the imagination of the audience and their appreciation would in turn, make me put in more creative work...I am neither the beginning nor the end of the glorious Kuchipudi tradition. (Vempati Chinna Satyam 1996, 98)



Source: Google Search

Figure 3.4: Vempati Chinna Satyam

In the year 1959, the Kuchipudi artistes had proved to the world that their art form was “classical” by organizing the Kuchipudi Natya Seminar, in Hyderabad, under the aegis of Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Akademi; at the same time, a tall lanky young man from the hereditary families of the Kuchipudi village, at the behest of B N Reddy (Telugu film director) was at Kavali, Jawahar Bharathi College, choreographing a ballet, “*Sri Krishna Parijatam*” and making history in the process-- “It provided a much needed opportunity to give shape to my restlessness, something original, a free flight to my imagination” (Chinna Satyam 1996, 94). Helping him in this creative enterprise was SV Bhujangaraya Sarma, the script writer and Dwaram Bhavanarayanarao, the music composer. This was the beginning of many such artistic collaborations between Chinna Satyam and SV Bhujangaraya Sarma later was joined by music composer P Sangeeta Rao. Chinna Satyam went on to choreograph twelve dance dramas,¹⁵² which are considered major milestones

¹⁵² See Appendix for a list of his dance dramas.

in the course of Kuchipudi dance form. Therefore 1959, is a landmark year in the history of the Kuchipudi dance form, as the dance form achieved the “classical” tag and a major innovation in the trajectory of the art form happened in the same year.

Like all other hereditary artistes of Kuchipudi village, Chinna Satyam too learnt dance and music, along with the stories from *Bhagavatam* and other *Puranas*. He had trained under Tadepalli Perayya Sastri, who by then was already into his seventies:

Satyam, woke up early in the morning, the village would be filled with a mixture of pleasing sounds...chanting by devout people, music being taught and learnt, dance jati's being called out. Perayya Sastri's class would begin at five and stretch upto seven or eight o'clock. Satyam would go to an elementary school and return to Sastri's class at half past four in the afternoon, to study music and dance until about eight o'clock in the night. (*Sruti*, 51/52: 48)

Chinna Satyam, was given the prefix “Chinna” or little to differentiate him from his elder cousin, Vempati Peda Satyam – who was at time working as a dance director in the Telugu films, at Madras. It was to eke a living that Chinna Satyam, all of 18 years of age, travelled to Madras on foot in the year 1947. His cousin brother and a newbie dance director in Telugu films, Peda Satyam, was his destination, in the city of Madras. While living with his brother, Chinna

Satyam learnt Bharatanatyam from Sowdamini¹⁵³ and also assisted Peda Satyam in choreographing for movies.

Once Rukmini Devi of Kalakshetra and her niece Radha [now Burnier] had come to Peda Satyam's house to see what Kuchipudi was like. By that time he had learnt a little bit of Bharatanatyam too in Madras. A little bit of that and a little bit of Kuchipudi was shown to them. They left saying it was not quite right. I did the fundamentals of Kuchipudi. The others did various items. We were dismissed as of having no standard. That rankled and reinforced my decision. (*Sruti*, 51/52: 48)

He would practice Kuchipudi dance and would try to improve upon the existing technique of the form (Bharani Shenkar pers. comm.).¹⁵⁴ For a short period, in 1950 Chinna Satyam was at Machilipatnam, teaching dance at, Azad Balika Paatasala. It was during this time at Machilipatnam, that Bhagavatula Yagyanarayana Sarma (pers.comm.), M Kachanamala (pers.comm.) and Turaga Janaki Rani learnt dance from Chinna Satyam; and all of them say that, they were taught Bharatanatyam dance by him. By this, it is clear that Chinna Satyam was trained and proficient enough in Bharatanatyam, even before he began teaching or experimenting with Kuchipudi as a dance form.

¹⁵³ Peda Satyam's wife and an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer.

¹⁵⁴ Bharani Shenkar, is the son of PV Narashimha Rao, (a dance teacher from Visakhapatnam), who had gone to Madras to try his luck in films. Bharani would observe Chinna Satyam practise and after sometime learnt Kuchipudi dance from Chinna Satyam, when he himself [Chinna Satyam] was learning the form from Sowdamini. According to Bharani Shenkar, both Vempati Peda Satyam and Sowdamini designed the fundamentals of Kuchipudi dance and taught it to Vempati Chinna Satyam.

While in Madras, he watched Bharatanatyam performances of Balasaraswati and Kamala Lakshman and the “perfection” of Kamala’s dancing made a lasting impression on him and also made him aware of the “tawdriness” that had crept into Kuchipudi dance. He has also recollected watching the performances of Uday Shankar and Ram Gopal during his early years in Madras.¹⁵⁵ Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry was living in Madras at that time and Chinna Satyam started learning Kuchipudi dance from him: “He ‘studied’ with the master for five years” (*Sruti*, 51/52: 49) and observed him teaching dance to the well-established dancers like Balasaraswati, Tara Chowdhury and Ram Gopal. Alongside, he began to study Bharata’s Natya Sastra and enhanced his knowledge in various aspects of the dance form, which eventually led to the “modernization and refinement of the Kuchipudi dance.” (*Sruti*, 51/52: 50)

Building an Institution for Kuchipudi in Madras

Chinna Satyam had started a dance school in 1958 at music director¹⁵⁶ TV Raju’s house, to teach Kuchipudi dance; but, he did not succeed in this venture as it was financially draining. On the advice of Vedantam Raghavayya and Peda Satyam, he started teaching dance at actor, Rajasulochana’s Dance school, Pushpanjali Nrutya Kalakendram.¹⁵⁷ At Rajasulochana’s school he developed a

¹⁵⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWAiA_BAEyM

¹⁵⁶ Kothapalli Padma (pers.comm.), a senior student of Vempati Chinna Satyam, she was training under him at that time.

¹⁵⁷ The invocatory number-- Puja dance, was choreographed by Chinna Satyam, for Rajasulochana and the lyric “Brahmanjali” referred to her school. It was written by BLN Acharya and set to music by Kocherlakota Prakasa Rao (Rajasulochana pers.comm.).

distinct pedagogy to teach this traditional form. Chinna Satyam, with some help from the actor's husband CS Rao, formulated a syllabus for teaching the Kuchipudi dance in a structured and systematic¹⁵⁸ way (Rajasulochana pers.comm.).¹⁵⁹ However, that partnership was short lived. He then met Shanta Rao “already a famous dancer who had learned the art from highly regarded *gurus*, Bharatanatyam from Pandanallur Meenakshisundaram Pillai and Mohini Attam from Ravunni Menon and Krishna Pannikar,” (*Sruti*, 51/52: 47) who expressed her desire to learn Kuchipudi dance from him. That was the flash point in Chinna Satyam's career as an institution builder. After watching one of his dance dramas, *Ksheerasagaramadanam*, in Madras, Shanta Rao, wanted to learn Kuchipudi from Chinna Satyam. She met him and offered to open a dance school, “When he accepted the offer, she rented—at 250 rupees a month—a spacious bungalow at 1 Boag Road, in T. Nagar...placed the ground floor at Satyam's disposal for his classes. Further, christening the school as the Kuchipudi Dance Academy,” (*Sruti*, 51/52: 47). Chinna Satyam began teaching at Shanta Rao's school,¹⁶⁰ “He taught classes between seven of the morning clock till one in the afternoon and again between four and eight. And he taught Shanta Rao privately after concluding the evening class sessions, until about 10 at night” (*Sruti*, 51/52: 47). He continued teaching there for sometime but

¹⁵⁸ Prior to this there was no set repertoire for Kuchipudi dance –they would teach a few fundamental adavus and start teaching dance items like –Vinayaka Kautvam, Athana Jathiswaram, Ramayana Sabdam, Bhamakalapam etc. There was no prescribed format or syllabus.

¹⁵⁹ Excerpts taken from Katyayani Thota's interview of Rajasulochana, at Chennai, 2012.

¹⁶⁰ Shanta Rao had purchased a plot of land at T. Nagar, to construct a School.

destiny had chiselled another path for him and eventually Chinna Satyam quit working for Shanta Rao, in 1963.

It was with a lot of conviction,¹⁶¹ that Chinna Satyam, started an institute of his own, Kuchipudi Art Academy, opposite Pangal Park¹⁶² in Tyagaraja Nagar, Madras in 1963, and began training students and established himself as a highly creative and innovative Kuchipudi *guru*, and soon his students began to give performances at numerous venues thereby garnering critical appreciation.

Soon, the artistic community of Madras noticed him, and many established dancers showed immense interest¹⁶³ in learning Kuchipudi dance from Chinna Satyam. From then onwards, his institute became the destination for anyone interested in training in Kuchipudi. In later years, he opened branches of the Academy at Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam and deputed two of his senior students to manage them. At Hyderabad, he entrusted the school to Sobha Naidu and at Visakhapatnam, where he had named the institute as Kuchipudi Kalakshetra, made Bala Kondala Rao as its Principal. Till date, these three institutions have trained more than 8000 students.

¹⁶¹By this time, he had choreographed dance dramas, *Sri Krishna Parijatam*, *Chandalika* and *Ksheerasagamadbanam*, worked as a Dance director in films and had already trained Yedavalli Rama and Chandrakala in the solo format, so was confident of his teaching capabilities. (*Sruti*, 51/52: 48)

¹⁶²With some help from Ramaiah Pillai who was instrumental in securing the premises for Vempati Chinna Satyam (Bharani Shenkar pers.comm.).

¹⁶³Vyjayanthimala, Sonal Mansingh, Yamini Krishnamurti, Radha and Vasanthi (Kamal Lakshman's sisters), Shobha Naidu, Lakshmi Viswanath, Hema Malini, Rathna Papa, Kamdev, Kshemavathy, Jayalalitha, Bala Kondala Rao, Sasikala, Kamala Reddy to name a few.

Revitalization and Refinement of Kuchipudi Dance

Ours is a Drama. Theirs – that of Bharatanatyam dancers in Madras — is a solo art. That’s why they could improve it to such an extent. You think it is easy for every participant in our dance -dramas to perfect themselves to that extent?”

Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry quoted by Chinna Satyam (*Sruti* 51/52: 56)

The regeneration of the form from a rustic theatrical form to a solo art form, happened through a process of “study, thought, reflection, creative imagination, translation of new knowledge, insights and ideas into practice, and the training of students to present his conceptions” (*Sruti*, 51/52: 50). Vempati Chinna Satyam, widened his knowledge by reading various texts on dance, especially, the telugu translation of *Natya Sastra*, by PSR Appa Rao and enhanced his understanding of the dance form. Initially when Chinna Satyam started teaching Kuchipudi dance, there was no systematic methodology of teaching the solo format; since most of the solo dance numbers were taken from the existing *Yakshaganas* and taught: “It was Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastri who started presenting individual items in a programme. All of them *patrapravesadaruvu-s* (songs from the entries of characters), *sabdams*, *tillanas*, were taken only from Kuchipudi dance-dramas” (*Sruti*, 51/52: 55). According to Rajasulochana, Satyam taught her *Athana Jathiswaram*, *Ramayana Sabdam*, *Bhama*

Kalapam and choreographed a few items on her request, *Brahmanjali*, *Golla Kalapam*, and *Ramayanam*.’

Chinna Satyam believed that a “strong solo repertoire” (Chinna Satyam 1996, 97) as necessary to evolve the tradition. To strengthen the solo repertoire of Kuchipudi Dance, he choreographed many new numbers; and re-choreographed many existing traditional numbers to suit the contemporary tastes and gave structure to several dance numbers. Most of the solo pieces choreographed by Chinna Satyam, are theatrical dance numbers, which have a well thought out design, an introduction, introducing the subject/character, the middle would be the exposition of the main theme and would conclude on a high crescendo with the repetition of the *Pallavi*. For instance, the choreography of a *Keertana* or a *Tarangam*, is preceded by a *slokam*, followed by a *jathi*, and together these become a complete piece. Another feature he incorporated in his dance numbers are the entries which consist of three speeds (*vilamba*, *madhyama* and *dhruta*).¹⁶⁴ This would enable the audience to see the command of the dancer over *tala*, or cadence, in the beginning of the item, and the exists of all the dance numbers are also very stylized.

¹⁶⁴ In the training of the dance form, while teaching the *jathis*, the student is made to practice walking in the three speeds to cover the space.

In order to reiterate the “classicity” of Kuchipudi, Chinna Satyam would regularly go back and refer to Natya Sastra and gradually began introducing the various movement related aspects from the text in his dances:

I included technical aspects of *angikabhinaya* such as, the *Nritta bastas*, *Charis* and others in both pure dance and *Nritya* sequences. For example, in the *Pravesadaruvu* of Usha, taken from the *Ushaparinayam Yakshaganam*, when I re-choreographed it as a solo number, I used *Bhaumi Charis* like *Vichyava*, *Syandita*, *Urudvritta*, *Apasyandita*, *Mattalli* and *Akasiki Charis* like *Vidyudbhranta* and the like. In the process, a variety is also brought into the *Nritta* and *Nritya* technique of Kuchipudi. (Chinna Satyam 1996, 97)

Chinna Satyam had always consciously tried to project Kuchipudi dance as a “classical” dance; and for this purpose, he would insist on the proper “*saushtavam*” where the *Natyarambham* position had to be followed strictly and knees bent to the sides in “*aramandi*” position. The hereditary artistes insist on keeping their starting position with their hands bent forward at the elbows.

In the *abhinaya* dance numbers, he felt that “maintaining the dramatic element which was the main cause for the popularity of Kuchipudi form” (Chinna Satyam 1996) was necessary. He did not believe in just choreographing to the meaning of the words of the lyric *Padabhinaya*, but should go deeper and find out the “milieu of the song and the *Kavibridaya*” (Chinna Satyam 1996, 97). He gives an example of choreographing *Krishna nee begane baro*, a composition of Vyasaraaya in Kannada language.

I thought about it. Krishna is a sweet captivating child. But the affectionate approach of the mother is different from the admiring one of outsiders. I showed five women, cajoling, carrying, petting Krishna in different ways. Then Yasoda enters, notices the goings-on, shoos them away, spirits Krishna inside to remove the drishti (the evil eye) and he runs away. The same song but this approach is different. And justified by the context. You may ask, is this the sastra? All of it can't be. It is creation according to the guidelines in the sastra. If the discerning recognise our effort, fine. Even otherwise, the self-satisfaction that we have done something is ours. (*Sruti*, 51/52: 59)

To strengthen the repertoire of the Kuchipudi dance form, Chinna Satyam enriched it by choreographing to the *Keertanas* of various *Vaggeyakaras*¹⁶⁵ (not found in the Kuchipudi repertoire previously). According to him, “solo items are important instruments of the profession, and are crucial in a dancer’s artistic endeavour, utmost care is to be taken in presentation. Further if a programme contains six dance numbers, each one must show variety in rhythm, in *Sabitya*, in pace and must be perfect amalgam of content and technique. For this, the choreographer must search for ‘new’ treasures and re-do old numbers with a stamp of his own” (*Nartanam* 2012, 9).

Vempati’s perspicacious intellect, could assimilate the strength of the Kuchipudi form; balance its theatricality with the textual knowledge of the shastra’s to instil vitality and elegance into its *Nritta* by expanding the body

¹⁶⁵ A list of available solo dance numbers of Vempati Chinna Satyam is given in the Appendix.

kinesthetics and bringing in subtle abhinaya to the form. His style was quite different from that of the hereditary artistes in the Kuchipudi village. He was able to chisel away the “coarseness” that had seemed to be a part of Kuchipudi dance and brought in a sculpted technique with delicate and restrained *abhinaya*, which in turn enabled his version of the dance form to take the high place in the Kuchipudi art form, as it received the sanction of circles in Madras owing to its “classicality”. And, it was through his dance dramas, that Chinna Satyam, gained recognition for the form. As mentioned earlier, he had composed his first dance drama “*Sri Krishna Parijatam*” at Kavali, for a group of college students, followed it with “*Chandalika*” in 1961 and yet another dance drama for the same college students “*Abhignana Sakuntalam*” (which was revived in 1998), performed just once. It was with his choreography of *Ksheerasagara Madhanam* that he gained recognition as a choreographer. This dance drama became the model upon which all the latter dance dramas were designed. Though certain elements from the nuances of the tradition were retained in this dance drama, it succeeded in creating a format for the “Kuchipudi dance drama,” which is the format that is followed even to this day.

A large number of girls and women from middle class backgrounds joined Chinna Satyam’s institute and were trained in a disciplined and systematic manner. These students could dance according to his specifications and they formed a ready-made corpus for his productions. This was the advantage of

having an institution, it enabled Chinna Satyam, to choreograph dance dramas with a large cast of characters. Chinna Satyam, was able to bring out the visual aesthetics by embodying the grammar of Natya Sastra on them and choreographing dance numbers to suit the female body. If a Satyabhama, Rukmini, Sita, Padmavati or Chandaliika were appreciated by the audiences, it was because of the creative technique used in the Kuchipudi idiom by Chinna Satyam, imaginatively.

Chinna Satyam had created a systematised syllabus to teach the students of the Kuchipudi Art Academy, which includes both practical and theoretical aspects. They are taught the *Samyuta, Asamyuta and Nritta hastas, Pada bhedas*, movements of the head, neck, and eyes and the *Charis – Bhaumi and Akasiki* from the *Natya Sastra*. Music and Sanskrit classes are also conducted in the premises.

The basic movement vocabulary (*adugulu*) is divided into divided into first half and second half, as are the *jathis*. The first half of the *jathis* are in *Chaturasra jaati jathis*, followed by the second half ones which are set in the *tisram, misram, kbandam* and *sankiranajaati Jathis*. Training in dance items begins with *Puja or Pushpanjali, Athana Jathiswaram, Krishna/Ramayana Sabdam, Dasavathara Sabdam* and *Tillanas*, and then proceed to *Daruvus, Kritis, Jayadeva' Ashtapadis* and only then to the famous *BhamaKalapam* and the *Tarangams* of *Narayana Teertha*. A minimum of five to six years training is required to become proficient in learning the dance form. Though a nominal amount of fees were fixed, Chinna

Satyam did not insist on fees. He did not believe in organizing *Arangretrams* or *Rangapravesams*, and would introduce the students on stage in his dance dramas and they would gradually progress to bigger roles and eventually perform solo numbers, depending on their individual virtuosity. He would give the accomplished students “*Natya Visaradha*” certificates to indicate their proficiency in the dance form.

Creating Kuchipudi Trainers Across the Spectrum

Chinna Satyam, being aware of the importance of having good teachers to teach this form to the students in a systematic manner, chose some of the boys from hereditary families, and trained them to be teachers. The first set of students handpicked by him were: Vedantam Radheshyam,¹⁶⁶ Hari Ram Murthy,¹⁶⁷ Mahankali Sri Ramamurthy¹⁶⁸ and Chinta Rama Murthy. All four of them were trained at Kuchipudi Art Academy, Madras for two years, and were given a monthly stipend. This paved way for teachers training sessions which were conducted by Chinna Satyam at the Kuchipudi village in the early 1980’s, in collaboration with the Cultural department, Government of Andhra Pradesh and some other private sponsors. The training camps would be held in the summer months at Kuchipudi village and most of the participants were dance

¹⁶⁶Vedantam Radheshyam worked as a lecturer at Siddhendra Kalakshetra and retired from there. He regularly participated in Chinna Satyam’s Dance dramas. He has trained many of the younger generation of artists of the Kuchipudi village –Vedantam Venkata Chalapathi, Vedantam Keshava, DSV Sastry etc.

¹⁶⁷ Hari Ram Murthy was sent to Visakhapatnam to teach dance at Kuchipudi Kalakshetra, a school started by Vempati Chinna Satyam. He has trained many students and choreographed dance dramas.

