

TRADITION, MODERNITY, AND THE DIGITAL PRESERVATION OF INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT: THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS DANCE IN CULTURAL HERITAGE, IDENTITY, AND BELONGING

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Abstract

Culture evaluation involves evaluating people's adoption, acceptance, and response to society. The country's multicultural society is reflected in the Indian culture and tradition. The idea that indigenous arts and performance can express and preserve traditional culture in India has received very little research. Studying indigenous arts in India that express Indian identities is necessary for the field of research. The study aims to contribute to the formation of indigenous arts by focusing on indigenous dance forms in India, which help preserve the identities of Indian culture and tradition. The researcher has chosen the qualitative research approach to study the chosen topics because it suits the research objectives and aims.

As explored in this article, traditional dance forms in India play a crucial role in protecting and maintaining India's cultural identities. The research suggests methods to safeguard the traditional dance form for current and future generations. Generations pass along elaborate techniques and cultural values associated with dance forms with peculiar features. Indigenous dance reflects the various cultural traditions, geographical distinctions, state variations, and art traditions in those territories. The present generation can strengthen cultural connections in their territory by practicing the indigenous Indian dance styles. According to cultural heritage theory, traditional dance contributes to safeguard and express cultural identities, customs, values, and traditions through a powerful and influential weapon. The continual existence and practice of traditional dance forms would help maintain the rich cultural heritage of India.

Keywords: *Indigenous, Dances, Culture, Tradition, and Heritage*

Objectives

The present study explores the idea that indigenous arts and performances of India are unique and express the identities of Indian tradition and culture. The present research article focuses on cultural heritage theory to explore the idea that Indian culture and identity are preserved through preserving the traditional dance forms. The study aims to contribute to the idea of how Indigenous art forms, narrowed down to the Indigenous dance forms of India help preserve the identities of Indian culture and tradition.

Hypothesis

The significance of indigenous performances or arts in maintaining and promoting Indian customs is examined in this study. There is breadth in traditional art forms; however, there is little to no attention given to their research concerning the maintenance of cultural heritage. The primary inquiry of this study is: In what way do indigenous arts and performance facilitate the preservation and expression of identity in India? To answer the inquiry, the working hypothesis is formulated that indigenous arts and performances have a very critical importance in the protection and expression of ethnical identity in India. These provided arguments will aid scholars of culture, preservationist groups, and

communities striving to uphold and maintain these indigenous heritage traditions

Methodology

The researcher has chosen a qualitative research approach to study the selected topics, which is suitable for achieving the research's aim and objectives.

Culture

Pal in his article "Art as a Preservation of Cultural Identity" mentions They are becoming increasingly valuable in an ever-modernizing society. As civilization reaches its pinnacle, mankind has never been more connected. Although this has been advantageous for human beings due to the fast-paced growth that a globalized society has fostered, it exposes the threat of individuals losing a feeling of cultural identity more prominently than ever before, as cultures are continually proliferating and evolving. Art is vital in retaining a cultural identity for civilizations in societies. In India, there are numerous Indian art forms—dance, music, painting, and architecture—each representing a diverse spectrum of unique cultural traditions formed over hundreds of years. Art not only serves as a means for artistic expression, but it also increases awareness and unifies communities, as well as preserving Indian cultural identity.

The development of human beings and the consistent adoption of certain habits create culture and tradition. The evaluation of culture can be defined as the adoption of people, their acceptance, and their response towards society. This gradual process and progress of human society with various complexities and complications lead to the elaboration of culture. The everyday life of the people with numerous customs, practices, beliefs, expressions, and traditions makes the culture of the particular society. "Cultural identification generally refers to how people identify themselves in comparison to the cultural groups to which they belong." (Menon). Even the natural environment contributes to making the culture of the society. The flora and fauna, the habitat of the circumstances, contribute to defining the identity and originality of the people. Culture is not stable or unchangeable, culture has been modified for centuries as per the development of society and time.

Culture of India

India is known for its unity in diversity and has numerous socioeconomic values. India is a country that has various geographical conditions with different social hierarchies and complex groups of people. Indian people have diverse regional traditional customs, different linguistic values, and

religious beliefs using which people emerged as a cultural identity of themselves. The Indian culture and tradition reflect the country's multicultural society. The uniqueness of Indian culture can be realized in the diversity of its culture and this is how India stands out from the rest of the countries all around the world.

