



EVOLUTION OF BHARATNATYAM: FROM THE DANCE OF GODS TO THE DANCE OF GLORY

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Abstract: (Eldridge) stated dance to be an ancient and most celebrated culture of India. Folk dances are a part of the entire country. Most of the weddings, festivals and Indian cinema boast of a wide range of dance and music. The real origination of this culture lies in the classical dances of India.

Classical dances of India or Shashtriyā Nritya is an integral part of India's culture and heritage. Most of these dance forms have their origination in temples where it was viewed to be as pious as a prayer. Although all these have originated from different regions yet most of these dances can be traced back to Bharata Muni's "Natya Shastra." With passage of time these dances have been improvised by various artists and dancers. The ultimate goal of any dance form is Rasanubhuti, which talks about the nine moods or rasas. Unlike folk dances, classical dances are about strict rules and technicalities. (Masodkar)

Amongst the different classical dances of India, Bharatnatyam has been quite successful internationally. It has its origins of being a temple dance performed by the Devadasis. The songs which were used were devotional songs where the dancer was the devotee. Also the Nattuvanaras acted as a main leader of the troupe whose work would involve preserving and passing this dance style from one generation to the another generation while the Devadasis would perform it. But it also had to face a lot of struggles during the British colonial times. In spite of the various repercussions, there have been the pillars of Bharatnatyam whose relentless efforts were designed towards winning the battles against the odds for the revival of the art style and transform it into a Dance of Glory.

India is a land of diversity. It has different cultures, religions, dances, music, languages and traditions. The people of India are the representatives of this rich diversity. But a lot of people lack the knowledge of the culture and heritage of India. Majority of the people failed to understand the plight undergone by the Devadasis and the challenges which the pioneers of Bharatnatyam had to undertake for revival and preservation of this dance style.

Hence, the purpose of this research is to understand the relevance of this art form amongst the people of India. Also this study throws light on the plight of the Devadasis during the colonial times and describes their present conditions. This study also highlights the challenges faced by the various pioneers of Bharatnatyam and elaborates their contributions for maintaining the sanity of this beautiful dance style of India.

Index Terms - Bharatnatyam, dance, devadasis, people, India

I. INTRODUCTION

Dance is the rhythm of the universe. It is a cosmic creation that helps an individual to connect with the ultimate divine. There are different styles of dances which represent different countries. One such country which is the land of dance, drama and arts is India. India is the hub of culture, traditions, rituals, heritage and fine arts. Dance in Indian culture holds a very special place in people's heart. Every state of India has its own distinct dance style which it adopts for expressing themselves. According to Hindu mythology, it is worshipped because gods invented dance. It is a form of expression which depicts a variety of feelings and emotions. Dance in India can be categorised as folk and classical dance. Hand gestures, facial expressions and body movements are an important constituent of classical dances of India. Out of all these dance styles, there is one style which is extremely popular and globally recognised. This style is known as Bharatnatyam.

Bharatnatyam is one of the oldest classical dance styles of India. It had its origin in the southern state of India, Tamil Nadu. Lord Shiva, popularly known as "Nataraja" is the God of this dance. It has been derived from Bharata Muni's "Natya Shastra" and encapsulates the Dravidian traditions. There are various dance items in Bharatnatyam which depict various Gods and Goddesses like Shiva – Parvati, Radha – Krishna and so on. Music forms the base of this dance style and various musical instruments are used like violin, veena, tambora, ghatam and so on. It is a culmination of Bhaav, Raag and Taal, hence the name "Bharatanatyam".