¹⁶⁸ Mahankali Sri Ramamurthy, was sent to Visakhapatnam to teach dance at Kuchipudi Kalakshetra and later moved to Mumbai to teach dance there.

teachers with schools of their own or working as a Kuchipudi dance teacher on a regular basis in schools. The aim of these summer camps was to standardize the teaching methodology and practice of Kuchipudi dance form and to bring about homogeneity among the various styles that developed in the Kuchipudi form and were being taught. Chinna Satyam said:

But it was only from 1981, ever since I started going over to Kuchipudi and teaching the correct forms of the fundamentals, that others started following suit. There has been a lot of improvement since then. Now you find them doing Puja, Athana Jathiswaram, in a standardized form within acceptable standard. There are many young teachers who have taken advantage of this. Even Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma is following this pattern.” (*Sruti*, 51/52: 61)

Lanka Annapurna, an alumna of Siddhendra Kalakshetram, who had trained under various hereditary *gurus* at Kuchipudi, was one of the participants of the first teachers training camp in 1980. She underwent the training in order to gain a government job, at the Ghantasala Government Music and Dance College Vijayawada and in the process learnt the Vempati style (Annapurna pers.comm.). Similarly, most of the present day Kuchipudi dance teachers and *gurus* attended at least one of these training camps, and, according to Vempati’s own estimate, anywhere between 300-600 teachers are teaching his style of dance, due to these teacher training sessions. These camps were held up to 1987, and, as a result there is a marked influence of the Vempati style on all the *banis* or styles of Kuchipudi dance that is being taught and performed today.

Establishing Kuchipudi in Hyderabad

While Vempati was establishing, redefining and reinventing the form of Kuchipudi in Madras in his own style, two of his contemporaries were carving niches for themselves and for Kuchipudi in Hyderabad, the capital of the then state of Andhra Pradesh. These two artistes did not experiment with the form as Vempati had done but were successful in disseminating their own styles in the city, resulting in a school of thought that it is mostly the “old style” that is prevalent here. The Kuchipudi dance taught in Hyderabad was mostly their style until Vempati Chinna Satyam started his institution in the city. It was only from then onwards that Vempati style of Kuchipudi is visible in the teaching and performance practices of the dance form in Hyderabad. However, even till today, it is mostly the old style or the traditional *bani* of Kuchipudi that is more visible in the city.



Source: Kuchipudi: Guru's Performers and Performance Traditions

Figure 3.5: Bhagavathula Ramakotayya

The first *guru* to begin training in Kuchipudi dance in Hyderabad was Bhagavathula Ramakotayya (1924-1979). He trained in *Yakshaganas* from

Chinta Venkataramayya, Vedantam Raghavayya and Bhagavathula Vissayya, and was tutored by Yeleswarupu Seetaramanjaneyulu in music. Ramakotayya was involved in the freedom movement of India and composed dance for patriotic songs like “*maakoddi tella doratanamu*” (we don’t want this white rule) in the 1940s. For a brief period, he was involved with the *Praja Natya Mandali* and choreographed *Simla Bhagavatham* and *Hitler Patnam* during 1942-1943. This was performed in all the important cities of the country. Many of the hereditary Kuchipudi artistes¹⁶⁹ were involved in these performances. It was after his engagement with *Praja Natya Mandali* that Ramakotayya visited Telangana around 1946 and explored many of the places¹⁷⁰ in the region. He wanted to start an institute to teach Kuchipudi in the village of Kuchipudi itself around 1951; but, could not raise the required finances to launch it. In the year 1955, he performed *Bhama Kalapam* at Shanti Niketan at the invitation of Shanti Dev Ghosh. It was after this tour that Ramakotayya decided to start an institute, to train students in Kuchipudi dance at Hyderabad and named it Kuchipudi Nritya Nilayam. He taught Kuchipudi dance in the conventional method. Other than *Bhama Kalapam*, *padams*, *ashtapadis* and *javalis*, he groomed his students to enact characters in *Yakshaganas*. The Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Akademi, gave affiliation to his institute as a *Gurukulam* and supported

¹⁶⁹PVG Krishna Sarma, Vedantam Rattayya Sarma, Vedantam Chalapathi, Mahankali Venkaiah were some of the members, who participated in these dance dramas. Sethuram, Bhagavathula. 2015. “Bhagavathula Ramakottayya.” PhD diss., P.S. Telugu University.

¹⁷⁰ Warrangal, Nalagonda, Palem, Vemulawada, Chennur, Yadgirigutta (Sethuram 2015, 20-24).

it financially (Sarma 2016). It is his son and artistic successor, Bhagavatula Sethuram, who is continuing this legacy and is also employed as a faculty member in the Telugu University at Hyderabad (Chapter II).



Source : Google Search

Figure 3.6: Vedantam Jagannadha Sarma

A contemporary of Ramakotayya, Vedantam Jagannadha Sarma too is an influential personality in the Kuchipudi scenario of Hyderabad. Jagannadha Sarma was trained by his father Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry and toured with his father. He performed with Ayyanki Tandava Krishna, donning female roles while Tandava Krishna donned the male roles. They performed within the Telugu speaking States and outside as well. That way they disseminated and popularized the dance form in the 1940's. Sarma started a school in Rajahmundry to train students in Kuchipudi dance, in 1946 and it was named Nartanasala,¹⁷¹ and Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry occasionally taught

¹⁷¹ Suvernalatha pers. comm.

there. That school functioned for a short time and was closed as Jagannadha Sarma got an opportunity to teach in a school at Madras. At the same time, he got opportunities to work in movies as a dance director and choreographed dance in over fifty films. While in Madras, he taught at actor Rajasulochana's dance school for a short time (Rajasulochana pers.comm.). This phase in Jagannadha Sarma's life was brief as he eventually settled down in Hyderabad in the year 1962. He would teach in a few schools, like Oasis, Venkateswara Bala Mandir and Nalanda and would train a few students at his own home too (Suvernalatha pers.comm.). Jagannadha Sarma established an institution, Kuchipudi Kalakshetram, in early 1965 and trained many students. Many of the present-day dance teachers and *gurus* in Hyderabad were his students in these institutes.¹⁷² N Suvernalatha, Manjula Srinivas and Prasanna Rani who later worked in the Government Music and Dance Colleges at Hyderabad and Secunderabad are alumni of this institute. Thus, Jagannadha Sarma's style of Kuchipudi flowed into the Government Music and Dance Colleges through his students. According to Prasanna Rani, Jagannadha Sarma's dance style was "very soft and refined, cinematic style." Lakshmi Subramaniam, a vocalist, who has lent vocal support to many *gurus* and dancers in Hyderabad, commented, that Vedantam Jagannadha Sarma was very good at rendering the *Konugolu*.¹⁷³ Jagannadha Sarma was a member of the committee that was overseeing the

¹⁷²N Suvernalata, Manjula Srinivas, Prasanna Rani, M Usha Gayatri, R Vijaya Lakshmi, Sumathi Kaushal, Uma Bharati, Shanti Akella to name a few.

¹⁷³a form of a lyrical *jathi*, sung at the end of a song, which is characteristic of the Kuchipudi style.

formulation of the Kuchipudi dance syllabus in 1965 (Seshai Sastry pers.comm.). Thus, Jagannadha Sarma played a significant role in disseminating Kuchipudi dance in the city of Hyderabad and formulation of its syllabus.

Another hereditary Kuchipudi artiste who spread the dance form in the city of Hyderabad was Yeleswarapu Suryaprakasa Sarma. According to Aruna Bhikshu,¹⁷⁴ he trained numerous students to write the Certificate and Diploma exams of the government of Andhra Pradesh.

Kuchipudi Institutes Mushroom Across Telugu Speaking States

Some of the other hereditary *gurus*, who taught the dance form outside the village are: Chinta Seetaramanjeyulu at Gudivada and Nagarjunasagar, Bhagavatula Ramatarkam at Kavali, Bhagavatula Yagyanarayana Sarma and Josyula Seetharama Sastry at Vijayawada, Yeleswarapu Nageswara Sarma at Machilipatnam, Hemadri Chidambara Dikshitulu at Rajahmundry and Kovvur, Chinta Radhakrishna Murty at Guntur, Mahankali Srimannarayana at Bapatala, Vempati Kodandarama Sastry at Warrangal and Pasumarthi Seetharamaiah at Visakhapatnam. These hereditary *gurus* founded institutes in their individual capacities and trained numerous students, choreographed solo dance numbers and a few of them created dance dramas. They were instrumental in disseminating the dance form to large number of students and created an interest in the dance form.

¹⁷⁴ A student of Yeleswarapu Suryaprakasa Sarma and a Professor at the Department of Dance, University of Hyderabad.

While the exact details of when these institutes were founded and how many students each produced are unavailable, it seems evident that by the time these *gurus* began their schools, there was sufficient demand for the form of Kuchipudi, and the schools served exactly that purpose – training aspirants in the form, irrespective of whether Kuchipudi was seen as a “hobby” or a profession.

Oral Tradition to Structured Format: Designing a Curriculum

Dandemulu, baskilu, vuntikaludandemulu, arali/pratyali, jaru, adugu chakra dandemu, pada charulu, hasta vinyasamulu, adavu samu, chaukam, mandikopu, katrenatu. Toyamangalam, sariranyamamulu, asamyukta and samyuktabastas. From *Abhinaya Darpana* – *Siro, griva, netra* and *bhru* exercises. They used to learn 108 *karnas* from their *gurus*. Important to learn classical music and *Alankara Sastra, Nayika* and *Nayaka bhedhas* and *Navarasasiddhantamu*. It takes a minimum of ten years for a dancer to learn all these. Only then will a person become a full-fledged dancer. (Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma 1980, 64-66)¹⁷⁵

From being an oral tradition to an institutionalized art form, the transition of the form has witnessed many changes, mostly in the transmission of the forms content. As already mentioned, in the beginning there were only *Kalapas* that were being performed and taught followed by *Yakshaganas*, solos and finally the dance drama. With the *Guru-shishya parampara* on the decline and students from different social backgrounds, especially women learning the form in large

¹⁷⁵Sourced from the personal papers of Anuradha Jonnalagadda.

numbers, the need for a systematic and standardized method of teaching the form was felt, and for this purpose many hereditary artists from the Kuchipudi village attempted formulating a set syllabus. Of them, Vempati Peda Satyam had succeeded in planning a curriculum for teaching this dance form by creating a syllabus for five years and proposed a year-wise plan for training the students. Unfortunately, this syllabus never found itself implemented in any school or institute, but it sort of became a basis for the latter ones to be structured. Much later, a detailed five-year syllabus¹⁷⁶ was formulated by a team of *gurus* that included Vedantam Jagannadha Sarma, Korada Narashimha Rao, Vempati Chinna Satyam and Pasumurthy Venugopala Krishna Sarma under the aegis of Andhra Pradesh Nritya Academy, in the year 1983. This was a more detailed syllabus taking into consideration that it was planned after Kuchipudi had been recognized as a “classical” dance form and had the inputs from four *gurus*. Both the syllabi that had been formulated to streamline the transmission of this art form to the aspirants is given below:

¹⁷⁶ See Anuradha Jonnalagadda’s dissertation.

Year	Subject	Peda Satyam's Syllabus	Andhra Pradesh Nritya Academy's Syllabus
First Year	Music Syllabus	<i>Sarali Swaralu, Dhatu Swaralu, Hecchu sthaya Swaramulu, Janta Swaramulu, Alankaramulu.</i>	<i>Sarali Swaralu, Dhatu Swaralu, Hecchu sthaya Swaramulu, Janta Swaramulu, Alankaramulu, Sarali Swaralu, Pillari Geetalu and Ordinary Chinna Geetalu.</i>
	Body Training	<i>Dandemulu, Baskilu, Kalisamu</i>	<i>Dandemulu, Baskilu, Kalisamu</i>
	Natyamu /Practical Training	The Basic <i>adugulu</i> (steps)	Groups of <i>adugulu</i> (steps) like – <i>Chaukam, Ontiaduvu, Jarnaduvu, Cuttaduvu, Katrenatu and Mandikuppa</i>
	Theory	<i>Samyukta and Asamyukta Hastas</i>	<i>Samyukta and Asamyukta Hastas. Nritha Hastas Sanskrit—Sabda Manjari and Amarakosam.</i>
Second Year	Music Syllabus	<i>Geetalu –Pillari, Sadharana Geetalu, Lakshana Geetalu and swarapallavi.</i>	<i>Lakshana Geetalu (4), Tanavarnalu (3), Padavarnalu (2) and Kritulu (4)</i>
	Natyamu /Practical Training	<i>Tisra kaalam Muktayilu</i> in all the <i>jaatis</i> are to be taught. Start teaching items – <i>Jathiswaram, Tillana</i> and <i>Chaturasra jaati sabdam</i> —begin with <i>nritha</i> dance numbers.	<i>Teermanas</i> in all the five <i>jaatis</i> to be taught. <i>Karanangabaramulu - Jathis- 12</i> in number. <i>Vinayaka Kautvam, Pushpanjali Athana Jathiswaram, Ramapatabhisheka sabdam</i> and <i>Adhyatma Ramayana Kirtana.</i>
	Theory	Teaching of <i>Samyuta</i> and <i>Asamyuta hasta prayogas</i> from <i>Abhinaya Darpanam</i>	First Chapter of <i>Amarakosam.</i>
Third Year	Music	<i>Tanavarnam (1) and Padvarnalu</i>	<i>Atatalavarnam (2), Padavarnam (2), a Tyagaraja Pancharatna Kirtana and Ashtapadis (2).</i>
	Natyamu/ Practical Training	Learning <i>Abhinayam</i> and its <i>lakshanas.</i> <i>Sabdas and Padardhabhinayamu, Kshetraya Padamu, Tarangams and Ashtapadis.</i>	<i>Karana Angabaras</i> or <i>jathis</i> of <i>tisram, Misram</i> and <i>Kbanda jaati.</i> <i>Dasavathara</i> and <i>Krishna sabdam,</i> <i>Tyagaraja Kriti—Balakanakamaya, Tarangam -Neelamegha, Ramadasu and Anamacharya Kirtanas.</i>

	Theory	<i>Samskṛta Alankāra lakṣhaṇa, Nandikeswara Proktam, Rasa Prakārnamu—Nayika/Nayakulu</i> , an analysis of <i>Lakṣhnamulu</i> . He specifies that the student should become proficient enough in the dance form, to be able to perform.	Second and third Chapters of <i>Amarakosam</i> <i>Griva, Bhrū and Dṛiṣṭi bhedas</i>
Fourth Year	Music	<i>Kṛtulu, Keertanalu</i> and its <i>prasthāraṇa</i> in the learning of music	<i>Kirtanas</i> of Muthswami Dikshitar, Shyama Sastry and Annamacharya.
	<i>Natyamu</i> /Practical Training	Solo dances, <i>Nṛtya Natakalu, Yakṣhaganalu</i> and <i>BhamaKalapam</i>	<i>Talams –Dhruva, Mathya, Rūpakamu, Misra jaati Jhampe, Tisra jaati jhampe, Khanda jaati Atatalam</i> and <i>Eka talamu. Adhyatma Ramayana Kirtanalu</i> (2), <i>Tarangalu</i> (2) <i>Ashtapadulu</i> (2) <i>Kshetraya Padalu</i> (2), <i>Jathiswaram</i> (1) and <i>Tillana</i> (2).
	Theory		First half of <i>Alankāra Sastra</i> , revision of <i>Ashtavidhi nayika awasthas</i> , <i>Rasa Bhavas</i> and details of <i>Saptatalas</i> .
Fifth Year	Music	Peda Satyam counsels that the student should be capable of performing on the stage	Revision of all that has been learnt so far in the four years of the musical training.
	<i>Natyamu</i> /Practical Training		<i>Sloka Abhinaya –Pushpabanavilasam, Ramakarnamritam</i> and <i>Krishnakarnamritam</i> . <i>Prahlada patabhishekam sabdam, Jaavali, GollaKalapam, BhamaKalapam</i> .

	Theory		<p>Life histories of Siddhendra Yogi, Narayana Tirtha, Jayadeva, Kshetraya, Muni-palle Subramanya Kavi, Ramadasu, Annamacharya, Tyagaraja, Muttu Swami and Syama Sastry.</p> <p>The Kuchipudi Trinity—Chinta Venkataramayya, Vempati Venkatanarayana, Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry and Chinta Krishna Murthy and Banda Kanakalingeswara Rao.</p> <p>A detailed study of <i>rasa</i>, <i>bhava</i>, <i>abhinaya</i>, <i>dharmi</i>, <i>vritti</i>, <i>pravritti</i>, <i>siddhi</i>, <i>atodya</i>, <i>gana</i> and <i>ranga</i>, according to Bharatha's <i>Natya Sastra</i>.</p>
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Source: Anuradha J

Table 3.1: Comparison between Vempati Peda Satyam's and Andhra Pradesh Nritya Academy's Syllabus

This study in a way gives us an insight into the evolution of the dance form, for one was proposed by Peda Satyam in 1960 and the other, after almost three decades, during which time there had been numerous changes in Kuchipudi, in terms of both practice of the form and content. Peda Satyam's syllabus is quite simplistic in approach and reflects the teaching pedagogy and repertoire of the times. In the teaching of the fundamental steps, he mentions *Adugulu* and the various *jaatis* that are to be taught. The Nritya Academy syllabus is more detailed and gives the *paataksbaras* and names of all the *adugulu* and recommends teaching of the steps up to the second half of the steps which are presently followed by the practitioners of the Vempati style. Peda Satyam mentions learning of *Jathis in tisra and chaturasrakalams* and not in other *jaatis* like

misra, kbanda and sankirna. He recommends practicing of the *Saptatalas* and *tisra kalam muktaayis*. He directly goes into the training of the dance numbers in the second year. Training in the *misra, kbanda and sankirna jaathis* happen later. The number of dance items being taught is less, he sticks to the traditional numbers and does not include the dances choreographed on the compositions of *Vaggeyakaras* like *Tygaraja, Dikshitar* or even *Annamacharya*; nor are *Padavarnas* included. It can be inferred that these musical compositions had not become a part or were not as popular in the Kuchipudi repertoire by then. The Nritya Academy syllabus is more elaborate in comparison and reflects the changes that had taken place in the teaching/learning processes over time. The number of dance items has enlarged to include the compositions of different *Vaggeyakaras* and the inclusion of *Krishna Sabdam* for the first time is seen in this syllabus. Another interesting feature is that most of the theoretical aspects taught in Peda Satyam's syllabus are from *Abhinaya Darpanam* and the Nritya Academy syllabus has included portions from the *Natya Sastra – rasa, bhava, abhinaya, dharmi, vritti, pravritti, siddhi, atodya, gana, ranga*. The syllabus prepared by the Nritya Academy was implemented for a year or so and then discontinued, for reasons unknown.

The existent syllabus being taught in the Government Music and Dance Schools and Colleges has taken parts of the Nritya Academy syllabus with a few changes and has been teaching it. The musical training, which both the syllabi had stressed upon has been done away with and so is the case with the

teaching of Sanskrit. They have retained the basic body training exercises¹⁷⁷ for men and suggest *Gunjilu*, *Kalisamu*, *Kuppi* and a few other physical movements. For females, mention exercises related to *Anga Vinyasa* (related to *lasya*), but do not specify the exact type of exercise. While this body training seems to have been an important part of training in Kuchipudi previously -- all the earlier generation *gurus* mention that *samu* (exercise) was practiced before they start learning or even practising the basic fundamentals. This practise has been discontinued completely by the late twentieth century.¹⁷⁸

In the practical training of the dance form, both the syllabi recommend the same dance numbers, with a few additions, like the inclusion of a *Devi Stuti*, apart from this nothing much has changed,¹⁷⁹ till date.

This chapter has discussed the process through which the dance form had been re-moulded by the hereditary *gurus* from the Kuchipudi village, who were in tune with the need of the times and founded institutes to disseminate the art form to non-hereditary men and women. The form travelled out of the village to urban destinations like Madras (now Chennai), Hyderabad and other metropolitan cities where it was further disseminated by the hereditary *gurus*.