Arts have a prominent role in creating the tradition and culture of India. Numerous art forms are unavoidable and unpreventable parts of the everyday life of Indians. Various art forms like singing songs, performing drama, narrating stories, and dancing are used for the transfer of knowledge and passing information. Art forms are also used to express emotions in both positive and negative forms. The central goal of performing arts is to make the audience experience their consciousness and assess and estimate the religious values that are fundamentally built into them. There are kinds of arts such as performing arts, applied arts, and visual arts. The art forms such as dance, drama and music come under performing arts. Arts such as painting, photography and sculptures come under the visual arts. The art forms which have entertaining and amusing elements such as pottery, interior decoration, and other arts where the purpose is to beautify the objects come under the applied arts. From the above-discussed kinds of arts, the present article focuses on India's performing arts,

particularly its ancient folk styles, along with their uniqueness. The article explores the significance of the Ancient Indian dance customs play a significant role in protecting, maintaining the cultural identities of India. The research proposes techniques to conserve old dance styles for the present generations to future generations to be utilized.

Indian Dance Forms and Preservation of Cultural Identity

Indian dance genres serve an important part in conserving heritage. Indian ancestral dancing styles are important for preserving and expressing state identities. Menon in an article entitled "Indian Ancient Performance with the growth of Ethnic Identification in the Indian Migration," states,

According to research, being involved in classical Indian dance helps immigrant children develop their sense of cultural self. These findings highlight the close connection between involvement in traditional Indian dance forms, which are firmly ingrained in India's cultural legacy, and the reinforcement of cultural identity among Indian diaspora members. Such engagement not only develops a sense of belonging, but it also helps to preserve cultural continuity throughout generations. The traditional styles of dance are Cuttack, Sadiraattam, Kuchipudi, Odhra Magadha,

Mohiniattam, Manipuri, Sattriya, and Kathakali, have an essential heritage value and add indispensable value to Indian tradition. Sacred heritage folk styles consist of two main parts. . The one is loose which means grace, dramatic action, and expression. A special feature of feminine is expressed through lasya. Tandava is another element of Indian classical dance that emphasizes the focus on rhythm and movement. It represents the male perspective of a dance.

Bharatanatyam

Bharatanatyam originated in Tamilnadu and emerged more than 2000 years ago. Traditionally, female Temple dancers had the privilege of performing Bharatanatyam. The traditional dress of Bharatanatyam dancers is silk sarees with gold zari designs. This dance is known for its entangled footwork, passionate facial expressions, and eloquent demonstrative hand gestures. It is a devotional dance form incorporating Hindu tradition and mythology.

...Sadiraattam, 'Katha, Kuchilapuri, Jagoi, Mohini Attam, Odhra Magadha, Sattriya Nritya, and Story-Play. Every art form has a distinctive past as well as method, and these have all contributed to Indian history and culture. A tribute to the culture of Tamil Nadu. Sadiraattam has been observed across centuries. distinguished by

its complex hand motions, precise steps, and complicated facial expressions. Classical music, another essential component of South Indian culture, is played in the background. Furthermore, Uttar Pradesh is where Kathak first appeared. It stands out for its quick footwork, expressive and complex hand motions, and elegant spins. The variety of North Indian customs throughout Indian history is reflected in the dance form, which draws inspiration from both Hindu and Muslim civilizations. (Pal)

Kathak

Kathak originated from north India, enlarged from courtly tradition. The literal meaning of the word Kathak is a storyteller. The dance form also influences the Mughal Empire. Through dance music and songs, the Kathakar's narrate stories from saga, fables, and folklore. The performing style originated from storytelling customs, the country's most popular dance styles.

To promote the skill of narrating, the kathakar travels from place to place. The dance form is known for its peculiar spins, footwork, and elegant moments. This dance form is particularly performed in Uttar Pradesh. The dresses used to perform the Kathak dance are anarkali suits or sarees.