It started as a temple dance which was performed by the “servants of God” popularly known as Devadasis. These women used to live in the temples itself and used to do the odd jobs like cleaning and maintaining the temples. They were highly regarded and garnered immense respect from the people. Later during the British colonial times, this system was banned and these Devadasis were forced to leave the temples and look out for alternative sources of income in the form of begging, prostitution, physical abuse, etc. But the relentless efforts undertaken by the Gurus of Bharatnatyam like Rukmini Devi, Balasaraswati, played a crucial role in reinstating this dance style. They fought against all odds in order to maintain the sanctity and purity of this dance style. Today Bharatnatyam has created a global presence. It has become an immensely popular dance style. The costumes, make up and jewellery has drawn a lot of attention. Although the dance has gained immense recognition yet maintaining the richness and grandeur of this dance among the people of India is challenging. Various initiatives and efforts need to be taken to preserve this art form. Also the people of India should take conscious efforts in maintaining the culture and art of the country. Also they should encourage others for upliftment and development of this dance style by removing all the social taboos attached to it. Due emphasis should be given on bringing out the goodness of this beautiful style which India is blessed with thereby maintaining the international stance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bharatnatyam is one of the most practised dance styles of India. Apart from being a popular dance form of India it has been successful in creating a global presence. Be it the costumes or the different hand gestures, this dance style has been grabbing the eyeballs of the people all around the country since time immemorial. Studies have also explored areas where the political organization has been influencing such dance practices.

(Meduri, 2004) explained the global presence of Bharatnatyam just like Ballet. It has been researched in many western universities and institutions around the globe. International conferences and various dance studies program had assumed a leadership and an important position, thereby leading to the birth of a new profile for dance. The costumes in this dance form are made of fine fabric with zari work and colours embroidered on the sari which drew universal attention. The West had been encouraging the Indian culture to get connected with the foreign soil which led to a large scale demand in the international markets. (Cultural Connections). (David, 2009) explored the growth of Bharatnatyam performances in British Tamil temples which also answered the questions relating to the presence of Tamil diaspora, whether the dance performances were linked to the temple dancers and the perceptions of the people regarding the dance performances. It also discussed whether there was a presence of a political organization which influences the temple practices. Indian Bollywood movies, yoga and Indian cuisine were popular but Classical Indian Dance had attracted the youth from China. Efforts have been made to pass this art form from one generation to another. (World News, 2007)

Studies have not only explained the global presence but also depicted the culmination of Bharatnatyam with different forms of recreation like yoga, martial arts, painting, sculpting, etc. (Education, 2015) considered Bharatnatyam to be the mother art of classical dance form. The formats of Bharatnatyam included dance items like Alarippu, Jathi Swaram, Shabdham, Varnam, Padams, Javalis and so on which had been evoking several other forms like painting and sculpting. (Jayakrishnan, 2010) conducted a study to reinstate the role of architecture as a cultural connection thereby rebuilding the fragmented dance community and identity. The dance and the dancer have been depicted as a medium of divine invocation in an architectural setting. The evolution of contemporary culture to an icon of nationalism provided the base of architecture. (Katrak, 2013) explained the emergence of a new concept of dance which is a culmination of Indian Classical Dance and other movement techniques like yoga, martial arts and so on. This was termed as Contemporary Indian Dance. It further gave a brief of the history of revival of Bharatnatyam and discusses the contribution of pioneers, redefining the usage of Indian Goddesses and their stories and undermining the stereotypes related to gender, culture and so on in Contemporary Indian Dance.

But the most important aspect of this dance style lies in its origination. This dance was known as Sadir Natyam or Dasi Natyam. The dance was passed on from one generation to another by Devadasis meaning “Servants of Gods”. Over the years, these temple dancers have lost their status and position and have been exposed to several forms of exploitation. (Ruchika, 2019) discussed the emergence and evolution of the various studies conducted on dance. It also discusses the factors that led to this evolution. Dance traditions are understood through sociological analyses. It elaborates the interactions of dance with other structures like religion, gender, caste and creed. (Nirupa, 2020) elaborated that Bharatnatyam was cultivated in the temples of India. It was then documented as a performing art in 19th century by four brothers known as “Tanjore Quartlet”. It explained the transfer of this dance from one generation to another under the Devadasi system. It also discussed the emergence of this dance style in the 20th century. It outlined the history of Bharatnatyam.