¹⁷⁷In my personal interactions with the lecturers who had taught in the colleges, Manjula Srinivas, Prasanna Rani, N Suvernalatha, P Sai Deepika, B Sudheer, none of them mentioned teaching the exercises. At the Kuchipudi village also, the artists said we are no longer practicing or teaching these exercises. Only Pasumarthy Rattayya Sarma gave a demonstration of these exercises.

¹⁷⁸ Pasumarthy Rattayya Sarma, whom I met, during my field work at Kuchipudi village, demonstrated some of the exercises: *baskilu*, *kuppilu* and *kalisamu*. Raja Reddy and Lanka Annapurna mention learning these exercises; but now no one either practises nor trains their students in these exercises. The hereditary artistes would say women do not need these exercises as they are naturally graceful.

¹⁷⁹Refer to the Certificate and Diploma syllabus of Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University.

In the following segment, the works of non-hereditary artistes are deliberated and their explorations in strengthening and propagating the art form, both in India and abroad is reconnoitred.

Chapter IV

Kuchipudi Institutionalization: Non-Hereditary Artistes and Newer Contexts

In the 16th century, Kuchipudi was performed by Brahmins, the Bhagavatars as dance dramas. They presented items like “*Bhamakalapam*” and “*Gollakalapam*.” Though based on religious scripture, the form was secular in spirit. But they were unable to capture the audience. It was three decades ago that women were brought. Today, they dominate Kuchipudi. This is a great transformation, which needs to be applauded. ... The art became popular in India and abroad and also gained the label of being classical dance. It created history.

Yamini Krishnamurti¹⁸⁰

This Chapter endeavours to document and analyse the contribution of non-hereditary men and women who became the torch bearers of the Kuchipudi dance form in the twentieth century. Kuchipudi, a rural theatrical male dance form admired for its female impersonation evolved into a solo and dance drama genre in the twentieth century. Consequently, it became possible for men and women -- most of whom belonged to the middle-middle and upper middle-class social hierarchy – to learn the form. As seen in the previous chapters, a number of institutes were established by the hereditary artistes in the Kuchipudi village and the surrounding towns and in larger cities like Hyderabad and Madras, to impart training in the dance form. Also, the

¹⁸⁰ "[Lecture Demonstration at Nayika, Bangalore](http://www.thehindu.com)". www.thehindu.com.

Andhra Pradesh Government founded institutes, which began disseminating the dance form to larger number of students interested in training in the dance form,¹⁸¹ which led to many non-hereditary artistes learning the art and making a profession out of it. They learned the dance form when the solo and dance drama genres were just being formulated, and in turn disseminated it through their performances, lecture demonstrations and training at institutes that they established. Through long discursive meetings, archival study and elucidations, the trajectory of those non-hereditary artistes that have become a part of the history of the form was traced; and, a narrative of their influences on the dance form and the effects of institutionalization on the Kuchipudi dance form are being presented here.

Non-hereditary Men Learning Kuchipudi

Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, who is credited with moulding the solo format in Kuchipudi dance, taught Kuchipudi dance to a number of men belonging to non-hereditary families. Other Kuchipudi *gurus* too taught non-hereditary men at institutes established in Kuchipudi and Eluru (Chapter III). Of the non-hereditary aspirants who trained under these hereditary artistes, some like Ayyanki Tandav Krishna, CR Acharyulu, Korada Narasimha Rao and Nataraj Ramakrishna, went on to become noted artistes of the period. The first generation of non-hereditary artistes popularized this dance form by

¹⁸¹See chapter II and III of this dissertation.

way of teaching, organizing performances and writing on dance. A brief outline of their lives and careers in Kuchipudi reflects the kind of impact they had on the form at the time.

Ayyanki Tandava Krishna¹⁸² belonged to a prominent political family which was involved in the country's freedom and Library movement. Along with Vedantam Jagannadha Sarma he gave performances of Kuchipudi dance all over the country and familiarized audiences with the dance form, thereby popularising it. CR Acharyulu, moved to Ahmedabad in the year 1956 and taught at Mrinalini Sarabhai's "Darpana Academy of Performing Arts". Initially, he would teach dance to very young children at Darpana Academy; and, later senior dancers like Mallika Sarabhai and Smita Shastri began to learn Kuchipudi dance from him (Smita Shastri pers.comm.). CR Acharyulu¹⁸³ is the only *guru*, who perpetuated the traditional temple dances¹⁸⁴ of Andhra Pradesh and co-authored a book with Mallika Sarabhai, *Understanding Kuchipudi*, giving an overview of the theoretical aspects of the training imparted at Darpana Academy.¹⁸⁵ Thus, CR Acharyulu's *bani* or style¹⁸⁶ is being perpetuated in Gujarat by his students.

¹⁸² Refer to Chapter II of this dissertation, for more on Ayyanki Tandava Krishna.

¹⁸³ He choreographed, Amritha Mathanam, Ulupi-Arjun, Alivelu Manga Vilasam and Mandodari Sapatham.

¹⁸⁴ More on these will be mentioned while discussing Smita Shastri and her institution in this chapter.

¹⁸⁵ An interesting feature included in this book, are the *Charis* known as *Madhupa Charis* (taught by Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry), wherein the stamping of the foot is predominant.

¹⁸⁶ His daughter Voleti Rangamani teaches his style in Hyderabad.

Korada Narashimha Rao, a student of CR Acharyulu¹⁸⁷ and Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, gained recognition by teaching and partnering with Indrani Rehman (more information on her later in the chapter), on national and international platforms in the late fifties of the twentieth century. He was also on the Academic Council of Andhra University and was appointed as the chief examiner for Kuchipudi dance at the Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University. Narashimha Rao, was a member of the Syllabus Committee appointed by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Through his institution “Shri Nritya Bharati” at Eluru, he trained many students,¹⁸⁸ who went on to carve niches for themselves in the performing and teaching arenas.

Nataraj Ramakrishna,¹⁸⁹ another *sishya* of Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, was actively involved¹⁹⁰ in the 1959 Kuchipudi Natya Seminar held at Hyderabad, to prove the “classicality” of Kuchipudi dance. Ramakrishna wrote many scholarly articles and books on the dance form and propagated Kuchipudi dance form through them. He established an institute in Hyderabad, “Nritya Niketan” (1955) and trained many students. He was appointed as a Professor¹⁹¹ in the Dance department at the University of

¹⁸⁷ Korada learned to portray characters in Yakshaganas from him and solo numbers from Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry.

¹⁸⁸ Yamini Krishnamurti, Gopi Krishna, Sarla Kumari, Veena Murthy.

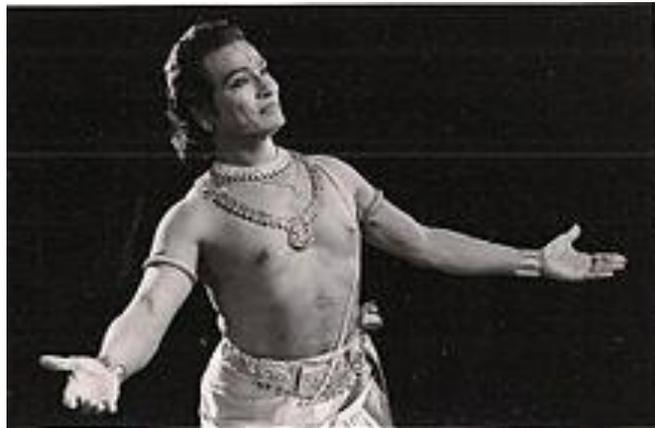
¹⁸⁹ He was proficient in Bharatanatyam, Kathak and the female dance forms of Andhra Pradesh. He is credited for having revived Perini Sivatanavam and also the female dance forms of Andhra Pradesh and re-named them as Andhra Natyam and started an under-graduate and graduate courses in these forms at the Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University.

¹⁹⁰ He was the convenor of the seminar. He was instrumental in bringing Vaidehi and Induvadana¹⁹⁰ to the seminar, and thereby introducing the female dance form of Andhra Pradesh to the public. “The highlight of the session, however was an illuminating demonstration of Gollakalapam as performed by the Deva Dasis” (*Souvenir on Kuchipudi Natya Seminar* 1959, 43).

¹⁹¹ The University of Hyderabad has instituted a Lecture in honour of Nataraja Ramakrishna and every year a distinguished person is invited to give a lecture.

Hyderabad, where he taught the Masters class and supervised many research scholars¹⁹² who were pursuing doctoral programs at the university.

DY Sampath Kumar, another non-hereditary dancer and *guru*, was instrumental in making dance popular across the north coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh. A student of Pasumarthy Krishnamurthy and Prahlada Sarma, he trained many students at his dance institute “Sri Geeta Nritya Kala Mandir”¹⁹³(1955) at Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh. Sampath Kumar was actively involved in the Dance festival conducted by APSNA at Vizianagaram in the year 1965 when Chinta Krishna Murthy was honoured with *Bharata Kala Prapoorna* and also organized a Dance festival –*Nrityotsav*, in the early seventies, where he invited artistes from Kuchipudi village to perform.



Source: Google Search

Figure 4.1: V. Jayarama Rao

One of the first artistes who stayed in residence at the Siddhendra Kalakshetra, Kuchipudi village to learn the dance form from Vedantam Parvatisam was V

¹⁹² Anuradha Jonnalagadda, Aruna Bhikshu, M Sivaraju.

¹⁹³ He taught Bharatanatyam and folk dances at his institute and was famous for his fisherman dance. Choreographed many dance dramas – *Abhijana Sakuntalam* (won best play award at the National Sanskrit theatre competition, Ujjain, 1961), *Meghadootam*, *Viplovasankham*. Organised a seminar of Toorpu Bhagavatam at Vizianagaram.

Jayarama Rao.¹⁹⁴ Along with his wife Vanashree Rao, Jayarama Rao propagates Kuchipudi dance in the national capital New Delhi, through their institute, “Kuchipudi Dance Academy.” They teach a combination of the Vedantam and Vempati styles (refer below), as Jayarama Rao had initially trained at Siddhendra Kalakshetra and later learned from Vempati Chinna Satyam at Madras.

Raja and Radha Reddy, also now in Delhi, follow a style similar to that of Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, though they did not directly learn from him. Their *guru* in the Kuchipudi dance form, Vedantam Prahlada Sarma – who had a strong *Yakshagana* background,¹⁹⁵ was also a *shishya* of Lakshminarayana Sastry. Their training under Vedantam Prahlada Sarma¹⁹⁶ at Eluru laid a strong foundation in the Kuchipudi idiom; according to Raja Reddy, he [Prahlada Sarma] was a strict teacher.¹⁹⁷ While performing at Eluru, they were spotted by Maya Rao, a Kathak trainer; and upon winning a scholarship from the Government of Andhra Pradesh they went to Delhi, to learn choreography from Maya Rao at the Natya Ballet Centre in the year 1966. They ultimately settled down in the national capital¹⁹⁸ and disseminated

¹⁹⁴ He spent eight years learning the art form there. I shall be discussing his journey in Kuchipudi dance later, in this chapter.

¹⁹⁵ For more on him refer to chapter III of this dissertation. He trained his younger brother Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma, in the Yakshagana performance practice.

¹⁹⁶ A student of Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry. For more on him, see chapter III of this dissertation.

¹⁹⁷ Refer to Chapter III of this dissertation for more details on his training system.

¹⁹⁸ Actually, Radha was chosen and Raja tagged along. In Delhi, they were selected to perform at a Youth Festival¹⁹⁸ organised by Mohan Khokar at Sapru House; and that is when their pair -- “*Jodi*” -- was formed and were further promoted by Dr Karan Singh. They were invited by Indrani Rehman¹⁹⁸ to perform in her troupe; and for two years they performed along with her. Though Indrani Rehman was the first person to introduce

the art form there; but they would regularly come back to Eluru to hone their skills in Kuchipudi from Prahlada Sarma. Raja Reddy states: “Because of competition we practised very hard and improved our presentation skills.” Raja and Radha Reddy established “Natya Tarangini” a dance institution¹⁹⁹ at New Delhi in the year 1976 to impart training in dance, music, yoga and Sanskrit and trained many students at their institute. Radha and Raja Reddy²⁰⁰ have performed as a pair all over the World and gained recognition for Kuchipudi dance. While explaining their teaching methodology, Raja Reddy describes teaching fundamental steps is similar to learning the alphabet, the learning of *teermanams* – *tadiginathom* -- are the words and *jathis* – *chaturasra*, *kbandam*, *misram*, *tisram* and *sankeernam* -- are similar to learning the sentences. This is followed by teaching small *Nritta* dance numbers like *Jathiswaram*, *Manduka/Rajasri sabdam*, *Tillana*, *Dasavataram*. A minimum of three years is required to learn the above-mentioned dance numbers. Simultaneously, the theoretical aspects such as *Hastas* along with the *Slokas* are taught (Raja Reddy pers.comm.). The hallmark of the style taught by Raja and Radha Reddy are the long friezes that they stand still in-between swift sequences of pure dance (*nritta*). Their group presentations are also similar and a lot of vigorous and

Kuchipudi to the Delhi audiences, it was Yamini Krishnamurti, Jayarama Rao and the Reddy's who, established dance institutes and propagated the dance form there. (<http://www.narthaki.com/info/tdhc/tdhc28.html>)

¹⁹⁹ They have a branch in Hyderabad, which is taken care by their daughter, Yamini Reddy. Their other daughter Bhavana Reddy is an accomplished Kuchipudi dancer and singer.

²⁰⁰ Although by then Indrani Rehman and Yamini Krishnamurti were performing Kuchipudi dance, they would perform only a couple of items or in the case of Yamini, she would perform Kuchipudi in the second half of the program. Nobody was giving full length Kuchipudi performances. It was Radha and Raja Reddy who started performing full length Kuchipudi programs at Delhi.

synchronous athletic movements are seen in them. Raja Reddy mentions that Prahlada Sarma frequently came to Delhi during the early years up to 1974-75 and the duo would show their choreographies to him; he would approve of some or make a few corrections and only then with his approval they would present them on stage. Sometimes, they had to convince him about their choreographies, especially in the presentational aspects. By this we can infer that the Kuchipudi style perpetuated by the Reddy's in Delhi was influenced by their training under Maya Rao in the presentational aspects and by re-locating to a newer geographic site, they choreographed to the songs of the North Indian saints in Hindi in both the solo and dance drama genre, in order to make their art fathomable to the local population.

As seen here, most of the first-generation non-hereditary²⁰¹ male artistes, all of whom underwent training under hereditary *gurus* for brief periods, succeeded in moving to cities that did not previously have avenues for Kuchipudi and in establishing centres for the form there. Though they made a few changes in the presentation format, it was usually with the approval of their gurus, as can be seen in the case of Raja and Radha Reddy.

²⁰¹Narasimhachari and Vasanthalakshmi – the dancing duo learnt Kuchipudi from PVG Krishna Sarma and Mahankali Satyanarayana. Established “Kala Samarpana” (1969), an institute to train students in dance – Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi, in Madras. From composing music to choreography, this husband and wife team have choreographed and performed, Ravana Mandodari, Jathikattu and Subadhara- Arjuneeyam to mention a few.

Nationalistic Agenda Brings Women into Kuchipudi

At a pan Indian level most of the performing art forms were being proliferated by women from middle class backgrounds.²⁰² The British in their mission to “civilize”²⁰³ the Indians from “degenerate and barbaric” social practices, projected the Indian women as the oppressed of this system. To this criticism the Indian nationalists constructed a reformed tradition and defended it on the grounds of modernity:

This resolution was built around a separation of the domain of culture into two spheres – the material and the spiritual. It was in the material sphere that the claims of Western civilization were most powerful. Science, technology, rational reforms of economic organization, modern methods of statecraft—these have given the European countries the strength to subjugate the non-European people and to impose their dominance over the whole world. To overcome this domination, the colonized people had to learn those superior techniques of organizing the material life and incorporate them within their own cultures. This was one aspect of the nationalistic project of rationalizing and reforming the traditional culture of their people. But this could not mean the imitation of the West in every aspect of life, for then the very distinction between the West and the East would vanish—the self-identity of the national culture would itself be threatened. In fact, as Indian nationalists in the late 19th century argued, not only was it undesirable to imitate the West in anything other than the material aspects of life, it was even unnecessary to do so, because in the spiritual domain the East was superior to the West. What was

²⁰² See Chapter II of this dissertation.

²⁰³ The entire edifice of colonialist discourse was fundamentally constituted around this project.

necessary was to cultivate the material techniques of the Western civilization while retaining and strengthening the distinctive spiritual essence of the national culture.” (Chatterjee 1989, 623)²⁰⁴

The responsibility to retain the superior spiritual culture, fell on the women of India, as the nationalists felt that women were shielded from the external world by not having to earn a livelihood, “women express in their appearance and behaviour the spiritual qualities that are characteristic of civilized and refined human society” (Chatterjee 1989, 626). Every feature of this modern Indian women was scrutinized -- her appearance, food habits, education, the manner in which she organized her life, both at home and outside of it. The nationalists adapted the indigenous cultural traditions as markers of Indian identity as, “a classicized tradition -- reformed, re-constructed, fortified against charges of barbarism and irrationality” (Chatterjee 1989, 627). This nationalistic movement to educate women for their emancipation and cultural refinement changed the lives of women coming from the demographic section of the “middle-class” rapidly. So much so that “the Indian women construct in the modern literature and arts today is wholly a product of the development of a dominant middle-class culture coeval with the era of nationalism” (Chatterjee 1989, 630).

²⁰⁴ Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonized Women: the contest in India – Partha Chatterjee Nov., 1989, pp-622-633, *American Ethnologist*, Vol.16, No. 4

It was in this milieu that women from non-hereditary backgrounds started to learn the creative/artistic traditions of the country and women like Rukmini Devi Arundale, Madam Menaka, Mrinalini Sarabhai, Zohra Sehgal, Maya Rao and Yamini Krishnamurti gave the Indian dance forms legitimacy and respect by performing them publicly and by teaching it to others at institutions founded by them. Many others followed these women and made Indian classical dance; its performance, pedagogy and production of its theoretical discourse their lifelong quest. Learning these art forms empowered these women – financially and socially -- some had prolific performing careers while others made teaching of these artforms into a career choice.

Some of the earliest women to learn Kuchipudi dance, from the hereditary artistes of the Kuchipudi village, Tadepalli Perayya and Bhagavathula Vissayya, were women from the devadasi community, Krishnaveni of Nangigdda and Balatripura Sundari of Repalle,²⁰⁵ but their impact on the dance form is not known. The credit of learning and popularizing Kuchipudi as a solo dance form goes to an American woman, Ragini Devi, and her half-Indian daughter, Indrani Rehman, who gave the dance form national and international prominence by performing it at Delhi, the capital city of India, and abroad, bringing it to the notice of the cognoscenti. In this process the

²⁰⁵Jonnalagadda 1993, Kuchipudi Dance Who is Who.

dance form began travelling to venues outside the Telugu speaking States and made its presence felt nationally and internationally.



Source: Google search

Figure 4.2: Indrani Rehman and Korada Narasimha Rao

Ragini Devi²⁰⁶ (Esther Luella Sherman), an American by birth, visited Bezawada (Vijayawada) and saw the *Yakshagana* performance of Chinta Venkataramayya, and wanted to learn this dance form from him²⁰⁷ and he taught her a few *Sabdams*.²⁰⁸ Her daughter Indrani Rehman²⁰⁹ learned Kuchipudi from Korada Narasimha Rao, the first-generation non-hereditary *guru* mentioned above. These were amongst the first Kuchipudi dancers to take the dance form abroad in the sixties,²¹⁰ and popularized Kuchipudi dance

²⁰⁶ In the early 1930's and 40's, Ragini Devi came to India and learnt Indian dance forms—Kathakali, Bharatanatyam, Mohiniattam and performed them extensively within India, in Europe and the USA (Dance Dialects of India Ragini Devi, 1972, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi).

²⁰⁷It is said that Vedantam Raghavayya, a student of Chinta Venkataramayya taught her these dances. Later Ragini Devi wanted Raghavayya to join her troupe and tour with her abroad. But his *guru* brought him back to Kuchipudi (V Raghavayya, "Naa Toli Cinema Anubhavam" Vijayachitra, September 1970, Issue-3).

²⁰⁸ She mentions –Manduka, Mohini Avatar, Chamundeswari and Ardhanariswara sabdas.

²⁰⁹Indrani Rehman, popularized Manduka Sabdam.

²¹⁰ She was the first person to take the dance form abroad and performed at Jacob's Pillow, Massachusetts, USA, in the year 1960. <https://archives.jacobspillow.org/index.php/Detail/objects/4878>.

overseas through their performances.²¹¹ Sunil Kothari mentions that, when Indrani danced “she looked like an *apsara* doing *Manduka Sabdam*” (Kothari pers.comm.). This is the first instance where women, other than the devadasis community, started learning Kuchipudi dance. In fact, Ragini Devi’s and Indrani Rehman’s already existing popularity in the dance circles in India rendered itself to the Kuchipudi dance form. Hence it can be assumed that the form gained more currency by the presentations of these two dancers, and in the case of Ragini Devi, through her writings too.

Besides these two dancers, who became popular numerous other dancers began displaying interest in learning the dance form, from 1940’s itself. Lakshminarayana Sastry was the *guru* who trained most of these dancers. He was a mobile institution as he travelled from one place to another, one house to another, to impart training to aspirants. Some of the first female students to learn this dance from him were M Kanchanamala, Vijaya Prasad and her niece Maruti Kesav (the two together were popularly known as Andhra sisters) at Machilipatnam,²¹² and the Vaddadi sisters — Uma and Sumathi -- at Visakhapatnam, in the 1940’s and 50’s. Balasaraswati (Bharatanatyam), Yamini Krishnamurthy (Bharatanatyam), and Tara Chowdhary (Kathak), well established artistes, were some of the other women, who learned a few dance

²¹¹ He was adjudged as the best male dancer, at the International Cultural Festival held at Paris, France in the year 1960.

²¹² Some of the other names mentioned are, Sakuntala, daughter of Cheruvu Sriramulu, of Gudivada and Akhileswari at Madras. Komala Kumari, Sundari and Lalita (Kanchanamala pers.comm.) are some of the other names mentioned.

numbers in the Kuchipudi style from him. Kanchanamala, recalls learning from him at a stretch, for one or two months and then he would disappear and again reappear after a few months and once again begin teaching. This way he never stayed at one place for long. His male students would go wherever he was and learn from him. Apart from these women, he taught dance to many devadasis.²¹³ In this chapter, the teaching/learning experiences of M Kanchanamala, Vijaya Prasad, the Vaddadi sisters, Yamini Krishnamurti is studied, as they played a major role in the propagation of the art form, and through their chronicles, the dance style taught by Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry is conveyed. Another artiste Swapna Sundari, who popularized the dance form at the national capital and Smita Shastri, a student of CR Acharyulu, who was a disciple of Lakshminarayana Sastry will be discussed in the proceeding pages.

The training methodology of Lakshminarayana Sastry can be deciphered, from his student Kanchanamala's narratives, who had trained under him for fourteen years (1942-1956) and had learned many dance numbers during this time.²¹⁴ Recollecting her training experience with Lakshminarayana Sastry,

²¹³ Mandapeta Jagadamba. According to Yamini Krishnamurti "Shastri was another victim of the Devadasi Abolition Act, which has destroyed teachers along with dancers. He had once been busily and happily employed, teaching padams to Bogamvalu, a particular class of devadasis...But when patronizing devadasis was declared illegal, the Bogamvalu became destitute, as also their *gurus*. Shastri then came to Madras to eke out a living, teaching 'popular' dances to aspiring starlets who needed some dancing skills to succeed in films (Krishnamurti 1995, 62).

²¹⁴ *Balagopala Tarangam, Radhika Ramana, Tillana, Athana Jathiswaram, Bhairavi and Todi Varnams, Swarapallavis, Padavarnalu, Vinatalu and Bhamakalapam.*



Source : Dr. Vijay

Figure 4.3 : M. Kanchanamala with her guru Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry

Every day he would teach different variations. He would dance impromptu and was inspired by the person who was singing. If the singer was exceptionally skilled, he would go on endlessly. He would sit and teach the steps, he would say, do *digidigi* or *kungu* (bend), and then show the *Hastas*.(Kanchanamala pers.comm.)

Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry²¹⁵ would clarify and say “if you learn for six months, it means you have learnt *A, Aa*.” According to Kanchanamala, Sastry offered his training dividing the students into three categories: Preliminary, Intermediate and Post graduate; and, would teach the students according to their proficiency in learning, and they would then progress to the next level, in the above-mentioned categories. Kanchanamala, along with her sisters²¹⁶ was learning music from Krovi Satyanarayana (a music teacher in Machilipatnam). Once while learning *swarapallavis*, they [Kanchanamala and

²¹⁵ Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry had choreographed an Alaripu for Kanchanamala, *tato dbimi taa...dbin taa... in* all the three kalams (Kanchanamala pers.comm.).

²¹⁶Kanchanamala’s mother and sisters would sing and do the *nattuvangam* for her dance programs.

her sisters] asked Sastry to choreograph dance for the *Anandabhairavi swarapallavi* and he obliged. From this instance, it can be presumed that *swarapallavis* were introduced into the Kuchipudi repertoire; as prior to this, no mention of the Kuchipudi artistes performing *swarapallavis* could be found. Lakshminarayana Sastry, would insist on Kanchanamala using less space while practising, as this would confine the movements to a limited area and also teach her equilibrium. Kanchanamala²¹⁷ mentions learning Bharatanatyam from Vempati Chinna Satyam²¹⁸ at Machilipatnam and giving performances at the village of Muvva with Turaga Janaki Rani and Vempati China Satyam around the years 1946-47.

Vijaya Prasad and Maruti Kesav (Vijaya's niece), together learned from Lakshminarayana Sastry and had a notable performance career in Andhra Pradesh. They trained under him from a young age from 1950 onwards and were popularly known as "Andhra sisters." Vijaya narrates her initial training experience as follows:

Tatagaru [grandfather, referring to Lakshminarayana Sastry] arrived one day with Yeleswarapu Nageswara Sarma, his disciple. He would teach us sitting in a chair. He was above seventy at that time. While tatagaru showed us the *hastas* and *mukhjabhinayas* sitting in a chair, Nageswara Sarma showed us the steps. If they needed any correction, tatagaru used to show the *adugulu* while sitting. Later Sarma Garu

²¹⁷ Kanchanamala, was a central scholarship holder and learned Bharatanatyam from Chokkalingam Pillai, at Madras.

²¹⁸ Vempati Chinna Satyam taught her *Alaripu*, *Kalyani Jathiswaram*, *Dhanyasi Tillana* (Kanchanamala pers.comm.).

continued to teach us after tatagaru left for Madras (Vijaya Prasad pers.comm.).

Vijaya gave her first performance at the age of eight and continued to give performances, mostly in the villages of Andhra Pradesh. Recollecting her training under Lakshminarayana Sastry, she says: “Our training started right away with an invocation song, *puja nrityam*. It is *Na hridaya peethipai*...Then followed a *Gopika geetham Innalla Vale Kadamma*, a *jatiswaram* and then the famous Kuchipudi *Dasavataralu*. He also taught us *Keertanas Poolu Koyaruga, Sri Hari paipaatalu paadaruga*” (Vijaya Prasad pers.comm.). After training from Sastry, they continued with Yeleswarapu Nageswara Sarma and learned folk dances from Acharya Gautam. They performed in this manner until 1968 till Vijaya Prasad relocated to Bombay. She trained many students at her school “Natya Kalanjali” which she established in Dombivili, Bombay. Her teaching at the institution enabled her to choreograph many Marathi *Abhangs* in the Kuchipudi style. She also authored a book in Marathi *Kuchipudi Natya Visishtitba*. Thus, through Vijaya Prasad Kuchipudi dance travelled to the State of Maharashtra, where she propagated the dance form through her institution.



Source: Google Search

Figure 4.4 : Vaddadi Sisters - Uma Rama Rao & Sumathy Kaushal

Dancer sisters, Uma Rama Rao and Sumathy Kaushal (known as Vaddadi Sisters), initially trained in Kuchipudi dance under Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry. Uma learnt both Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dance from various *gurus*²¹⁹ and passed examinations in Music and Dance, conducted by the Madras Government. She took to teaching the two art forms and worked as a lecturer in Bharatanatyam at Sri Tyagaraja Music and Dance College, Ramkote, Hyderabad. There she trained students in Certificate and Diploma courses; and later, she headed the Dance Department in the then newly opened Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University, Hyderabad²²⁰ and supervised the Undergraduate (BA) and Graduate(MA) courses in Kuchipudi. She acquired a Doctorate in Dance from the Potti Sreeramulu Telugu

²¹⁹ PV Narasimha Rao, Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, Nataraja Ramakrishna, CR Acharya and Pakkiriswamy Pillai.

²²⁰<http://stgcmd.com/history-of-college/--Sri> Tyagaraja Government college of Music and Dance.

University in the year 1994. Uma Rama Rao, founded “Lasya Priya” an Academy of Indian Dances at Hyderabad and trained numerous students.²²¹ She contributed many scholarly articles on dance to various journals and has authored a book, *Kuchipudi Bharatam of Kuchipudi Dance: South Indian Classical Dance Tradition*. Her sister Sumathi Kaushal²²² had a vibrant performance career as she began performing in the then newly formed State of Andhra Pradesh, and the political and cultural leaders were keen on promoting Kuchipudi dance as the cultural symbol of the State-- Sumathi²²³ became the “brand ambassador” of the State. She was featured in the Films Division of India documentary on Kuchipudi dance where she performed a couple of traditional dance numbers. Through her institute “Nritya Sikhara” in Hyderabad and USA, she trained several students in both Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dance styles, and authored a book, *Kuchipudi Natya Darpanam* (unpublished) on dance. Sumathi taught at the then newly opened Dance Department at the University of Hyderabad for a year; and thus, both the sisters have now become a part of the history of the artform, owing to their association with Kuchipudi in the early stages of its spreading into non-hereditary domains. They have such a strong presence in the historic

²²¹ Notable among her students are Alekya Punjala, Sabita, Jyothi Lakkaraju, Madhuri Kishore, Padma Chebrolu, Pallavi Kumar to name a few.

²²² http://www.thehindu.com/entertainment/dance/amazing_grace/article17440698.ece

²²³ She was the first women dance director in Telugu films.

chronicles of the artform because they did not restrict themselves to the performance arena, but ventured into academic sphere too.



Source: Google Search

Figure 4.5: Yamini Krishnamurthi

Yamini Krishnamurthi is the dancer through whose career Kuchipudi benefitted as much as she benefitted from the form. She was a well-known Bharatanatyam artiste in Madras, and had trained in the Odissi dance form too. Despite her proficiency in numerous dance forms, it was with Kuchipudi that most of her success and popularity in the dance world is associated with – *Krishna Sabdam* being her trademark dance piece. In Yamini’s own words, “a rickshaw pulled up at our door one day, decanting an agitated little man. His name he told us in rapid fire Telugu was Vedantam Lakshminarayana Shastri.... what he had to say could not possibly wait another day. Were we

not Andhras? Then what was I doing, dancing only Bharatanatyam?” (Yamini Krishnamurti²²⁴ 1995, 52). He said that they should begin the classes immediately: “Today is an auspicious day. We must start our Kuchipudi classes today” (Yamini Krishnamurti 1995, 56). He started teaching her Dasavatara Sabdam and asked her to follow him as he was dancing. Yamini recalls: “As a dance form it gave me greater sense of artistic freedom than anything I had ever learnt till then.” Subsequently, it was Pasumarthy Venugopala Krishna Sarma, who was enlisted to teach the dance form to Yamini:

Unlike Bharatanatyam where the first steps are danced with the feet placed flat on the floor, in Kuchipudi they are danced tiptoe. The curves of the body called ‘ponkam’ and ‘kungadam’ have to be maintained throughout the dance sequence. The movement emulates a crescent moon ploughing through the clouds. This lends a sinuous quality to this style, making it quite distinct from Bharatanatyam, which is more angular and geometrical (Yamini Krishnamurti 1995, 64).

Yamini learnt many dance numbers²²⁵ from Pasumarthy Venugopala Krishna Sarma, while her father “refined its language, rediscovering its roots, the original words and their meaning” (Yamini Krishnamurti 1995, 66), and her sister Jyotishmati, learnt the music and *nattuvagam* from PVG Krishna Sarma. Yamini also learnt Kuchipudi dance from Chinta Krishnamurthy for a short

²²⁴Krishnamurti Yamini with Renuka Khandekar, A Passion For Dance My Autobiography, 1995, Viking by Penguin Books India (P) Ltd.

²²⁵Usha Parinayam, Sasirekha Parinayam, Mandooka Sabdam, Prahlada Pattabhishekam, Tarangam, Pallavi in Vasanta Ragam and Bhama Kalapam.

while. She narrates the prejudice she faced when she wanted to perform Kuchipudi dance, a *Dasavataram Sabdam* at the first Science Conference in independent India in the year 1960 and was told that “The Committee does not want a folk form” (Yamini Krishnamurti 1995, 59); and, it was only when the then Vice-President of India, Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, intervened that she was allowed to perform Kuchipudi. Yamini acknowledges the various Andhra Mahasabhas and Telugu associations for having invited her to perform Kuchipudi all over the country,²²⁶ and thereby propagating the dance form. Yamini Krishnamurti was one of the first few people to perform Kuchipudi dance abroad and popularize it there. She essayed the role of Mohini, in the dance drama *Ksheerasagaramadanam*, which was choreographed by Vempati Chinna Satyam to raise funds for the construction of Siddhendra Kalakshetra. Yamini, founded an institution in Delhi, “Yamini School of Dance” and trains students in dance.

Another dancer who impacted the art form through her performances, lecture demonstrations, workshops and her singing is Swapna Sundari.²²⁷ She trained in the Kuchipudi dance form under several gurus – BR Mohan Rao (Visakhapatnam), Pasumarthy Seetharamaiah (Visakhapatnam), Jaya Rama Rao (Delhi), Yeleswarapu Suryaprakasa Sarma (Hyderabad), N Ramakrishna (Madras) and Vempati Chinna Satyam (Madras). She learnt Bharatanatyam

²²⁶Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and many small towns and cities within Andhra Pradesh.

²²⁷ Anuradha, J. 1993. Kuchipudi Dance Who is Who.

and is a trained Carnatic singer – she recorded Kuchipudi dance music in audio cassettes. Swapna established an institute in Delhi, “Kuchipudi Dance Centre” in 1981 and has trained many students in the dance form. She has choreographed many dance dramas²²⁸ and solo numbers to the works of non-Telugu saint-poets.



Source: Google Search

Figure 4.6: Smita Shastri

It was at Darpana Academy, Ahmedabad that Smita Shastri²²⁹ began learning Kuchipudi dance from CR Acharyulu.²³⁰ He taught her the traditional items from the Kuchipudi repertoire and soon Smita was performing Kuchipudi solo numbers in between Mrinalini Sarabhai’s Bharatanatyam performances and gained recognition personally and for the art form of Kuchipudi. Since it

²²⁸ Om Shakti, Amrapali, Nauka Charitram, Water – an allegory, Krishna Kathavali, Quli Qutub Shah, Prahlada Natakam, Radhika Saanthwanam.

²²⁹ Smita Shastri trained in Bharatanatyam under Kittappa Pillai and Chatunni Pannicker and gave her *Arangretram* in the year 1962 at Darpana, a school founded by Mrinalini Sarabhai. she started performing with her mentor Mrinalini Sarabhai and represented the Gujarat University at the All India University Competitions and won the first prize.

²³⁰ CR Acharyulu, moved to Ahmedabad, Gujarat and began teaching Kuchipudi dance at Darpana Academy.

was a new form in Gujarat it raised curiosity amongst the connoisseurs and soon Smita began performing solo shows in the Kuchipudi style and Acharyulu started teaching her rare items,²³¹ like *Vinayaka Kautvam*, *Mayura Kautvam*, *Simhanandini* and *Sandhya Tandavam*. She observes about guru Acharyulu as follows: “Guruji was a fount of knowledge and he would keep teaching ten different variations for a single *adavu* or *abhinaya*. I would then cull out the best movement or *abhinaya* from those movements and standardize them. I would deliver dialogues in Telugu, though I could not understand them” (Smita Shastry pers.comm.).

Smita established, “Nartan School of Classical Dance” in Ahmedabad, in the year 1971 and has been teaching Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dance forms at her institute²³² for the past forty-seven years. She has choreographed many new dance numbers in Gujarati and Hindi; *Padams* and *Javalis*.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Vempati Chinna Satyam’s Kuchipudi Art Academy (KAA) at Madras has been the institution that has produced the maximum number of dancers in the late twentieth century. For the purpose

²³¹ Some of the dances performed in the temples rituals was taught by CR Acharyulu to his students. These were *Kautvams* praising gods or goddesses during a procession and at the end of the procession, they would draw the figure of the deities *vahanam*, a lion- *Simhanandini*, peacock- *Mayura*, Mahalakshmi *Udbhavam* – *Padma*. She says it was through many trials and errors that they arrived at an appropriate method to display the *Simhanandini* and *Mayura*²³¹ drawings on a white canvas cloth on the proscenium stage. Smita, popularized Kuchipudi through her performances

²³² She has trained many students in these two forms and the unique feature of her institute is the “Dikshant Samaroh” In this Samaroh, the students who qualify for Arangretram are combined and a programme is organized, the cost of the programme is shared equally by all the students, thus reducing the burden on a single student. According to Smita, the Kuchipudi stance that she learned from CR Acharyulu was the “*tribhanga*,” so, all her students perform Kuchipudi in that stance.

of this study, the first-generation dancers who trained in this institute and who successfully established their own institutes will be discussed here.



Source: Google Search

Figure 4.7: Rathnapapa Kumar

Rathnapapa Kumar,²³³ as a child artiste in films danced to the choreographies of Vempati Peda Satyam, Vempati Chinna Satyam and Pasumarthi Krishnamurthy. Chinna Satyam²³⁴ presented *Sri Krishna Parijatham*,²³⁵ a dance drama he had choreographed previously for the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Andhra Mahasabha in the year 1961. After the Kuchipudi Art Academy was founded in the year 1963, Rathnapapa started learning there and gave her

²³³ Rathnapapa Kumar learnt Bharatanatyam from KJ Sarasa and acted as a child artist in films;

²³⁴ On the occasion of the Golden jubilee celebrations of Andhra Mahasabha in 1961, Rathna's mother requested Vempati Chinna Satyam to stage a dance drama with the condition that Rathnapapa would be a part of it. It was after this program, that Anasuyadevi, requested Chinna Satyam to train her daughter in Kuchipudi, and he started giving private lessons to Rathna at her home.

²³⁵ Actress Kuchela Kumari played the role of Krishna with, Rathnapapa as Satyabhama, Sukumari as Narada and Rama Raman as Rukmini (Rathnapapa pers.comm.).

Rangapravesam in the year 1967. She continued to perform Kuchipudi with Chinna Satyam and participated in many of his dance dramas *Vipranarayana*²³⁶ and *Ksheerasagaramadhanam*.