(Torri, 2009) explored the origin of devadasi system and its evolution. It analysed the social status and economic condition of the devadasis and also answered why girls are drawn to this system. The study examined the emergence of gender, caste and violence. The emblematic significance of the devadasis depends upon the gendering and sexualising of rank relations of control and subjection. (Dalrymple, 2008) focussed on the past and present condition of the Devadasis. During the Middle Ages, devadasis were from the grandest families like princesses and slaves which were captured during war. Many were literate and poets. But looking at present, the devadasis belong to the extremely lower castes like “Dalit Madar” and are illiterate. (Orchard, 2007) introduced the ill-effects of the Devadasi system. It is an alternate form of child prostitution. Demonstration of the practice to be culturally, economically and socially rooted in the rural regions of South India forms a part of the paper. This affects the girls as they grow in a particular environment. Complex forces that impact child prostitution and factors that affect the girl’s ideologies and thoughts are dealt in this study.

Many states have abolished the Devadasis system; the practice is still prevalent in disguise. There is a gap between the official statistics and the harsh reality. The study conducted proposed a combination of descriptive and evaluative study to examine this practice in the state of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and so on. It also focused on the evils namely prostitution and begging. (Dr. V. BHARATHI HARISHANKAR, 2015 - 2016). (Rao, 2018) stated Bharatanatyam fell into Oblivion during the British Raj, just like other Indian methods. The shades of malice of the Hindu beliefs were celebrated unnecessarily like the Sati framework, the devadasi framework, the rank framework, the way of life and conventions, untouchability and yoga. Bharatanatyam was mis-comprehended as “Nautch,” performed by the debased class. The vast majority of them were embarrassed about their own strict presence. (Rajan, 2020) explained the presence of caste and class as a criterion for imparting knowledge regarding the dance field. The access to this form was given only to the privileged dancers. This type of

alignment is prevalent till today which determine the selection procedure for dance festivals, awards and shows. (Puri, 2015) examined the moral boundaries on a female in India. It focussed on the legal and moral interventions in dance. Dancers have to undergo lack of clarity. An overview of the history of devadasis has been provided. Insights with regards to the revival of the dance form are given. Research is primarily focussed on 17th century temple women in Tamil Nadu. The second section was based on fieldwork to observe how ethical limits of the move are haggled through stage practice, individual accounts and dreams identifying with issues of gender, religion and economy.

Exploitation of the Devadasis has been predominant. But there have been people who have played a predominant role in reviving this dance style and maintaining its purity and sanctity. Studies conducted have spoken about the revival of this art form and the challenges faced during this tedious process. Also preservation of this dance style through digitalization has been discussed.

Cultural heritage is preserved in the form of digitized records. It is recorded in a multimedia format by using Multimedia Web Ontology Language (MOWL). The study proposes a framework based on an ontology approach which would lead to formation of a cultural heritage repository with access to huge collection of videos (Anupama Mallik, 2011). (Aparna Mohanty P. V., 2016) explained the usage of machine learning in order to aid people in understanding the movements of the dancer. It proposed algorithms in understanding the bodily movements and gestures of the dancer. Also a convolutional neural network is proposed which is to be tested on standard data. (Aparna Mohanty, 2018) attempted to understand Navarasas. Understanding these emotions from images or videos has been a difficult task. In order to address this problem a dataset consisting of emotions expressed in classical dance with detailed information collected by Microsoft Kinect sensor and usage of convolutional neural network to understand the meaning of the Navarasas.