The credit of beginning the process of disseminating Kuchipudi dance through her institution in the United States of America, goes to Rathnapapa Kumar, who opened an institute at Houston, Texas, in the year 1975 “Anjali Centre for Performing Arts,” to teach both Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi to students at Houston, where she developed her own style of teaching techniques and pedagogy. She has published books on dance, both in Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi, in which she has shown the *adavus* in pictorial form. Rathnapapa Kumar had to think out of the box to cater to the multi-lingual students at her institution in Houston, Texas, when a parent complained that they don’t understand the language of the dance songs. She began by choreographing a *Varnam* in Gujarati and later to a wider selection of music in various Indian languages Oriya, Bengali etc., while adhering to the strict grammar of the dance styles (Rathna pers.comm.). The students receive multi-disciplinary training at Anjali Centre for Performing Arts: they are taught music, language and history of the dance form they learn.

²³⁶*Vipranarayana*, was written by Devulapalli Krishna Sastry, (Anasuya’s uncle) and staged in the year 1968 for Vinodini Sabha, Hyderabad, with Rathnapapa, actor Chandramohan and Kothapalli Padma as the lead dancers. M Balamuralikrishna, gave vocal support for the dance drama.



Source: Google Search

Figure 4.8: Shobha Naidu

Shobha Naidu, the prima donna, of Kuchipudi dance, initially learnt dance from PL Reddy, at Rajahmundry and later moved to Madras to learn Kuchipudi from Vempati Chinna Satyam in the year 1968. She began learning at Kuchipudi Art Academy²³⁷ beginning from the fundamentals, progressed very quickly and gave her *Rangapravesam*²³⁸ (*Arangretram*) soon after. She would regularly perform solo dance programs, while simultaneously participating in Vempati's dance dramas, portraying supporting character roles, like Rukmini

²³⁷ Shobha Naidu informs that, she along with her parents saw *Sri Krishna Parijatam*, dance drama and she was so enthralled by it that she wished she could enact the role of Satyabhama at least once in her life time --- which she did later countless times (Shobha Naidu pers.comm.). Excerpts taken from an interview conducted by Anuradha J and Katyayani Thota.

²³⁸ She performed *Puja*, Vasantha *Svarapallavi*, Balagopala *Tarangam*, *Pralaya pyodhi jale- Ashtapadi*, *Bhamakalapam Pravesa daruvu*, *Vaani Pondu* — *Javali* and *Hindolam Tillana*. Rukmini Devi, came back-stage after the programme and made her promise that she would not leave dance for movies.

in *Sri Krishna Parijatham*, Rambha in *Menaka Viswamitra* and even enacting a male role of Krishna. Gradually Shobha, became the lead dancer at Kuchipudi Art Academy and began to perform principal female roles of Satyabhama, Padmavati, Chandalika and Mohini in the dance dramas of the academy. In the 1970's and 80's, she performed extensively with her guru and her name became synonymous with the Kuchipudi dance form. Commenting on Chinna Satyam, Shobha says, he was a very strict teacher and while choreographing he would teach once and expected her to remember and learn it immediately.²³⁹ When Chinna Satyam opened an institute in Hyderabad, he appointed Shobha Naidu as its Principal and she has perpetuated her gurus style of Kuchipudi (the Vempati style) in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. In the past three decades she has choreographed²⁴⁰ many dance dramas and solo dance numbers and; has trained numerous students in the Kuchipudi dance form. Quite a few of her students²⁴¹ have established themselves as performing artistes and teachers of repute in the dance form. Shobha continues to disseminate the art form by teaching it through her TV

²³⁹ Shobha Naidu narrates, learning, five Annamacharya keertana at the behest of Nedunuri Krishnamurthy, within a week's time and performing them at Tirupati. Chinna Satyam would begin composing late in the night (after 10 o'clock) and completed choreographing all the five keertanas within the stipulated time. Shobha recounts that it was from then onwards that abhinaya was given more importance in Kuchipudi dance.

²⁴⁰ Shobha has choreographed 15 dance dramas and 80 solo dance numbers. Her noteworthy dance dramas are – *Vipranarayana*, *Kalyana Srinivasam*, *Sri Krishna Saranam Mama*, *Jagadaananda Kaaraka*, *Girija Kalyanam* in the mythological genre and *Vijayasthuthi Naari*, *Navarasa Natbhamini*, *Swami Vivekananda*, *Sarvam Saimayam* in the social genre.

²⁴¹ A couple of noteworthy names who have been trained at this institute are Anuradha J and Kamala Reddy.

shows “Sadhana” (Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel) and “Siri Siri Muvva” (Sanskruithi) as a compere.



Source: Google Search

Figure 4.9: Manju Bhagarvee

Dancer and actor Manju Bhargavee, another senior student of Vempati Chinna Satyam, joined the Kuchipudi Art Academy at its inception. She was regularly given male roles in Chinna Satyam’s productions – Srinivasa (*Srinivasa Kalyanam*), Siva (*Haravilasam*), Dushyanta (*Sakuntalam*), Ananda (*Chandalika*), Krishna (*Sri Krishna Parijatam*). Regarding this, she has said:

There was no male role that I did not do. Master would ask me to stand in a certain way and hold myself. At first, I performed a male role with reluctance. I was unwilling to do *Haravilasam*, as Shiva’s role is not like that of Krishna. It has a masculine grandeur which surpasses all other roles. I was afraid that I would be inadequate for the role. But master insisted. (Bhargavee pers. comm.).

Manju Bhargavee²⁴² took to female roles to prove that she could perform them with equal élan. She has founded a dance institution “Natyavedam” in Bangalore; and, continues to teach and perform the dance numbers taught by her guru Chinna Satyam to her students. Though busy acting in films and on TV, Manju Bhargavee has been active in giving performances.

From the brief biographical sketches given above of the dancers who were the first ones from non-hereditary families to ride the wave of the newly-found Kuchipudi dance form, the biggest consequence that impacts the world of Kuchipudi today is the development of two major styles or *bani*s in Kuchipudi, especially in the solo and dance drama genre – the “old style,” and the Vempati or the “Madras style.” It is the formulation of and the distinction between the two styles that will form a major part of the rest of this chapter. The reason this becomes crucial to this study is owing to the fact that establishing an institution in the performing arts, intentionally or otherwise, necessitates and focuses on structuring of the form in the manner deemed best by those who establish the institute. Thus, when a large population of practitioners of a form adhere to a certain codified method of performing/practicing the form, it in turn results in the creation of a “*bani*.” It is in this context that the old style and Vempati *bani* will be compared, at

²⁴² Manju Bhargavee is the Chairperson of the Kuchipudi Syllabus committee, Government of Karnataka and a Senate member, for Performing Arts, All Women’s University, Tirupati.

times in the way in which they are contrasting to each other and at others, similar.

The Kuchipudi “*Banis*”

The two styles that are oft mentioned in Kuchipudi are the “old/traditional style,” referring to the Kuchipudi dance performed in the native village or by their students, and the “Vempati/Madras style” referring to the Kuchipudi dance style established by Vempati Chinna Satyam and through his students at Madras. These two styles have been analysed by scholars and the changes that have taken place in the content, technique and presentation have been dissected (For example, Jonnalagadda 1996, Putcha 2011, Thota 2016). While there were other leaderships in the performance culture of Kuchipudi before it travelled out of its village, like the Chinta’s or Mahankali’s schools for instance, they remained restricted to the genres of *Kalapam* and *Yakshaganam*, resulting in the consolidation of two major styles mentioned above in Kuchipudi today. This study attempts to understand the changes that have occurred in the dance form exclusively owing to the process of institutionalization of the form.

The twentieth century witnessed many hereditary artistes migrating from the Kuchipudi village in search of a livelihood and settling in different parts of the Telugu speaking regions and Madras, which has been the cultural centre for not only the traditional performing arts but also for the Telugu films. Teaching

dance through their institutions, these *gurus* had a huge effect on the spread of the Kuchipudi's popularity. From instructions at these institutes and the biographical accounts of the non-hereditary artistes, it could be seen that distinct styles of the dance form emerged. The non-hereditary artistes, who initially learnt from the institutions established by the hereditary artistes, went on to represent the dance form in the national and global arena. It is through the course of their paths in the dance world, that the different characteristics of the styles they trained in had unfolded. Hence, the next part of this chapter will be drawing from the experiences of the non-hereditary artistes, both men and women, in learning the dance in an institutionalized setting and, in turn, their influence on the dance form in the manner in which they propagate it to their students.

As mentioned earlier, Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry's contribution to the solo genre is immeasurable. It is through the narratives of his students that the training system and dance repertoire of his *bani* is revealed. The use of *vacchikabhinayam* – dialogue delivery-- is seen in this style and in the solo dance numbers more importance is given to *abhinaya*. Kanchanamala recollects having learnt twenty-five *padams* from Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry and the *sancarīs*²⁴³ – *sthayi bhavas* -- were delineated very subtly, unlike the dramatic

²⁴³ Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry would write down the song, jatis and the various expressions used for communicating the meaning and call it as the *jaatakam* or horoscope (Kanchanamala pers.com). Vempati Peda Satyam had made similar notes and gave the details of *sancarīs*, taught to him by Lakshminarayana Sastry (Jonnalagadda 1996, 99).

acting which is seen in the contemporary Kuchipudi dance. Describing *sattvikabhinaya* in solo dances, she says: “the dancer should perform till the audience understands and then their response should be reflected back, on to the dancers face. Therefore, there is more scope for improvisation in the traditional style for both *abhinaya* and *nritta* numbers, as in the *nritta* sequences, while performing the *konugolu*, the *sutradhara* can go on saying the mnemonics any number of times and the dancer has to keep performing,” (Kanchanamala pers.comm.). In the traditional style, in the *natyarambha* position (beginning stance) the dancers bend their arms at the elbow and the tilting of the body *usi* is very pronounced; since this style is the immediate successor of the *Yakshagana* genre that was in vogue, the remnants of the masculine vigour of that genre are present in it. As discussed in Chapter II, most of the dance teachers who worked in the Government Music and Dance Colleges in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad were students of Vedantam Jagannadha Sarma; therefore, his *bani* flowed into these institutions and indirectly to the students learning there. The students of Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, were mostly solo dance performers; and, most of them had learned some other dance style, before learning from Lakshminarayana Sastry. Yamini Krishnamurti, Nataraj Ramakrishna, Uma Rama Rao and Sumathi Kaushal were proficient in Bharatanatyam, hence, all of them had an understanding and foundation of at least one “classical” Indian dance form, before learning Kuchipudi.

It is perceptible that Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, initiated the process of institutionalization in the Kuchipudi dance form by teaching solo dance numbers to his students; and, it was this solo genre, that was taught at the institutes established by his students -- Vempati Chinna Satyam, CR Acharyulu, Korada Narasimha Rao, Vijaya Prasad, Uma Rama Rao and Sumathi Kaushal. This *bani* can be seen at the Siddhendra Kalakshetra, Kuchipudi village, as most of the teachers and *gurus* of the Kalakshetra were the students of Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry. The traditional style manifested into different configurations which entered into the teaching patterns of the institutions founded by Lakshminarayana Sastry's students from both hereditary and non-hereditary backgrounds at different geographic locations.

Vedantam Lakshminarayana's style was further advanced by his son Vedantam Jagannadha Sarma, who had for a brief period worked as a dance director in films at Madras and later settled down in Hyderabad. Sastry's innovative form of solos and observation of Bharatanatyam, and Sarma's experience with the film dances brought considerable modifications in the Kuchipudi style that Jagannadha Sarma taught. According to Thota "Especially in the choreographies which they credit to Lakshminarayana Sastry and Jagannatha Sarma, movements that are characteristically Bharatanatyam – such as the *koruvai adavu*, the *nat adavu* and the *teermanam adavu*, which involve a diagonal extension of both the arms and those which

involve the arm reaching backwards are employed frequently.” An influence of the Bharatanatyam style in the form of *adavus*, movement patterns and the repertoire which consisted of *varnams*, *padavarnams* and *tanavarnams* is seen in his choreographies.

The *bani* or style which has brought immense recognition for the dance form is the Vempati *bani* evolved by Vempati Chinna Satyam, who was also a student of Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry. While describing classical Kuchipudi dance, Putcha says, “good dance, that is, classical dance, attempts to balance its femininity with what is an interesting athletic, institutionalized aesthetic” (Putcha 2011, 171). Chinna Satyam strived to create a style, similar to the clean and straight lines of the Bharatanatyam technique in Kuchipudi which would be acceptable to the urban sensibilities of the Madras cognoscenti. Chinna Satyam’s sojourn to Madras, interning under his mentor and cousin, Vempati Peda Satyam, learning Bharatanatyam from Peda Satyam’s wife Sowdamini while refining the Kuchipudi he had already learnt, working in films as an assistant to Peda Satyam, and later independently, teaching Kuchipudi dance privately to students and at various dance institutes and eventually establishing his own institute “Kuchipudi Art Academy” (KAA)²⁴⁴ where his experiences coalesced into creating a distinct style of his own. In many interviews²⁴⁵ and personal interactions, Vempati’s admiration

²⁴⁴Refer to chapter III for more on Vempati Chinna Satyam.

²⁴⁵Sruti 1984

for Kamala Lakshman's²⁴⁶ dance comes forth-- "Perfection. Angasudham...footwork, movement, expression,... she coupled perfect lines with ease of execution. I thought how wonderful it would be if the Kuchipudi style also could have such perfection" (VAK Ranga Rao, 56).²⁴⁷ He personally enquired from Kamala, as to what was the difference between his dance style and that of Bharatanatyam was, to which she responded by saying that "*sashtavam* was missing in the Kuchipudi dance." As a result, Vempati began working on that aspect of the body kinesthetics in Kuchipudi, and the Vempati style's marker became its "*angasudhi*" or perfect body movements.



Pictures Courtesy: M. Sita Prasad

Figure 4.10 : *Natyarambham* arms position - Vempati Style and traditional style

Through the narratives of his students and their experiences with Vempati Chinna Satyam, one aspect that comes to the fore lucidly is the reflection of

²⁴⁶A Bharatanatyam danseuse and an actor in Tamil films.

²⁴⁷ Vempati Chinna Satyam's interview, in *Sruti* issue, 51-52: 56.

the individual strengths of the artist in his choreographies. For instance, Shobha Naidu's forte was "*sattvika abhinaya*," which resulted in *abhinaya* gaining more prominence in the choreographies in which she was the muse. After Shobha Naidu moved to Hyderabad, Chinna Satyam started choreographing with Bala Kondala Rao, a senior student of the Vempati repertory, and complex *nritta* patterns could be seen emerging in his choreographies.

Chinna Satyam's dance style is often criticized as being an imitation of Bharatanatyam by the hereditary artistes of the Kuchipudi village. However, his style greatly differs from that of the "old style" in terms of the fluidity, feminine grace and "elusive elan" along with the sculpturesque poses and complex body movements. In other words,

Hence, the 'Vempati' school of Kuchipudi dance is a manifestation of many layers, whose presence can be explained by the various dance forms, dance styles and dancers that Chinna Satyam encountered before he established his own Institution... those that have a significant impact are the Vazhvoor bani's graceful feminine quality, Peda Satyam's exuberant masculine virility and stylization of every genre of dance, and also Peda Satyam's, Chinna Satyam's and Seshu's engagement with the Oriental thematic choreographies. (Thota 2016, 152)

In her seminal work, Anuradha Jonnalagadda has examined the *adavu* patterns of the "old" and "Vempati" styles and has pointed out the additions and deletions in the "Vempati" style. While discussing the *Nritta* aspect of

Vempati's style she observes that "the innovations mainly occurred in the domain of executing the movement and its body kinetics and in the addition of the variations" (Jonnalagadda 1996, 56). The other area where the innovation occurred, according to her, was in the *jatis* that are taught in the Vempati style: "For example, in the training of Vempati Chinna Satyam, *jatis* set to *tisragati*, *misra* and *kbanda capu talas* and *sankeeranajati* were introduced as innovations. Each of the *caturasragati jati* is performed with a proper entry and a proper exit" (Jonnalagadda 1996, 90). These entries and exits are taught and practiced with different names in the other styles of Kuchipudi: *palugundu varasalu* and *vinyasalu*²⁴⁸ are practiced in the three speeds and are used to cover space. In the Vempati style, these steps are taught in the beginning of each *jati*; for example, the *kbanda jaati* steps are performed before teaching the equivalent *jatis*. It was seen in the previous Chapters that Vedantam Parvatisam and Vedantam Prahlada Sarma had also organized the basic fundamentals of the Kuchipudi; but Chinna Satyam was able to categorize them better and mould them to suit the feminine body. He induced more grace into the same set of *adavus* by restraining the manner in which they are performed; and, this aspect of the style greatly contrasts with the more masculine (*motu* in Telugu) body dynamic of the traditional styles. The quick

²⁴⁸ For more on these, see Jonnalagadda (1996).

silver and springy movement for which Kuchipudi is known is adopted in a highly aesthetic manner by Vempati to showcase the grace of a female body:

Perhaps the most crucial difference was that the proponents of authentic (masculine) Kuchipudi did not exhibit a desire to modernize or adapt Kuchipudi to audience tastes while those that represent and teach the version which gained classical recognition (feminine) did so explicitly, by shaping Kuchipudi practice into a solo, female aesthetic. (Putcha 2011, 156)

In terms of choreography, in the Vempati style, the dancer is able to cover more space, owing to the extensions in both the arm and leg movements. The leg extensions wherein the foot is raised and extended on the heel *anchitam*, while this movement gives the required bounce and grace to the movement, it also, facilitates covering of space.²⁴⁹ Similarly, the training methodology of Vempati, supports this aspect of covering the space. While practicing in the class, the students are directed to move in forward, backward and lateral directions as this trains the dancer to perform better on huge proscenium stages. Another feature which adds to the feminine grace is the use of the torso (*parsva*) movements; while performing the lateral movements, the dancer bends the torso along with the hand in a synchronized fashion, this lends more grace to the *nritta* movements. As the students learn in large numbers in institutionalized settings, all of them are taught a fixed number of

²⁴⁹ Putcha 2011, 165.

choreographed movements, so, the scope for improvisation and individual input is limited. Even in *abhinaya*, the dancer has to finish the sequence/segment in specific number of *avartanams*/repetitions of the song. This makes it difficult for a performer who wants to do more *sancaris* or extend the dramatic episodes. The singer is told to sing a line/refrain, a specific number of times and the dancer has to complete the episode in those repetitions. However, as an exception, Shobha Naidu, who is known for her *sattvika abhinaya*, reveals that whenever she wants to elaborate a *sancari* or dramatic episode on the stage, she gives a prefixed signal to the singer to continue rendering the same line.

Vempati Chinna Satyam had to face criticism for eliminating a unique feature of the Kuchipudi art form the *vacchikam* aspect from his style; though in the solo genre, *vacchikam* is mostly seen in the dance numbers (divertissements) taken directly from the *Kalapas* and *Yakshaganas*, where a few dialogues are spoken by the dancer and the *Sutradhara*. In the newer choreographies, these dialogues are not seen. *Vacchikabhinayam* is seen majorly in the performances of the hereditary artistes in the Kuchipudi *Yakshaganas*. Chinna Satyam, countered that argument by saying that in an urbanized institution, it is not possible to teach *vacchikam* (literary and verbal expression), as students of different linguistic (other than Telugu) backgrounds come to learn and it is difficult for them to understand or deliver the dialogues in Telugu. Consequently, Vempati entrusted the *vacchikam* part -- singing and dialogue

delivery -- to the musical ensemble. Thus, ensuring proper intonation and pronunciation of dialogues and songs in Telugu by the vocalist went a long way in enhancing the nativity of the art form. Fluid grace, *saushtavam* and *angasudham* in body kinetics, energetic and spirited tempo/pace in the execution of *nritta* movements with expressions, refined and lyrical rendering of *jatis*, sculpturesque body movements, softer neck and eye movements and restrained facial movements are the hallmarks of the Vempati style. In this way he created a unique style in the art form and set a paradigm for others to follow.

Thus, the evolution of the body kinesthetics in the Kuchipudi dance form can be observed, from it being performed in one place with the arms held close to the body with limited use of space by the hereditary artistes to the expansive movements of both the hands and the legs movements and covering of larger spaces as seen in the Vempati style. With more and more non-hereditary artistes entering the dance field and specialising in the solo forms as they are easier for them to practice and perform than the *Yakshaganas* or native *Kalapas*, solos became more popular with them. They, in turn, taught these solos to their students at their institutes; this resulted in the non-hereditary teachers and students propagating the solo forms and performing more of them. Thus, institutionalization happened in the Kuchipudi art form, as a result of the solo repertoire gaining prominence and acquiring distinction as a Telugu dance form, with many hereditary and non-hereditary artistes teaching the solo

dance at their institutes. Though many of them choreographed dance dramas which eventually led to the popularization of the art form it will not be out of context to say that the “solo repertoire” enabled institutionalization to happen..

Solos – Institutions – Dance dramas

As seen in the first chapter of this dissertation, institutionalization of the Indian performing art forms happened on a pan-Indian scale with most of the first generation dancers and *gurus* establishing institutes to teach the “classical” dance forms. They trained their students in the solo “classical” dance forms like Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Mohiniattam and Manipuri and eventually, all of them choreographed dance dramas²⁵⁰ in their respective styles; and, this helped them in gaining visibility and popularity for their institutions. Similarly, both the hereditary and non-hereditary gurus of Kuchipudi trained their students in the solo format but eventually choreographed dance dramas. Initially, it was more thematic based dances, as seen from dance notes of Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry and that of the *Venkatarama Natya Mandalis* choreographies – where solos and duets were performed by the artistes. In the early years, the *gurus* taught the dances learned from their own *gurus* at their institutes, and progressively

²⁵⁰ Vardhini, Parvati T. 2017. “Institutions – Mediums Transmitting Traditions: The Pioneering Dance Institutes of India.” *Raamaneeyakam, Nrutyotsavam Naatya*, Special Edition. Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University, Hyderabad, 258- 268 .

choreographed newer dance numbers and dance dramas to widen the range of Kuchipudi repertoire. Chinna Satyam, who introduced the dance drama genre in the Kuchipudi art form was later emulated by all the other Kuchipudi artistes. Most of them choreographed dance dramas with stories from the *Bhagavatham and Puranas*. Uma Rama Rao, choreographed the works of King *Shahjis Pallaki Seva Prabandhams* and also to contemporary themes, such as *Medha Vikas* on Computers. Apart from the regular *Bhagavatham and Puranaic* stories, Shobha Naidu, choose social and women centric themes like *Sarvam Sai Mayam*, *Swami Vivekananda* and *Vijayostu te naari* to choreograph her dance dramas. Swapna Sundari presented Bhamakalapam with Hindi dialogues and choreographed dance dramas to abstract subjects such as Water- an allegory. Institutionalization of the art form enabled the *gurus* to train students who could take part in the dance dramas choreographed by them as the end goal was to always tell a story.

Newer Time-lines and Content to Suit New Contexts

When an oral system of learning, which occurs both actively and passively in the eco-system of the art form, is replaced with an institutionalized process, the teaching pedagogy undergoes numerous changes. There are two types of institutes that were established to propagate the art form, one was founded by the gurus, private institutes and the other was established by the State Government – The Government Music and Dance Colleges. Though the art

form was orally transmitted to them by their *gurus*, the Kuchipudi artistes realized the importance of having a prescribed syllabus while teaching the dance to non-hereditary students, who are not familiar with the ethos of the Kuchipudi dance form. As required by formal educational institutions, the Kuchipudi *gurus* framed a syllabus which has been prescribed and is followed at the institutions that teach Kuchipudi dance.²⁵¹ In the *guru-shishya parampara*, the training would progress purely in accordance with the student's capacity to receive and imbibe. But, in an institutionalized teaching method the teacher has to follow the syllabus and complete it, irrespective of the student's ability. This model is mostly observed in the government institutions where they have to abide by a proposed teaching plan and complete the syllabus within a fixed time frame of the academic calendar. After finishing the syllabus, the student writes an examination both theoretical and practical, through which her/his aptitude, skill and ability are tested; and, later upon completion of the course a certificate is awarded. For those interested in furthering their knowledge in the dance field, they can pursue higher studies in the Universities which offer graduate and doctoral courses in dance. Some of the detrimental factors of this system are that except for a few outstanding cases, the institutionalized setting does not produce "superior performers" which results in the student seeking higher specialized training outside the institutional structure. This

²⁵¹ In the previous Chapter, the first known Kuchipudi syllabus framed by Vempati Peda Satyam and a later one formalized by the Kuchipudi *gurus* and the Andhra Pradesh Nritya Academy in 1983 were discussed.

could be owing to the restricted hours and efforts that can be put in the training by both the teacher and the student. As this process insists that there be fixed hours of teaching/learning, both the teacher and the student interact for a set number of hours and at a certain time. Whether in the case of government or private institutions, this structuring of duration of class occurs. While it was a daily practice for the learners from the hereditary families in the Kuchipudi village, in the government institutes²⁵², classes are held early in the mornings and evenings every single day, and in the private institutes, classes happen during evening hours a few times in a week (2 or 3 classes per week), as the student would be pursuing regular academic education during the day. In the case of these private dance institutes, training of a certain student progresses purely as per her/his abilities as in the scenario of the oral tradition - the *gurus* teach according to the talent of the student or take extra classes for those who require them. But, in the case of private institutions too, a systematic teaching methodology and prescribed syllabus are adhered to. This methodology and syllabus are mostly designed by the head of the institution, and this results in a certain set of practitioners of the form being guided/mentored in a certain way.

As has been discussed above, Kuchipudi dance travelled to different geographic locations within India and abroad; and, the form adapted itself to

²⁵² The Government Music and Dance Colleges in the combined state of Andhra Pradesh offer a Certificate course (4 years) and a Diploma course (2 years).

suit the requirements of the students and the local sensibilities. Vempati Chinna Satyam, moulded the Kuchipudi dance in Madras to suit the tastes of the Sabha audiences. He refined the dance form and choreographed many dances to the lyrics of the *Vaggeyakaras* and expanded the Kuchipudi dance repertoire. He also catered to Tamil audiences by commissioning the script²⁵³ for *Kumarasambhavam* (1967) and *Padmavati Tirumanam* (1983) to be re-written in Tamil. In Bombay, Maharashtra, Vijaya Prasad choreographed dance to Marathi *Abhangs* in the Kuchipudi idiom. In Gujarat, Smita Shastri choreographed dance to Gujarati songs. At Delhi, Raja and Radha Reddy have composed many dances to the lyrics of North Indian saints like, Surdas, Kabir and the Sufi saints. In fact, they choreographed to the music of a *tarana*,²⁵⁴ given to them by Pandit Ravi Shankar and it has become a popular number of their dance repertoire. They had to adopt newer training systems to disseminate the dance form to the students, who come from different linguistic backgrounds and are not familiar with the ethos of the Telugu language or their customs like eliminating the *vacchikabhinayam* or explaining the meaning of the lyrics before teaching the item and giving elaborate descriptions of the dance numbers being performed before a programme.

²⁵³Jonnalagadda 2012, 44.

²⁵⁴*Tarana*, is a genre of Hindustani classical vocal music, rendered at medium and fast pace. It contains words from Persian and Arabic phonemes.

This proliferation of the numbers of aspirants and spreading of the dance form has brought many modifications in not only in style of Kuchipudi dance; but it has also effected many changes in the manner in which institutes operate. In larger towns and metropolitan cities, the dance *gurus*/instructors conduct classes in multiple locations for the convenience of the students. Jayarama Rao and Vanashree Rao conduct classes in three locations, spread across New Delhi. As the dance form has been taken to the other countries and as the institutions are established there, further alterations have become imperative. In the USA, for example, the students have only one class per week as they have to travel long distances to attend the dance classes. It has impacted the teaching and training methodology of the dance form in some ways. Rathnapapa described her first reality check in an alien land; when she first started teaching in the US and asked her students to come daily for the classes and the mother of one of the students, very politely told her that it would not be possible for her to bring her daughter to the class every day, as she was working and had to adjust her timings, accordingly. Now, Rathnapapa's institution is spread across six locations in Houston and has three teachers teaching the dance form. These reduced teaching hours have led to the Kuchipudi *gurus*/teachers not insisting on the students practicing fundamental steps or *jatris*, regularly and teaching the new dance numbers instead.

Transformation in Patronage and Performance Spaces

The performing art forms of India have survived due to the patronage of various benefactors such as the Kings, Zamindars, rich merchants and art-loving audiences. Kuchipudi art form, being a rural theatrical form in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, relied on the support it got from the rural folk and the local landlords and Zamindars²⁵⁵ of the *Samsthanas* in the Andhra region of the Madras Presidency. Once the country gained independence, it was the government bodies, which became the chief patrons of the art forms of India through its Akademies and Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).²⁵⁶ Kuchipudi art form, received the support from the Sangeet Natak Akademi post the 1959 seminar, when it was recognized as a “classical” dance form and SNA gave the initial grant to construct a permanent building for Siddhendra Kalakshetra.²⁵⁷ The regional chapter of SNA, Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Akademi (APSNA), gave monetary aid to produce a dance drama in Kuchipudi style and *Ksheerasagara Madhanam*, was premiered in the year 1962 with Vempati Chinna Satyam as the choreographer and Banda Kanakalingeshwara Rao as the producer. APSNA continued to support Kuchipudi dance by identifying local *gurus* who were adhering to high standards of teaching, recognized their institutes as “*Gurukulams*”²⁵⁸ and gave

²⁵⁵ Like the zamindars of Chalapalli, Karvetinagaram, Kalahasti, Venkatagiri, Peddapuram, Bobili and Vijayanagaram.

²⁵⁶ For more on this, refer to chapter II of this dissertation.

²⁵⁷ For more on this, refer to Chapter III of this dissertation.

²⁵⁸ Bhagavathula Ramakottayya’s institute “Kuchipudi Nritya Nilayam”, in Hyderabad was recognized as a ‘*Gurukulam*’ and was given financial assistance by APSNA.

them financial support. The Akademies instituted scholarships, fellowships and awards to deserving artistes, organized and sponsored art Festivals within and outside the country in which Kuchipudi artistes and their troupes participated. A large number of deserving *gurus* and artistes secured awards and recognition through these measures. Most of the hereditary Kuchipudi *gurus* and artistes won government awards and recognition, beginning with Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma, who won the Padmasri award at a very young age. The State Government also instituted awards like *Bharata Kala Prapoorna* and recognised *gurus* and artistes for their contribution to the art form. Young artistes were encouraged by bestowing them with Central Government scholarships instituted by the Human Resource Development Ministry to train further in their respective art forms. One of the first persons to win a scholarship in Kuchipudi dance is M Kanchanamala followed by many others like Lanka Annapurna and Sumathi Kaushal in the early years. Public sector firms and private corporate companies sponsor a few artistes and organize programs for them like ITC, which sponsored Vempati China Satyam's dance dramas.

Apart from these Akademies, it is the Sabha's which offer prestigious performing spaces and all the artistes, young and old compete to get a chance to perform there. Like the Madras Music Academy, in Madras, there were several sabhas in the Telugu speaking areas of the Madras Presidency, which helped in propagating the performing art forms. The foremost amongst them

being the Saraswati Gana Sabha²⁵⁹ at Kakinada and other Sabha's in towns like Tenali and Vijayawada, would organize music and dance programs of artistes from both South and North of India. The Maharajah's Music and Dance college Vizianagaram, the first college of its kind in South India, would regularly organize programs, especially during the *Vinayaka Chaviti Navaratri* festival in its premises. The Andhra and Telugu Associations, across the Indian sub-continent and abroad have also played a major role in the propagation and popularization of the Kuchipudi art form. Yamini Krishnamurti acknowledges the contribution of these associations that invited her to perform Kuchipudi dance in the early years which facilitated in popularising the dance form. A few individual organizers²⁶⁰ and patrons were also responsible for popularizing the art forms.

In the Sabha's of Madras, from the late twentieth century, Kuchipudi dance was mostly performed by the students of Vempati Chinna Satyam and/or, his productions that were showcased. While establishing the Kuchipudi Art Academy, in the early years, he presented many of his students at Krishna

²⁵⁹ It is one of the oldest sabhas in south India established in the year 1894 to promote "Carnatic music and Bharatanatyam in Andhra." There were two other well-known music sabhas in South India, The Swati Tirunal Sabha in Trivandrum and the Gayani Samaj at Bangalore, founded in 1904. Saraswati Gana Sabha was patronized by the Rajah's of Pithapuram and Bobili, in the formative years.

<http://www.kutcheribuzz.com/news/general/2509-sgs-centenary-kakinada>

²⁶⁰ M Siva Narayana, a tailor by profession and interested in the performing arts, organized programs of the Kuchipudi artistes, like Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma, from mid-1950's to the early 1960's. He would organize their programs in the northern coastal area of Andhra Pradesh, Orrisa, Bihar and Bengal, where a large number of Telugu speaking people had settled down and were interested in watching and listening Telugu culture. In this way a single individual was responsible in popularizing Kuchipudi dance. (Dwaram Durga Prasad pers.comm.)

Gana Sabha, in Madras, which helped in establishing Vempati, as a Kuchipudi *guru* of repute:

The sixth day of January in the year 1966 was, it turned out, the D-day. He presented a batch of his students in a programme at a college hall and it was well received. Balasaraswati, Ramaiah Pillai, Dandayudhapani Pillai and many other dance personalities were witness to the success, and Bala suggested that Satyam repeat the programme. He did just that, some three weeks later, at Sri Krishna Gana Sabha. Word had got around about the new *guru* on the scene. The 'House' was full. Rukmini Devi came, saw the programme and was conquered. (*Sruti*, 51/52: 47)

Another patron of Kuchipudi art, GM Sarma, a central government employee, became an ardent admirer of the dance form after watching Vempati Chinna Satyam's dance drama's and organized huge festivals of Kuchipudi dance, called *Kuchipudi Mahotsavs* at Calcutta, Nagpur and Bombay, to propagate the dance form in non-Telugu speaking regions of India. In these *Mahotsavs*,²⁶¹ the foremost Kuchipudi *gurus*, dancers and scholars participated and gave performances of solos and dance dramas, lecture demonstrations and seminars. These *Mahotsavs*, went a long way in perpetuating the art form in the non-Telugu speaking areas of India and were the precursors for the establishment of the Kuchipudi Kala Kendras, dance institutes, to teach Kuchipudi in all of the above mentioned cities. These are managed by the

²⁶¹ Kuchipudi Mahotsav's were organized in the following years – 1986, 1987, 1989, 1993, 1996, 1999 and 2001.

senior students of Vempati Chinna Satyam; and, the Bombay institute is managed by a hereditary Kuchipudi artiste, MSR Murthy. An extension of all these activities culminated in the publication of *Nartanam* in 2001, a quarterly journal on Indian dance.

The Raja-Lakshmi Award²⁶² in the year 1981, given by PV Ramaniah Raja, (a businessman with interest in the performing arts), to Chinna Satyam was a turning point of sorts in Kuchipudi as a part of the award meant he was sponsored a program in the United States of America. This was the first time Chinna Satyam toured the USA, with a few students and performed in all the major cities there. This created a huge interest in the dance form amongst the Telugu diaspora in the USA. As a result, Vempati toured the United States many times with his students thereafter and was able to propagate the dance form in the country. The largest effect of this is the entry of the most recent art enthusiast and promoter of Kuchipudi on the scene-- Anand Kuchibhotla, the founder of Silicon Andhra, a cultural organization established in the USA. The *Maha Brinda Natyam*, organized by Silicon Andhra,²⁶³ was recognized by the Guinness book of world records, for the participation of a large number

²⁶² The Raja- Lakshmi Award carries a cash prize of Rs 100,00, a citation a plaque and in addition the awardees receive US \$2000 from Dr KV Rao and Dr Jyoti Rao, in association with the Telugu Fine Arts Society, New Jersey, USA.

²⁶³ Silicon Andhra, is a cultural organization formed by Non-resident Indians, belonging to Andhra Pradesh, in USA and is headed by Anand Kuchibhotla. They organize cultural programs, both in the US and in India to perpetuate the Telugu culture.

of Kuchipudi dancers in an event. This event was enabled by Kuchipudi dance institutions, which train students in large numbers:

Silicon Andhra has rewritten the history and created a New Guinness World Record with 6117 Kuchipudi Dancers at Vijayawada on 25th December, 2016. We sincerely thank all Gurus, Parents, Artistes and Students for making this happen.

<https://www.meraevents.com/event/Siliconandhra-Kuchipudi-Guinness>

Recently, the University of Silicon Andhra, was launched, in the United States of America, it offers courses in Certificate, Diploma and a Master's programme in Kuchipudi dance. The effects of this institution can only be studied after a few years from its inception.

The dance programmes which are being telecast in regional and national television networks give more visibility and consequently encouragement to the artistes. Though the electronic media have condensed the performance time and telecast the programmes at unsuitable hours, either in the mid-mornings or late in the night, when the viewership is low, performing on the television is seen as a prestigious event to showcase their talent. Artistes are given grades according to their virtuosity in the art form-- "A Top" "A" or "B" -- by Doordarshan, the government owned national TV channel. The

print media, another source of patronage, through their reviews and feature articles, give publicity to the artistes.²⁶⁴

Another important form of multi-media, that has both influenced and patronized dance are films. They played a significant role in propagating and patronizing dance in the twentieth century. Some of the traditional Kuchipudi artistes who migrated to the film industry²⁶⁵ – Vedantam Raghavayya, Pasumurthy Krishna Murthy and Vempati Peda Satyam – created an interest in Kuchipudi dance form and many young girls were inspired to learn the art form after watching dances in those films. Some of the dancers later became actors in films.²⁶⁶ Most of the Telugu/Tamil actors in the twentieth century learned Kuchipudi dance as it helped them in refining their acting skills. Many of the “classical” dances in films became very popular and they were later adapted to be performed on the stage. For example, Vempati Chinna Satyam re-choreographed the dance number “*Ananda Tandavam*,” originally composed for the Telugu movie *America Ammayi* for stage performances.

The migration of Indian artistes to overseas destinations of Europe and United States of America has brought another change in the patronage of the art form. Initially, it was the artist (accompanying her spouse), who migrated to a foreign location and gave a few performances and started an institution

²⁶⁴ The newspaper, The Hindu, gives space for the performing arts, by publishing a supplementary paper every Friday, under the title “Friday Review” and publishes reviews and articles on the performing arts.

²⁶⁵ For more information on this topic, refer to Thota 2016.

²⁶⁶ Chandrakala, Manju Bhargavee, Sabita Bhamidipati.

to teach the art form mainly to the children of the Indian immigrants, who are interested in sustaining the cultural roots of their land of origin. While Rathnapapa established her institute in 1975, later in the 1990s, the next generation of artistes like Sasikala Penumarthy, Kamala Reddy, Anuradha Nehru, Vinjamuri Sujatha migrated to the USA and established institutions of their own. Also, it is these artistes who invite their *gurus* to their adopted country to conduct programmes, workshops and to teach their students. Chinna Satyam toured the United States of America many times at the behest of his students. The reverse trend is also seen when these same artistes, bring their students to India, for advanced training under *gurus* and perform in select sabhas and organizations, go back to their adopted countries and apply for funds for newer productions based on press reviews of their programs in India.

As it is mainly the women artistes, who accompany their spouses to these countries and perform and teach, the number of female *gurus* of the art form in these foreign locations is on the rise. Now the Indian diaspora has become a major source of patronage for Indian artistes and *gurus*. With organizations like TANA,²⁶⁷ ATA²⁶⁸ and Silicon Andhra²⁶⁹ promoting the Kuchipudi art

²⁶⁷ Telugu Association of North America.

²⁶⁸ American Telugu Association.