Research conducted has spoken about the benefits derived by practising this dance form. (Chatterjee, 2013) described dance as an active form of exercise which had deep impact on physical, emotional and mental health. It is considered to have some therapeutic effects on the body. Ayurveda considers dance to have healing powers. In India, the therapists have started modifying the steps according to the need. (Chatterjee Surjani, 2017) explained the effectiveness of Bharatnatyam in providing a good body composition. The research is conducted to understand its effect on the cognitive abilities and postural balance in adult female dancers. Cognitive performance and motor analysis was carried out. It was concluded that bharatnatyam helps in maintaining balance and cognitive ability. (Shankarashis Mukherjee, 2014) conducted a study on female individuals who received formal training in the dance form and children with different socio economic background who did not practise any regular activity to understand the impact of Bharatnatyam on the body composition. It was concluded that the dance form has a considerable impact on reducing obesity. (Ghosh, 2015) conducted a study with the main objective of comparing the motor ability between Bharatnatyam dancers and professional gymnasts in West Bengal. Results showed a slight difference in all criteria except for agility. It concluded that the cardiovascular endurance and speed in dancers was more than the gymnasts.

Also comparisons with other dance styles have been predominant. (Varghese, 2010) believed dancers possess different skill sets that is highly dependent on the discipline. The study was done to draw a comparison of static and dynamic balance in freestyle and Bharatnatyam dancers. It was concluded that both the styles did not differ in BESS and SEBT. Analysis of data took place with the help of Mann Whitney-U-Test and the Wilcoxon signed rank test.

Emphasis has been given on only the production and interpretation of this style within Chennai, India. But not much has been discussed about the relevance of this dance style amongst the people of India. (Pillai, 2002) studied that dance studies had focussed on celebrations, historical cultural exchanges and reincarnation of dance moves to be the toughness of a culture. But actually it normalizes globalization. It demonstrated that globalization of these local traditions does not strengthen the new practices. Hence it focuses on the production and interpretation of Bharatnatyam in its home country i.e. India, without exploring the outside world.

Tabular Format of Review Literature:

Sr.No.	Author(s)	Title	Journal/Report/Website/ Other	Volume (Issue)	Page No.	Findings
1	Meduri, Avanthi	Bharatanatyam as a Global Dance: Some Issues in Research, Teaching, and Practice.	Dance Research Journal	36(2)	11-29	Global Presence, various conferences and dance studies conducted.
2	Pillai, Shanti	Rethinking Global Indian Dance through Local Eyes: The Contemporary Bharatanatyam Scene in Chennai.	Dance Research Journal	34(2)	14-29	Focussed on production and interpretation in India only.
3	David, Ann R.	Religious Dogma or Political Agenda? Bharatanatyam and its Re-emergence in British	Journal for the Anthropological Study of Human Movement		1-13	Growth of Bharatnatyam performances in British Tamil temples.
4	Cultural Connections	Bharatnatyam	Utsavpedia	-	-	Demand in international markets because of costumes.
5	Education	Bharatnatyam : Know	India Today	-	-	Dance lead to

		more about the most popular dance form of South India				formation of other art forms.
6	Katrak, Ketu H.	Innovations in Contemporary Indian Dance: From Religious and Mythological Roots in Classical Bharatanatyam.	Religion Compass	7(2)	47-58	Explained the emergence of Contemporary Indian Dance.
7	Nirupa, V.	Metamorphosis Of Bharathanatyam: From Temple to a Transnational Art.	Journal of Interdisciplinary Cycle Research	12(2)	928	Outlined the history of Bharatnatyam.
8	Puri, Stine Simonsen	Dancing Through Laws: A History of Legal and Moral	Nordic Journal of Law and Social Research	(6)	131-148	Moral boundaries, legal interventions in dance.
9	Orchard, Treena Rae	Girl, woman, lover, mother: Towards a new understanding of child prostitution among young Devadasis in rural Karnataka, India	Social Science & Medicine	64(12)	2379-2390	Devadasi system is an form of child prostitution.
10	Torri, Maria Costanza	Abuse of Lower Castes in South India: The Institution of Devadasi	Journal of International Women's Studies	11(2)	31	Origin of devadasi system and its evolution
11	Dr. V. Bharathi Harishankar, Dr. M. Priyamvadh	Exploitation of Women as Devadasis and its Associated Evils	University of Madras	-	1	Examined the Devadasi practice in various states.
12	Dalrymple, William	Serving the Goddess	-	-	-	Focussed only on the history of Devadasis.
13	Rajan, Anjana	Entertainment	The Hindu	-	-	Focussed on class and caste for imparting knowledge.
14	Rao, Bindu S.	Growth of Bharatanatyam During The Anti-Nautch Movement of Colonial Era, Through The Famous Gurus & Their Banis.	IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science	23(5)	43-51	British influence led to downfall of Bharatnatyam.
15	Anupama Mallik, Santanu Chaudhary, Hiranmay Ghosh	Nrityakosha: Preserving the intangible heritage of Indian classical dance	Journal on Computing and Cultural Heritage	4(3)	-	Formation of a cultural heritage repository for dance.
16	Aparna Mohanty, Pratik Vaishnavi, Prerana Jana, Anubhab Majumdar, Alfaz Ahmed, Trishita Goswami, Rajiv R.Sahay	Nrityabodha: Towards understanding Indian classical dance using a deep learning approach	Signal Processing: Image Communication	47	529-548	Machine learning to understand the movements of the dancer.
17	Aparna Mohanty, Rajiv	Rasabodha: Understanding	Pattern Recognition	79	97-113	Usage of convolutional

	R.Sahay	Indian classical dance by recognizing emotions using deep learning				neural network to understand Navarasas.
18	Chatterjee, A.	The therapeutic value of indian classical, folk and innovative dance forms	Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities	5(1)	75-83	Therapeutic effects of dance on the body.
19	Ruchika, Ranwa	Evolution of Studies on Dance: On the Sidelines	Research Review International Journal of Multidisciplinary	4(3)	935	Birth of the various studies conducted on dance.
20	Varghese, Denita	Comparison of static and dynamic balance between bharatnatyam dancers and freestyle dancers	Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Karnataka	-	-	Comparison of balance in freestyle and Bharatnatyam dancers.
21	Jayakrishnan, Kavitha	Dancing Architecture: The parallel evolution of Bharatanatyam and South Indian Architecture	UWSpace	-	-	Role of architecture in rebuilding the dance form.
22	Chatterjee Surjani, Banerjee Neepa, Chatterjee Sandipan, Bhattacharjee Satabdi, Banerjee Debamalya, Mukherjee Shankarashis	Effects of Bharatnatyam Dancing on the Cognitive Ability of Adult Bengalee Females	Ergonomics in Caring for People	-	313-319	Bharatnatyam is effective in providing a body composition.
23	Shankarashis Mukherjee, Neepa Banerjee, Surjani Chatterjee, Sandipan Chatterjee, Ayan Chatterjee, Tanya Santra, Bijan Saha	Effect of Bharatnatyam Dancing on Body Composition of Bengalee Female Children	American Journal of Sports Science and Medicine	2(1)	56-59	Bharatnatyam helps to reduce obesity.
24	World News	Bharatnatyam popular among Chinese youth	The Times of India	-	-	Classical Indian dances popularity among the Chinese youth.
25	Ghosh, Dr. Sandip Sankar	A Comparative Study on Motor Ability between Bharatnatyam Dancers and Gymnasts of West Bengal	International Journal of Sports and Physical Education	1(2)	1-4	Comparing the motor ability between dancers and gymnasts.

III. RESEARCH GAP

Bharatnatyam is one of the oldest forms of classical dance in India. Its history and revival is of crucial importance. Research conducted describes the influence of temples and architecture on revival of the dance form. Less emphasis has been given on the pioneers of Bharatnatyam and the various challenges faced by them for keeping this art form alive. Also the downfall of the Devadasis system and its negative connotations in the form of child prostitution, begging, etc. has been discussed. But very little focus is given on understanding the plight of these temple dancers who were known for their service and devotion towards God.