²⁶⁹ Silicon Andhra, is a cultural organization formed by Non-resident Indians, belonging to Andhra Pradesh, USA and is headed by Anand Kuchibhotla. They organize cultural programs, both in the US and in India to perpetuate the Telugu culture.

form, artistes from India are invited to these forums to perform, educate and teach their respective art forms.

Interestingly, it is the tourism industry, by showcasing the native art forms to the tourists, which has also become a source of patronage for the Indian performing art forms. They organise festivals to display the “classical” art forms of the country and the artistes customize their art forms to suit the interests of the tourists who are keen on seeing the countries art forms. The *Siddhendra Yogi Mahotsav* at the Kuchipudi village, is an annual feature since 1948 and was first “organized by “Sri Lalitha Natya Kala Samithi” with the participation of several important dancers and patrons of Kuchipudi” (*Mahotsav 2009 Program Brochure*, cited by Putcha 2011, 190).²⁷⁰ Another dance festival which majorly showcases the Kuchipudi art form in the village is by a Kuchipudi Bhagavatha, Pasumarthy Kesava Prasad through his Akhila Bharatha Kuchipudi Natya Kala Mandali, established in the year 1983. Generally, the tourists are happy to have a glimpse of the art forms and are more interested in the external accoutrements than the artistic or the creative aspects of the arts. Thus, the changing patterns of patronage of the art form have impacted the dance forms repertoire, themes, presentations, gender and status of the art forms by evolving and responding to the changing times and place.

²⁷⁰ Siddhendra Yogi Mahotsav Brochure. 2009.

Change, as it is said, appears to be the only constant. So, increasing popularity of the Kuchipudi dance form and the number of aspirants who wish to be trained in it did bring many changes in the ambience of transmitting this form to the future generations. One such major change is the institutionalization of the Kuchipudi art form. This study would be incomplete if the major drawback of this process is not mentioned. In the process of institutionalization dance has become a medium to be instructed, rather than a whole eco-system of culture that has to be internalized and absorbed in order to be performed with an understanding. Institutes have been able to produce Kuchipudi dancers of the solo genre, but not all-inclusive artistes. The dancer might be technically perfect, but he/she lacks that something indefinable which can only come from a deep empathy with the ethos of the art form. When smaller groups of students are trained at a given point of time, *gurus* find it possible to focus on identifying and honing individual strengths of various disciples. But, when large groups of students are being trained together, focus shifts to developing a uniform technical virtuosity of the entire group by standardising the method of training. For instance, in the dance dramas of Vempati, the non-hereditary, institute trained artistes are given the main female role or supporting roles as dancers, where dance dominates; but for the parts that demand theatricality, like the Kings, Demons, Rishis and puranic male characters of importance it is still the hereditary Kuchipudi artistes who are enlisted to perform these roles. In most of Vempati Chinna

Satyam's dance dramas, he would give all the lead female and dancing roles to his students and for the male characters like, *Akasharaju*, *Daksha Prajapati*, *Rishis*, *Narada*, he would entrust those roles to the hereditary artistes of Kuchipudi village. It is probably owing to the hereditary artistes' good command over the Telugu language,²⁷¹ understanding of the stories from *Bhagavatam* and *Puranas*, and the music which is unique to Kuchipudi that they are able to get into the skin of the characters; but, the urban institute trained dancers are unable to emulate that which is the intangible artistry of the hereditary artistes. Hence, the art form of Kuchipudi which has distinct genres like the *Kalapa*, *Yakshagana*, solo and dance drama has been successful in training dancers in the solo genre through institutionalization; but where characterization (*vesham*) and theatricality are required, it still depends on the artistry of the hereditary Kuchipudi artistes. This also indicates that institutionalization as a process was possible and depends on the solo genre's entry and integration into the form of Kuchipudi; and, that is the genre which is successfully propagated through this process.

²⁷¹Most of those belonging to the present generations have under graduate and graduate degrees in Telugu language.

Chapter V

Corollaries of Institutionalization

It doesn't matter how many days' notice we (hereditary artistes) are given, we will only begin our practice three days before the performance.²⁷²

If only we had access to such spaces (large practice halls as constructed in the Siddhendra Kalakshetra), I would practice for hours and hours, every single day.²⁷³

Institutionalization, a western concept, was indigenized by the Indians, who adopted this model and fused it with the native system of pedagogy. In the case of Indian dance, instances of this can be seen in the establishment of regional institutes, like the Kalakshetra and Kalamandalam, which have gained national and international prominence, and today are looked upon as centres which impart exceptional training in the respective art forms. For the Kuchipudi dance form too, institutes were founded on the lines of the same; and, it would not be wrong to conclude that the original intention was to create a space that would mean to Kuchipudi what Kalakshetra meant for Bharatanatyam.

²⁷² Vedantam Raghava, (pers. comm.). He said this while discussing the preparatory process for performances.

²⁷³ Amritha Lahiri, (pers. comm.). A Kuchipudi dancer and performer based in North India, she said this while visiting the village of Kuchipudi during the Yakshagana festival.

As seen in the previous chapters of this dissertation, institutionalization of the Kuchipudi dance form is a result of the various changes that happened in the socio-political milieu of Andhra Pradesh and their influence on the form through the middle to the last decades of the twentieth century. Be it the pan-Indian Nationalistic movement, the States Reorganization on linguistic basis or the hereditary artistes themselves teaching Kuchipudi dance to the non-hereditary artistes, the form had been impacted by changes on various aspects – from the training to performance to perception of the form.

This conclusion begins where these processes had reached their fruition and had succeeded in establishing institutes, both government aided and otherwise, in various places across the country; and, attempts to understand the ramifications of this institutionalization on the form. Opinions expressed here mostly draw from ethnographic study which were dealt, in detail in the chapters of this work. It attempts to analyse the direction that Kuchipudi has been taking for the last four decades, prior to the establishment of the first institute in the village of Kuchipudi (1957) to the early 1990's, by which time the various academies, institutes, universities that are relevant for this study were in place.

Over the years, apart from government established music and dance colleges and universities, two other schools/institutes that were seen as important to the form have been the Siddhendra Kalakshetra, at Kuchipudi village, and the Kuchipudi Art Academy, at Madras; and, while both were headed by hereditary

Kuchipudi gurus the two academies took very different trajectories. The training imparted at the Siddhendra Kalakshetra, has not deviated much in terms of either form or content from what the founders had introduced.²⁷⁴ They had initiated the training of the solo genre to both, the hereditary and non-hereditary students at the Siddhendra Kalakshetra and left out the training system of the *Yakshagana* genre and its allied subjects. Several students from both the hereditary families and non-hereditary backgrounds studied the Kuchipudi dance form here. Many of the hereditary artistes who are foremost in the world of Kuchipudi today have been initiated into the form at this institute.²⁷⁵ But, post the initial years, very few of the non-hereditary artistes who trained here have come into prominence nor have they impacted the dance form.²⁷⁶

Among the first-generation non-hereditary learners of Kuchipudi dance form a few men joined institutions as teachers, but majority of them became performers. So is the case with the first-generation of women artistes. Though in later times they started institutions, several of them including Yamini Krishnamurti, Uma Rama Rao and her sister Sumathi Kaushal trained students in Bharatanatyam initially and started teaching Kuchipudi, much later. This could probably be because while they were training in Kuchipudi, the form's

²⁷⁴ Vedantam Parvatisam and Vedantam Prahlada Sarma systematised the method of training but not the content. Refer Chapter III for details.

²⁷⁵ For instance, Vedantam Raghava, Vedantam Venkata Nagachalpathi. Refer below for details.

²⁷⁶ Kuchipudi guru and artist Jayarama Rao (pers.comm.) and Lanka Annapurna (pers. comm.) a few exceptions, belong to the first generation of students who trained at Siddhendra Kalakshetra.

teaching pedagogy had not been fully systematized and codified. Also, their initial training and career was in Bharatanatyam, and they learnt Kuchipudi to widen their repertoire.

For institutions like the Kalakshetra at Madras, to continue having a foothold in the dance scene and to have a constant presence, a large part of the credit goes to it having a repertory.²⁷⁷ Similarly, though the Siddhendra Kalakshetra had formed a repertory²⁷⁸ of its own in the initial years, for some unspecified reason, it was later disbanded. The reason for the discontinued repertory could be that there was already another well-known troupe²⁷⁹ in the Kuchipudi village, with Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma as its lead performer, who had by then become very popular for his female impersonation. He was synonymous with Kuchipudi itself in the mid-20th century, and most of the performance opportunities of the *Yakshaganas* went to him and his troupe. Another noteworthy factor was Chinta Krishna Murthy, who was a *Sutradhara* (one who conducts the performances) for both Satyanarayana Sarma's troupe and the Siddhendra Kalakshetra troupe, gave preference to Satyanarayana Sarma's troupe as he was at that time, a star performer of Kuchipudi. The dancers trained at the Siddhendra Kalakshetra used to perform in both these troupes

²⁷⁷ A type of a theatrical presentation in which a company presents several works regularly or in alternate sequence in one season (www.dictionary.com). This is unlike what we understand by repertory, where a person is paid to perform.

²⁷⁸ Kuchipudi guru and artist Jayarama Rao (pers.comm.) and Lanka Annapurna (pers.comm.), mention the existence of a troupe belonging to the Siddhendra Kalakshetra. Both mention participating in its programs.

²⁷⁹ Venkatarama Natya Mandali, Chinta Krishna Murthy was its artistic director and after him Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma took over.

and eventually this could have led to a clash of interests. Other factors, like the growing popularity of the solo and dance drama genre and the decline in the performance opportunities for *Yakshaganas* in the Kuchipudi art form could have also contributed to the closure of the repertory of Siddhendra Kalakshetra. In most of the prestigious platforms across the country and also outside the country, representation of Kuchipudi has been by artistes and academies that were not based in the village of Kuchipudi.²⁸⁰ Even in terms of their presentations, the Siddhendra Kalakshetra chose to restrict itself to the genres and productions of their artistic ancestors, and did not venture into choreographing newer pieces, which in a way is justified for they are the custodians of the art form. Another reason could also be that every hereditary artiste connected with the Siddhendra Kalakshetra, even till today, has a parallel, at times flourishing, performance career, which has nothing to do with his duties as an employee of the Siddhendra Kalakshetra. In other words, his “job” and his “passion to be on stage” were two different streams, albeit parallel.

In contrast to this, the Kuchipudi Art Academy, founded by Vempati Chinna Satyam at Madras, was the place where many innovations and experiments took place in the dance form (refer Jonnalagadda, 1996). Chinna Satyam, who functioned as the founder-head, guru and choreographer of the institution training and creating new works was solely responsible for raising funds

²⁸⁰ Exception was only Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma from the village of Kuchipudi, and nobody else.

required to sustain the institution and his art. Consequently, this need to establish the form and the institution resulted in the emergence of a strong repertoire of solo dance numbers and newer dance dramas from KAA. This brings forth the major differentiating factor between institutions that *have* the support of the government and those that need to *raise* funds in order to function, by showing good work.

An interesting development that one could observe is that the hereditary artistes of the 1970's and 80's, who had trained at Siddhendra Kalakshetra and resided in the Kuchipudi village, while practising and performing *Yakshaganas*, would simultaneously perform in Chinna Satyam's dance dramas. One such artiste is Vedantam Rattayya Sarma, who prolifically participated in the productions of Chinna Satyam²⁸¹ (refer Chapter IV). This brings into view the difference in the views of hereditary artistes and that of non-hereditary artistes, regarding ownership of the form. For artistes like Rattayya Sarma, KAA was only an extension of the art form of his village, while the non-hereditary performers or researchers would never consider the two as parts of the same piece in terms of artistic or representative viewpoints.

The process of imparting training of Kuchipudi dance at institutes by both the hereditary and non-hereditary artistes is another significant aspect of this dance form. Since the inception of the Siddhendra Kalakshetra at the Kuchipudi

²⁸¹ Later, Chinna Satyam trained several young hereditary artistes and gave them opportunities to perform in his productions.

village, the hereditary artistes began teaching/learning there. Most of them associated themselves with the Siddhendra Kalakshetra, right from Vedantam Parvatisam, Chinta Krishna Murthy, Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma, PVG Krishna Sarma, Vedantam Rattayya Sarma, Chinta Ramanadham to its present Principal Vedantam Ramalinga Sastry. Outside the Kuchipudi village it was the KAA which had an overarching presence in the art form. So, for a student of Kuchipudi—hereditary or otherwise – it was institutionalized training that was eventually available rather than a *gurukula* system, even in the village.

In the post 1980's period governmental agencies like the Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA), the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Zonal Committees, which are instrumental in promoting the art forms by giving awards, scholarships and most importantly organizing programmes seem to vacillate and do not have proper procedures to regulate their functioning, as seen in Chapter II. In the initial years of the formation of the State of Andhra Pradesh, there had been academies, such as APSNA which provided grants for building institutions, organizing intra-state programmes and publishing journals like the *Natyakala*. Meanwhile, the Government of Andhra Pradesh abolished the Academies in 1983 and established the Telugu University on the recommendations of the Narla Committee report, in the year 1985 (refer Chapter II). This move to consolidate the cultural and academic activities of the State under one organization, which happens to be a university, has affected

the happenings in the cultural sphere majorly. With diverse responsibilities entrusted on to the Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University, where the role is entirely different from that of the Academies, like promoting performing arts by organizing festivals or publishing standard journals, led to reduced visibility and documentation of Kuchipudi in and around the two Telugu States.

In the 1990's, the central SNA organized *Nrityotsavs* at Hyderabad for promoting the art form and several individuals too promoted it by organizing festivals outside the Telugu speaking regions (refer Chapter IV). But these endeavours seem to die down sooner or later, and the promotion and support that the art form of Kuchipudi received gradually declined. It was again in February 2016 that a documentation of the existing *Yakshaganas* was organized at the Kuchipudi village, mostly owing to the initiative taken up by the team of *Nartanam*, supported by the SNA and the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Attempts such as these are few and far in between, and do not ensure a continuous interaction of the artistes, audiences or scholars, which in certain ways keeps the eco-system of the art alive and dynamic.

Despite this the Government of India and SNA took up to encourage young artistes by awarding the *Bismilla Khan Yuva Puraskars* and to acknowledge the contribution of senior artistes with the Padma awards, but on the whole, governmental support has been neither consistent nor continuous. Thus, it appears that regional nationalism by the Telugus and the Government concerns

while declaring Kuchipudi as a “classical” dance form in 1959, slowly faded away and the onus of sustaining the art was left to the artistes without much support.

In order to succinctly summarise the consequences of this process of institutionalization on this art form, three major classifications may prove helpful. They are elaborated upon below with an attempt to counterpoint the beneficial and negative impacts of the very process of institutionalization on the dance form of Kuchipudi.

Transmutation in the Populace and Perceptions of the Form

In a conscious manner the hereditary artistes of the Kuchipudi village established institutions to train students in the dance form of Kuchipudi, to both the hereditary and non-hereditary aspirants. It is seen in the chapters of this dissertation that the dance form was first propagated by these artistes outside the village by establishing institutes of their own in the urban centres across the combined Telugu States and some outside the State and have been teaching the solo genre of Kuchipudi, mostly to the non-hereditary aspirants. It was only after the form moved to urban centres that it became more widely practised and, more importantly, more inclusive. Though a few non-hereditary artistes did learn the dance at Kuchipudi village it was only after institutes were established in the towns and cities of the Telugu States that there were more aspirants learning the form. Institutionalization, thus, greatly aided in the dance

form being available easily to those aspirants from across the country, belonging to diverse backgrounds, class, caste and gender. Thus, it resulted in the vast “spread” of the form, which was the initial, basic intention for even beginning this process of institutionalization in Kuchipudi.

Nevertheless, to say, a desired consequence of this spread of the form was to place it on par with the other recognised and respected classical dance forms of the country. Thus, it became a part of the celebrated dance forms, along with Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kathakali and Manipuri, which again, was the primary purpose of regional nationalists wanting to engage with the form.

This mushrooming of institutes across the regions created new career avenues for women, who might otherwise not have been financially independent enough, to make a living. This development, whether significant for the art form or not, have proven to be beneficial for the women learners. Those performers presented in the creative and artistic productions of their *guru's*-institutes, gained popularity and enjoyed the privilege of becoming teachers themselves, wherever they settled down. Hence, this training and performing with gurus in turn resulted in carving the career paths of individual students, affording them with the currency to be representatives of their art form – for instance, alumni of the KAA have spread across the world and have established their own institutes.

One of the interesting facts, about the private institutions founded by individual gurus, including the KAA, is that a student remained a student life long, though he/she becomes an independent teacher or an artiste they keep coming back to the *gurus*. In this way we see the traces of the *guru-sishya parampara* continuing. Due to the absence of curriculum-based teaching that leads to a degree (either certificate, diploma etc), there is no stipulated period after which a student graduates and leaves. In other words, a student is never independent of the *guru*, nor is the student's art. Many a times we observe that the students follow the pattern of choreography set by the gurus and hardly engage with experimentation that the *gurus* have done during their own creative productions. Thus, institutionalization has successfully produced dancers to embody their guru's works, but has not enhanced their knowledge enough for them to grow independent. Therefore, it may not be out of place to suggest a relook at the syllabus and training systems that is being followed and modify them to facilitate the growth of independent creative artistes in Kuchipudi.

Transition in the Training Methodologies

As discussed in chapter I of this work, the process of learning and training in Kuchipudi prior to institutionalization occurred in an organic manner taking place in a semi-*gurukula* kind of eco-system in which factors such as timings, syllabus, levels etc. had no place. The progress of an artiste was measured only by the success of his performance, whether in a small or big role.

It is essentially this fluidity of the training that got effected by institutionalization, especially in the village. Measured inputs, targeted training and goalposts to be reached became a part of training in this form now. In order to achieve this, segregated syllabi were prepared for courses that were designed to be completed in a stipulated period of time. At the same time, institutionalization, owing to the same timelines, fixed syllabi and structured formats, has resulted in a huge lacuna for a fitting ambience in which the genre of *Yakshagana* can be trained and learned. The previous era's Kuchipudi, in which training in the art happened through performing the art has been disbanded.

Conversely, the dance form also had benefitted with dancers who are trained in a systematic manner elsewhere and with those who furthered their understanding of the dance form by pursuing research in it. Having a Certificate, Diploma, degree, Post graduate degree and Ph D in Kuchipudi is a possibility now. This has resulted in dancers who can not only dance, but can also think, re-think and analyse various aspects of the form. Hence, institutionalization of Kuchipudi, has led to the form, becoming a part of the academic discourse surrounding art and dance in the country, and has a major presence, especially in the southern part of the country.

Attempt is made to have a homogenised training across institutions, especially after the Teacher Training Workshops conducted by Chinna Satyam, which

successfully displaced any traditional stylizations and repertoire that might have survived till date. These attempts, while successful on certain counts (see below), also created confused trainers in some cases, especially when they were not at all trained by Vempati before or after the workshops. This school of thought to have a uniform style and homogenous repertoire did not really serve well for Kuchipudi, principally for hereditary artistes of the time who had until then not been trained by Vempati.



Source: T. Syamala Sitarama Swami

Figure 5.1: Teacher Training Class of 1984 at Siddhendra Yogi Kalakshetra – Kuchipudi

In the government aided music and dance colleges, the time, in the terms of the number of hours available, is, to simply put, not enough to produce a dancer of minimum calibre. Also here enters the issue of style – a student that has trained in a certain style of Kuchipudi until then, must mould his/her style

according to the teachers' appointed at that institute, and this creates a huge dilemma in the dancer's mind and body about the form itself. From the teacher's perspective, it's extremely difficult to bring students of various styles and levels of skill and grasp to one level and train them all in the same syllabus, year after year. According to Komanduri Seshadri,²⁸² the teachers at the government music and dance colleges, "cannot give personal attention to the students, as the time schedule for each class is not enough – the teacher must teach a beginner, slightly senior and diploma students at the same time. Student does not learn from one teacher. The teacher does not get the opportunity to train the student in their respective styles as it requires a lot of patience and dedication on the part of both the student and the teacher" (Seshadri, pers.comm.).