Some studies conducted show the impact of Bharatnatyam on physical, emotional and mental health of the people whereas some studies spell its global presence. But not much is spoken about its relevance and presence in today's world.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the plight and the trauma faced by the Devadasis.
2. To analyse the challenges involved and the contribution of the pioneers of Bharatnatyam in its revival.
3. To analyse the relevance of this dance form in today's world among the people of India.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for this research study involves primary and secondary sources of data.

Secondary sources consisted of research that is exploratory in nature. The research design consists of understanding the plight of the Devadasis and the challenges faced by the pioneers for the revival of Bharatnatyam. The sources of data included electronic sources and journal articles.

Devadasi system is an ancient religious practice prevalent in India. This process involves girls who belong to the lower classes of the social strata are given off to temples as human offerings in order to appease the Gods. But the reality lies that they are sexually exploited and are forbidden from marrying any other man. They also have to earn their bread and butter by begging on the streets of the country. (India, 2014)

(Chronicle, 2017) had described the origination of the Devadasi tradition during the Cholas, the Chelas and the Pandyas times. They lived in temples and were well versed in dance and music. But coming back to the 21st century they were nothing more than just prostitutes or sex traders.

A report by the National Human Rights Commission of the Government of India speaks about the presence of the Devadasi system till today in spite of being declared illegal by the Government of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The districts which are bordering Maharashtra and Karnataka are known as "Devadasi Belt" where trafficking operates mainly due to women being deserted by their husbands or through coercion and deception. (Service, 2019)

One of the biggest hurdles in removal of the system is lack of accurate data. A report submitted by Sampark to the International Labour Organization estimated that there are around 450000 devadasis present over the country. The plight faced by them is traumatic. They are deprived the right to education and face social stigma from others. The trauma increases with age and they are left with no work and extreme poverty in their old age. This extends to their children who face discrimination and are denied rights and privileges that other kids get. The health, education and mental development of the child is at a considerable risk. The daughters in particular are deprived of job opportunities and education and are expected to carry forward their mother's duties, thereby, living a life of isolation and traumatization. (Jayna Kothari, 2019)

(Iyer, 2016) further explained finding a livelihood is a laborious task for devadasis since majority of them are unskilled. None of them held any kind of property or have worked on any land. The daily wage laborers prefer couples because it is convenient and cheaper. No one hires the Devadasi since they do not have partners. Some of them pose as a team for jobs yet they can hardly meet their ends. Young girls are forced to dance at weddings.

The plight and trauma undergone by the Devadasi is unimaginable. (Kidron, 2011) elaborated the situation of these Devadasi changed as the tradition was banned in the year 1988 and the temples started distancing them after seeing their plight and trauma. These changes occurred during the colonial times. Few academicians feel the presence of British curbed the influence of the kings and the temple patrons.

In spite of these challenges and hurdles, there have been many patrons in the field of Bharatnatyam. They have been pioneers in uplifting the beauty and purity of this art style whose struggles played a pivotal role in revival of Bharatnatyam.

(Katrak, 2011) described the history of revival of this art form from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century. Various nationalists and revivalists wanted to redefine this dance form into a respectable art form. Nationalists renamed "sadir" or "dasiattam" into Bharatnatyam that translates into the dance of India.

(Nirupa, 2020) described all the pioneers of Bharatnatyam. E. Krishna Iyer, a lawyer and freedom fighter, broke the notion attached with dance by performing in female costume and campaigned to raise public interest. He set up a platform for Devadasi to perform in public. This art form also attracted girls of the Brahmin families like Kalanidhi Narayanan and Rukmini Devi. Rukmini Devi emphasized on the spiritual aspect of Bharatnatyam. She played a predominant role and changed the costume styles, stage settings, musical and thematic contents. Her efforts were well appreciated by the orthodox Madras community. Another pioneer was Balasaraswati who stuck to her Devadasi lineage and did not believe in reforms and soon achieved immense fame and success. Other dancers and gurus like Dr Padma Subramanyam and Dr Vyjayanthimala Bali retained the sanctity and purity of dance by carrying it to the next pedestal.

The challenges were real and practical. These patrons have been significant in making Bharatnatyam a popular dance style all over the world. Yet nothing much has been discussed about the relevance of this style among the people of India. Primary Data for the same was collected. The type of research was descriptive in nature. The research design consists of understanding the relevance of this dance form in today's world was collected by primary data. The population included the people of India with different age groups. Simple random sampling technique was used to get the desired sample size. Ordinal and Nominal scales have been used to analyse the knowledge level of the respondents with respect to the subject matter. The instrument used for collection of data is a Questionnaire and PSPP has been used to analyse the relevance of this dance in today's time. The sample size was 459 respondents. Different variables like age, training received in classical dance, number of classical dances in India, how people view Bharatnatyam as; a recreational activity and fitness activity, the presence of this dance form in today's times and inclination of the people to learn this dance form was tabulated and analysed.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS

Age					
Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0	221	48.15	48.15	48.15
	1	36	7.84	7.84	55.99
	2	32	6.97	6.97	62.96
	3	54	11.76	11.76	74.73
	4	116	25.27	25.27	100.00
Total		459	100.0	100.0	

Age		
N	Valid	Missing
	459	0
Mean	1.58	
Std Dev	1.72	
Minimum	.00	
Maximum	4.00	

Figure 1 Age

The value 0 represents the age group of the respondents ranging from 18 to 24 years. The value 1 represents the range from 25 to 31 years. The value 2 represents the range from 32 to 38 years. The value 3 represents 39 to 45 years and the value 4 represents more than 45 years.

Dancer					
Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0	54	11.76	11.76	11.76
	1	405	88.24	88.24	100.00
Total		459	100.0	100.0	

Dancer		
N	Valid	Missing
	459	0
Mean	.88	
Std Dev	.32	
Minimum	.00	
Maximum	1.00	

Figure 2 Are you a trained classical dancer?

The value 0 represents the answer yes to the question and the value 1 represents the answer no to the question. Out of 459 respondents only 54 respondents are trained classical dancers. Rest 405 are not trained in any classical dance styles.

NumberofDance					
Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0	23	5.01	5.01	5.01
	1	143	31.15	31.15	36.17
	2	58	12.64	12.64	48.80
	3	121	26.36	26.36	75.16
	4	114	24.84	24.84	100.00
Total		459	100.0	100.0	

NumberofDance		
N	Valid	Missing
	459	0
Mean	2.35	
Std Dev	1.28	
Minimum	.00	
Maximum	4.00	

Figure 3 Number of Classical Dances in India

The value 0 represents the number of classical dances in India ranging from 1 to 4. The value 1 represents the range from 5 to 8. The value 2 represents the range from 9 to 12. The value 3 represents more than 12 classical dances. And the value 4 represents I do not know. Out of 459 respondents, 68.8% of the respondents probably did not know the exact number of classical dances of India.

ViewRecreation					
Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0	399	86.93	86.93	86.93
	1	60	13.07	13.07	100.00
Total		459	100.0	100.0	

ViewRecreation		
N	Valid	Missing
	459	0
Mean	.13	
Std Dev	.34	
Minimum	.00	
Maximum	1.00	

Figure 4 Do you view Bharatnatyam as a recreational activity?

The value 0 represents the answer no to the question and the value 1 represents the answer yes to the question. Only 13.07% of the respondents view Bharatnatyam as a recreational activity whereas the majority of the respondents which amount to 86.93% of the total do not view it to be a recreational activity.

ViewFitness					
Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0	402	87.58	87.58	87.58
	1	57	12.42	12.42	100.00
Total		459	100.0	100.0	

ViewFitness		
N	Valid	459
	Missing	0
Mean		.12
Std Dev		.33
Minimum		.00
Maximum		1.00

Figure 5 Do you view Bharatnatyam as a fitness activity?