Those dancers trained for a considerable time under any guru of certain currency and those who underwent the Certificate or Diploma courses, emerged as independent Teachers themselves, setting up institutes on scales ranging from very small to quite significant. However, this has only resulted in propagating the art in terms of quantity – Kuchipudi is practiced by massive numbers today. This, unfortunately, does not do much for the quality of the dance or dancers.

²⁸² Komanduri Seshadri was a lecturer in violin and later appointed as a Principal for many years in the government music and dance colleges in the combined Telugu States.

Transformation in the Content

While *Kalapas* and *Yakshaganas* were the mainstay of Kuchipudi as practiced in the village, to either learn or perform any of them requires hold not just over dance, but also the language, music and other aspects. This makes it extremely difficult to train aspirants from non-hereditary backgrounds, and so, the solo genre – which was brought onto the canvas of Kuchipudi – became the perfect tool to train anyone from any language background. Thus, institutionalization was not only made possible by the introduction of solo genre into Kuchipudi, but this in turn demanded the expansion of the solo repertoire that would create a well-rounded dancer. Thus, came into the Kuchipudi repertoire, the vastness of the compositions of various *Vaggeyakaras*, North Indian saints and a large selection of genres like the *Swarapallavis*, *Padam*, *Javali*, *Ashtapadi*, *Tillanas* etc. Similarly, thematic presentations of a single composer (e.g. *Ramadas Keertanas*, choreographed by Swapna Sundari,) as a full-length production, found their way into smaller productions, which were performed by solo artistes, as well as a group works (e.g. *Jagadanandakaraka* of Shobha Naidu).

While solos taught the language of Kuchipudi to a vast many, the high point of any institution became the dance drama. Most gurus who successfully engaged in teaching, gained recognition through the dance dramas they created. The fact that an institute had a number of well-trained students only helped in presenting these productions. The uniformity in the training that dancers

belonging to one particular school have, enables certain semblance in the performance, thus leading to a visual aesthetic.

Institutionalization also demanded that the movement vocabulary of Kuchipudi – which until then was suited in terms of aesthetics and dynamics for the male body – be widened and altered. This is especially seen in the Vempati school, which developed a very distinctive vocabulary for Kuchipudi. In fact, this emerged as a style that can be embodied by both men and women, as opposed to the earlier style. Not only has Vempati sculpted a dialect for Kuchipudi that would suit the female body and have universal appeal, but he expanded the vocabulary enough for it to cater to the demands of the trends in dance choreography of the time. Thus, both institutionalization and the solo genre, designed to suit both men and women, have mutually helped each other in establishing Kuchipudi as a “classical, dance” form.

The geographic location of an institute also seems to have impacted the course that Kuchipudi has taken over the years. In fact, for the urban based middle-class connoisseurs, the Vempati style became more palatable vis-à-vis the style practiced at the village. An acquaintance, who is a dance aficionado and has been watching dance performances at Hyderabad from the time the state of Andhra Pradesh was formed commented, “I have been attending and observing dance performances for more than fifty years. I recollect, becoming bored by watching the Kuchipudi dancers performing the same dance numbers *sabdas*

and *pravesa daruvus* or *Yakshaganas*, every time. The dancers would change but the dance numbers (repertoire) would be the same when compared to Bharatanatyam. It was only after watching “Girija Kalyanam” a *Yakshaganam* in the Telugu movie *Rahasyam* and the performances of the students of Vempati Chinna Satyam, that I began to appreciate Kuchipudi dance. From skilfully choreographed dances to the songs of the *Vaggeyakaras* and other music composers, combined with well-trained students, classy costumes and jewellery -- all these turned me into an admirer of the ‘Vempati style’ of Kuchipudi. This appreciation led me to encouraging my daughter to train in Kuchipudi dance from a student of Vempati Chinna Satyam.”²⁸³ Thus, KAA, like the other urban based institutions became the destination for aspirants of the form, and the impact of Siddhendra Kalakshetra was restricted to the populace around that geographical location.

Despite these above-mentioned benefits that Kuchipudi’s dance derived from institutionalization, the unseen shadows it slowly but assuredly cast was over the genres of Kuchipudi that originally carried its essence – the *Kalapā*, and the *Yakshagana*. For reasons unknown, the most vibrant genre of the form the *Yakshagana*²⁸⁴-- which encompasses its theatricality, music and characterization

²⁸³ D Kanakadurga, (pers. comm.). She is a Professor of English, and has a daughter who has taken dance as a profession, both artistically and academically.

²⁸⁴ Though a course in *Yakshagana* has been introduced by the Telugu university in the Kuchipudi village and at Hyderabad in the recent times, there does not seem to be much impact of this move on the genre itself.

– teaching could not be successfully translated into the institutionalized system and hence some scholars mourn that the growth of the core performance practice of the form is stunted and probably on the verge of disappearance. This is a fact that's being recognised only now, in hindsight, but wasn't foreseen especially when the dance drama became recognised as the most popular manifestation of Kuchipudi. Efforts are now being made by hereditary artistes to salvage what is left of the genres, but the damage, quite a bit of it, has been done.

As seen in the chapters of this dissertation, Kuchipudi art form's trajectory into the twentieth century was taken forward by its own practitioners, who were progressive and adapted the prevalent cultural practices into their performance which sustained their art and themselves. This adaptable nature of the art form is proving to be both a boon and a bane in the recent times. For instance, in the State of Kerala, which is known to patronize and encourage performing art forms, exists a competitive culture in which Kuchipudi dance is a part. Right from school to college level, the winners of these competitions are given extra credits while applying for professional courses like engineering or medicine. This seems to be the reason for the existence of so many Kuchipudi practitioners in Kerala, as most of the students learning other dance forms like Bharatanatyam and Mohiniattam learn a few Kuchipudi dance numbers²⁸⁵ for

²⁸⁵ Sneha, a fellow research scholar from Kerala while discussing the Kuchipudi teaching/learning eco- system in the State, mentioned that in Kerala dancers want to learn Kuchipudi, as they feel it is an easier style when compared to other dance forms.

participating in these competitions. In these competitions, the students are given limited time to perform and show their virtuosity. Therefore, they include all the aspects of the dance form and as a result Kuchipudi dance ends up looking like a hybrid “jazzy” form. So, the need of the hour is for all the *gurus* and practitioners of the dance form to introspect and draw a frame work or certain realistic parameters for what should be considered as Kuchipudi dance? The art form has spread across the globe through institutionalization and variations of the art form are seen cropping up from different geographical locations. Therefore, it is a boon because it is adaptable but a bane because anything and everything goes in the name of Kuchipudi.

This has resulted in the oft-repeated question, what is Kuchipudi? The aesthetic visual images that are conjured when a dance form is mentioned are so diverse in Kuchipudi, that there exists much confusion with regards to what can be termed Kuchipudi and what cannot be. Practitioners of each style or dialect believe that theirs is the best or the most authentic version, and that the rest do not “feel” as Kuchipudi as they should. While some practitioners are termed “too Bharatanatyam-ish,” some are termed “un-aesthetic.” The wide spectrum of this form, unfortunately, does not seem to have those deeper linking aesthetic principles that other dance forms seem to enjoy. For instance, though Bharatanatyam has many styles within it, there are certain definitive core principles, in terms of the dynamics of body movement, that link them to each other and signify them as Bharatanatyam. Whereas with Kuchipudi, any slight variation in the already existing major stylized movements make the dance

movement look like a non-Kuchipudi one. Hence, the question, what IS Kuchipudi?

Kuchipudi in the Present Times

The bifurcation of the unified State of the Andhra Pradesh into two states, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, has once again brought the politics of patronage of the art form to the fore front. The Andhra Pradesh Government is once again promoting Kuchipudi as the State's dance form at every possible venue and is facilitating the teaching of Kuchipudi dance in its schools by appointing Kuchipudi dance teachers and by encouraging the performances of Kuchipudi dance at State organized events. Again, the effects of this kind of promotion can only be understood in the due course of time.

In the realm of performing arts, institutions are not just a brick and mortar buildings, but are the carriers of the country's inherited traditions, into the future. This being the case the Indian dance forms are still *guru* centric, even today a student of performing arts is asked the name of the *guru* and the school or institute is secondary. In the later years though institutions became popular, they came to be associated with the legacy of a particular *guru* or *bani*. For instance, for learning Kuchipudi dance, the most sought-after institute is the Kuchipudi Art Academy founded by Vempati Chinna Satyam in Madras for it trained in the style popularized by Vempati.

However, the issue of institutionalization is more problematic in the Kuchipudi artform, because of the presence of two extremely diverse kind of people who must function within the world of Kuchipudi together – the hereditary artistes and the non-hereditary artistes. These extremely disparate viewpoints can be seen in the two quotes given at the beginning of this Chapter. While for the non-hereditary artistes an institution becomes a place of learning, of passion, of solace even, for the hereditary ones, it appears to be limiting at best. Except in cases like Chinna Satyam, who made every decision concerning the institute himself, to give the hereditary artistes a structure within which to function – whether in terms of space or time or aesthetics. While for the former (non-hereditary), the art is something precious that they have found, for the latter (the hereditary), the art is something that comes to them as easily as their own flesh and blood.

If the scope and aim of institutionalization of an art form is purely its propagation and dissemination, then this process has been quite successful in the case of Kuchipudi, as seen in the chapters of this dissertation. Though in recent times, it appears that in these institutions a stagnation that is detrimental to the progress of the form has set in, in terms of experiments, innovations and more importantly, the form itself evolving from one phase to another. This may have happened owing to the structural restrictions imposed upon the form in the process of institutionalization.

The dance form of Kuchipudi is once again going through a transition period, with all the major hereditary Kuchipudi *gurus* and artistes of the twentieth and twenty-first century -- Pasumarthy Venu Gopala Krishna Sarma, Vempati Chinna Satyam and Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma -- having passed away. Due to the financial and artistic constraints experienced by the older generation, very few hereditary artistes of the present generation from the Kuchipudi village, have taken up their inherited art form, as a profession.²⁸⁶ One of the few initiatives taken up by the hereditary artistes themselves is forming an organisation called “*Bhagavatha Melam*,” in order to safeguard their artistic inheritance.

In this fluid state of affairs, it is these institutions that are carrying forward the tradition of teaching and propagation of the dance form. As seen in the chapters of this dissertation there are various institutions that are imparting training in the dance form and can be broadly classified into the following categories: 1) Institution established by the hereditary artistes in the village of Kuchipudi – Siddhendra Yogi Kala Peetham at the Kuchipudi village. This institute is now administered by the government of Andhra Pradesh and continues to train students in the traditional style. 2) Private institutes established by hereditary artistes – the Kuchipudi Art Academy at Madras and Kuchipudi Kalakshetra at Visakhapatnam, established by Vempati Chinna Satyam where the Vempati

²⁸⁶ Unfortunately, Vedantam Raghava, has settled down in the United States of America and his brother Venkata Nagachalapathi Rao (who is known for his skilled female impersonation), keeps travelling abroad frequently.

style of Kuchipudi is taught. 3) Private institutes by non-hereditary artistes – institutes like The Kuchipudi Art Academy headed by Shobha Naidu in Hyderabad, Natya Tarangini established by Raja and Radha Reddy in Delhi and Hyderabad, Nartana by Smita Shastri at Ahmedabad and Anjali Centre for Performing Arts founded by Rathnapapa Kumar in Houston USA, to mention a few. All of them train their students in their respective styles and perpetuate the dance form through their performances and teachings. 3) The Government Music and Dance Schools and Colleges – these schools and colleges offer the Certificate and Diploma courses and train in the respective styles of the teachers appointed there and 4) Institutes of Higher Learning – institutes such as the University of Hyderabad and the Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University which offer Post graduate and Doctoral programs to students. Apart from these institutions, for those aspirants in search of original teaching methodology and repertoire, there are a few hereditary gurus and artistes in the village of Kuchipudi, Pasumarthy Rattayya Sarma²⁸⁷ and Vedantam Radheshyam,²⁸⁸ who had trained under the older generation of gurus,²⁸⁹ and are able to train students in the old style. Kuchipudi being an ever-changing and ever-evolving art form is awaiting the next evolution to take it forward by either a hereditary or a non-hereditary artiste.

²⁸⁷ For example, Sreelakshmy Govardhan, comes to Kuchipudi village all the way from Kerala to learn from Rattayya Sarma.

²⁸⁸ Vedantam Radheshyam, who trained under Vempati Chinna Satyam for some time, combines both the styles in his training.

²⁸⁹ Chinta Krishna Murthy, Vedantam Prahlada Sarma, Vedantam Parvatisam and Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma.

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- Manju Bhargavee - Hyderabad, July 15, 2013.
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- Manjula Srinivas - Hyderabad March 2, 2015.
- M Lakshmi Subramaniam - Hyderabad March 03 2015.
- L Vijayalakshmi - Hyderabad, March 12, 2015.
- Prasanna Rani - Hyderabad, March 19, 2015.
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- Pasumarthy Rattayya Sarma - Kuchipudi, September 24, 2015.
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- DSV Sastry - Hyderabad, November 5, 2015
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- Bhagavathula
Yagyanarayana Sarma - Vijayawada, November 17, 2015.
- Pemmaraju Surya Rao - Vijayawada, November 18, 2015.
- Mahankali
Suryanarayana Sarma - Guntur, November 19, 2015.
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Telephonic Communication

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Kuppa Padmaja -- November 20, 2017.

Rajyalakshmi Seth -- September 21, 2018.

Appendix-1

Vempati Chinna Satyam's Available Solo Dance Choreographies

- 1) *Poorva Rangam -- Brahmanjali - BLN Acharya*
- 2) *Jayamu Jayamu Lalita Kala Vaaniki*
- 3) *Athana Jathiswaram*
- 4) *Vasanta Swarajathi*
- 5) *Sivashtakam*
- 6) *Ananda Tandavam*

Sabdhams

- 7) *Krishna*
- 8) *Ramayana*
- 9) *Mandooka*
- 10) *Dasavataram*

Padavarnam

- 11) *Ye Maguva*

Kowthvams

- 12) *Ganesha Kowthvam - Jhem Jhemtaanana – M Balamuralikrishna*
- 13) *Natesa kowthvam*

Pravesa Daruvus

- 14) *Rukmini pravesam*
- 15) *Usha pravesam*
- 16) *Padmavathi pravesam*
- 17) *Lakshmi pravesam*
- 18) *Mohini pravesam*
- 19) *Bhama Pravesa*

Bhamakalapam

20) Madana Daruvu

21) Lekha

22) Sakunalu

Jayadeva's Ashtapadis

23) *Sancharadadhara*

24) *Radhika Krishna*

25) *Pralaya Payodhijale*

26) *Pasyati Disi Disi*

Narayanateertha's Tarangams

27) *Neela megha sarira*

28) *Govardhana giridhara*

29) *Pooraya mamakamam*

Kshetrayya Padams

30) *Evvade vadu –*

31) *Komoro vaaniki*

32) *Dari chuchutunadi*

Dharmapuri Subbaraya Iyer - Javalis

33) *Parulannamata*

34) *Vani pondu chaluwada ne*

35) *Mariyada teliyakane mataladuta tagunatane*

36) *Mogudochi pilichadu*

37) *Etuvanti vade*

38) *Maguvatana*

39) *Vagalaadi*

40) *Aligithey*

41) *Kavalera*

Oottukad Venkata Subrama Iyers Keertanas

- 42) *Brindavana Nilaye*
43) *Marakata Manimayachela*
44) *Madhura Madhura Venugita Mohana*

Stuti's

- 45) *Siva stuti*
46) *Surya stuti*
47) *Kamakshi stuti – kanjadalayathakshi - Muthuswami Dikshitar*
48) *Mahisasura Mardhini*

Annamacharya Keertanas

- 49) *Palukutenela talli*
50) *Okapari okapari*
51) *Muddugare yasoda*
52) *Cheri yasodaku sisu ithadu*
53) *Alamelumanga nee abhinava rupam*
54) *Kulukaga nadavaro komalaaraa*
55) *Singara murithivi*
56) *Paramapurushudu*

Tyagaraja keertanas

- 57) *Jagadananda karaka*
58) *Ksheerasagara sayana*
59) *Tera teeyaga raada*

Vyasathirtha Composition

- 60) *Krishna nee begane baro*

Purandhara Dasa Composition

- 61) *Gajavadana Beduve*

Sadasiva Brahmendra Composition

62) *Narayaneeyam*

Tulasidas Bhajan

63) *Tumaku Tumaku Ramachandra*

64) *Sri Ramachandra Krupalu Bhaja Mana*

Tamil Composition

65) *Yen palli kondiraiyya*

Folk Song

66) *Ravoyi chinnavada*

Tillanas

67) *Hindolam*

68) *Hamsanandi Tillana*

69) *Sankarabharanam Tillana*

Darunu from the Dance Drama Vipranarayana

70) *Vedalera Vayyarulu*

71) *Koluvaitiva Rangasaayee*

Composition from the Dance Drama Menaka Viswamitra

72) *Apsarasalu*

Dance number from Kalidasa's Rithu Sambaram

73) *Sarad Rithu*

Appendix-II

Dance Dramas Choreographed by Vempati Chinna Satyam

1. *Sri Krishna Parijatam* (1959)
2. *Chandalika* (1961)
3. *Ksheerasagara Mathanam* (1962)
4. *Kumarasambhavam-Tamil* (1967)
5. *Vipranarayana* (1969)
6. *Menaka Viswamitra – Sakuntalam* (1971)
7. *Srinivasa Kalyanam -Telugu* (1975)
8. *Rukmini Kalyanam* (1984)
9. *Srinivasa Kalyanam-Tamil* (1985)
10. *Haravilasam* (1988)
11. *Ramayanam* (1991)
12. *Ardhanareeswaram* (1998)
13. *Abhigynana Sakuntalam* (1998)
14. *Sri Pada Parijatam* (2000)
15. *Kiraatarjuneeyam* (2000)
16. *Gopika Krishna* (2004)

Appendix-III

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No. 39.] HYDERABAD, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1985.

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ANDHRA PRADESH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The following Bill was introduced in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly on the 24th September of 1985.

L. A. BILL No. 34 OF 1985.

TELUGU UNIVERSITY BILL.

A Bill to provide for the establishment and Incorporation of a Teaching and affiliating University in the State of Andhra Pradesh for the promotion and advancement of Telugu Language, Literature and Culture.

Be it enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Andhra Pradesh in the Thirty-sixth year of Republic of India as follows:—

CHAPTER-I.

Preliminary

1. (1) This Act may be called the Telugu University Act, 1985.

Short title,
extent and
Commence-
ment.

Appendix-IV

Questionnaire for Dance Teachers

1. Name:
 2. Educational Qualifications:
 3. Date of Birth:
 4. Address:
 5. Name of the Guru(s) :
- Training in Dance:
- i) No. of years (Training period):
 - ii) Details of Performances:
 - iii) Training in other Forms of dance:
6. Training in Music (if any)
 - i) No. of years trained :
7. Name of the Institute:
 - i) Year of Establishment:
 - ii) No. of students trained till date:
 - iii) No. of students training at present:
 - iv) No. of Arangretrams conducted:
 - v) Details of Performances given by the Institution (places):
 - vi) Productions (number, details):
 - vii) No. of students who have received CCRT or HRD Scholarships/Fellowships:

viii) No. of students who have taken Dance as a Profession:

ix) Age profile of students:

Age in Years: 5 - 10 10 – 15 15 – 20 20 – 25

above 25

No. of students:

8. Any other relevant information (kindly provide on a blank paper)

From Informal Gurukulas to Inclusive Institutions: Tracing the Process and Impact of Institutionalization on Kuchipudi Dance

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