The value 0 represents the answer no to the question and the value 1 represents the answer yes to the question. Only 12.42% of the respondents view Bharatnatyam as a fitness activity whereas the majority of the respondents which amount to 87.58% of the total do not view it to be a fitness activity.

Presence					
Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0	72	15.69	15.69	15.69
	1	216	47.06	47.06	62.75
	2	70	15.25	15.25	78.00
	3	94	20.48	20.48	98.47
	4	7	1.53	1.53	100.00
Total		459	100.0	100.0	

Presence		
N	Valid	459
	Missing	0
Mean		1.45
Std Dev		1.03
Minimum		.00
Maximum		4.00

Figure 6 Do you agree that classical dances are losing their presence in India?

The value 0 represents respondents had neutral thoughts to the question. The value 1 represents respondents agree with the question. The value 2 represents the respondents disagree with the question. The value 3 represents the respondents strongly agree with the above question and the value 4 represents the respondents strongly disagree with the above question. Only 70 respondents disagree with the question whereas 216 respondents agree that classical dances are losing their presence in India.

Learn					
Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0	142	30.94	30.94	30.94
	1	200	43.57	43.57	74.51
	2	117	25.49	25.49	100.00
Total		459	100.0	100.0	

Learn		
N	Valid	459
	Missing	0
Mean		.95
Std Dev		.75
Minimum		.00
Maximum		2.00

Figure 7 Given a choice would you like to learn Bharatnatyam?

The value 0 represents respondents would maybe learn the dance style. The value 1 represents respondents would learn the dance style and the value 2 represents the respondents do not want to learn the dance style. Out of 459 respondents only 200 respondents would like to learn Bharatnatyam whereas 117 respondents are not keen to learn Bharatnatyam.

VII. DISCUSSIONS

The sample size of 459 respondents consisted of 161 males, 291 females and 7 preferred to not disclose their gender. They belonged to different age groups and different strata of society.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Bharatnatyam is one of the most beautiful dance forms of India. It is India's representation globally. It has a deep and an interesting history to discuss about. Right from being a temple dance to being one of the most popular dances, it is a legacy in itself. This ancient dance style was earlier restricted to temples and were performed by the temple dancers also known as Devadasis. During the older times, being born in a Devadasi household was considered to be a blessing of God but the British colonial times, tarnished the image of these dancers who were then reduced to mere prostitutes and were subject to filth and dirt. Also various studies has been conducted that would highlight the pathetic conditions of these once renowned Devadasis. This dance style had seen its fair share of success and struggle. It was also banned during the colonial times, yet there had been many pioneers who have not given in to the oppression of the British. These frontiers had led to revival and rebirth of Bharatnatyam, turning it into the Dance of Glory.

The contributions of these Devadasis and revivalists should be made aware to the people of India who lack a clear understanding about the subject matter. The study conducted highlighted the relevance of this dance among the people of India and it was quite appalling to study the results. More than 60% of the people are not trained classical dancers. Also they lack the basic knowledge

of the number of classical dances in the country. The study also highlighted many people viewed it to be a recreational, fitness or a spiritual activity but if given a choice to learn this dance style only 43% of the respondents readily agreed to learn this art style. Ironically, more than 50% of the respondents do agree that classical dances are losing their presence in India. Studies have been conducted to understand the presence of this style internationally but not much has been spoken about its hold in the country. Hence this study played an important role by being an eye opener and highlighted the presence of Bharatnatyam in the country itself. Various factors like popularization of Western practices and the drive towards modernization is leading to the decline of the age old art forms of India, Bharatnatyam being one such art form which was earlier revered and worshipped. Various steps in the form of advertising, mass media and so on should be taken not only by the government but also by the people of the country which would be then passed on to one generation to generation, inspiring them to stick to their roots but at the same time not isolate themselves from the changing times in order to be up to date. These steps would be predominant in keeping the culture, heritage and art forms of India alive and intact.

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