“Kathak is the language of the soul, where every movement speaks of devotion

and every rhythm echo eternity.” (Pandit Birju Maharaj)

“Kathak is not just a dance; it is a way of life, a meditation in motion, where tradition and storytelling merge seamlessly.” (Sitara Devi)

“The rhythmic footwork of Kathak is like a heartbeat—timeless, precise, and deeply connected to the soul of Indian culture.” (Mohanrao Kallianpurkar)

Kathakali

Kerala is the place of origin of the iconic traditional dance performing arts, Kathakali. It is one of the highly spirited dance forms with an association of acting, music, and dance. The dance form is known for its elegant, ornamental costumes and makeup. Through Kathakali, people perform dramas through dance to narrate sins from the Ramayanam and Mahabharatam, namely Ramanattam and Krishnattam.

The Kathakali dance form was promoted by feudal lords in the temples of Kerala. Male dancers play an important role in performing Kathakali dance.

“Kathakali is not just dance; it is theatre in its purest form, where every movement speaks, every expression narrates, and every rhythm breathes life into mythology.” (Kalamandalam Gopi)

“Kathakali is not just performance; it is meditation in motion, a divine dialogue

between the actor and the universe.” (Guru Gopinath)

“Every mudra in Kathakali is a syllable of an ancient language, every movement is a verse, and every performance is a scripture unfolding before the eyes.” (Kalamandalam Balasubramanian)

Kuchipudi

Kuchipudi has its origin in Andhra Pradesh. This dance drama is a combination of dialogues, dance, and music to narrate stories from Hindu mythology. Kuchlapuram is a village in Andhra Pradesh and the name Kuchipudi is said to be derived from the name of the village.

Kuchipudi demands high-powered energy foot steps and elephant emotional storytelling.

“Kuchipudi is the embodiment of elegance and drama, where dance and theatre merge to create a mesmerizing narrative.” (Swapnasundari)

“Kuchipudi is not just a dance; it is a living tradition, where every movement carries the fragrance of devotion and storytelling.” (Vempati Chinna Satyam)

“Kuchipudi is the dance of joy, where the feet converse with the earth, the hands paint the air, and the heart speaks to the divine.” (Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam)

Manipuri

Manipuri dance has a mythological origin that is from Shiva and Parvati dancing in the valleys of Manipur. This form of dance is mostly performed in the Northeastern state of Manipur. Predominantly female dancers perform this form of dance. “Patloi” dresses or is used for performing this dance, the lehenga namely “kumin” is designed to mirror and share work, with the layer of transparent silk called “Pasun”. An article entitled "Indian Classical Dance - List of 8 Classical Dances of India, Its History, Rasas, Aspects & Components." Mentions the peculiarity of the dress of Manipuri dance form as,

It is also embroidered with gota, silk, or zari on the choli. To allow the audience to observe the dancer's expression and passion, they covered their faces with a transparent odhni. Radha typically wears green, and Gopini typically wears red.

Krishna, a male dancer, is wearing crimson. Love between Radha and Krishna namely “Ras Leela” is the central theme in Manipuri dance form. It has both love and devotion as its theme. The dance movements are known for their grace, elegance, and ring-shaped moments.

Mohiniyattam

Mohiniyattam, the title suggests a beautiful woman who dances. Mohini is to "gorgeous

woman," while Adam stands for movement. A solitary woman dances alone. "The performer is wearing a plain white or off-white saree with a matching blouse or choli and bright gold or goldlaced brocade embroidered in the borders." ("Indian Classical Dance - List of 8 Classical Dances of India, Its History, Rasas, Aspects & Components"). Mohiniyattam is the combination of 40 basic dance movements known for its flowy moments. By performing Mohiniyattam, stories from Hindu mythology are narrated in the dance form.

"Mohiniyattam is not just movement; it is a storytelling art that speaks through the language of grace and subtlety." (Jayaprabha Menon)

"Mohiniyattam is a dance of enchantment, where every step, glance, and gesture are woven into the melody of devotion." (Sunanda Nair)

Odissi

Odissi dance is known for classical music through which storytelling would be done. The dance form has its origin in the temples of Odisha. Odissi is believed to be the most ancient Indian classical dance style. As a kind of worship, the temple dancers practice this dancing style inside the temple. Mainly, women dancers performed this form

of dance to narrate religious stories and to express the ideas of spirituality.

Women dancers dress in vibrantly colored saris, such as the Sambalpuri and Bomkai sarees, which are adorned with regional and traditional patterns and made of silk. The sari's front is pleated, or a pleated cloth is sewn in front to provide the dancer more freedom to move while showcasing their superb footwork. The head, ear, neck, arm, and wrists are all adorned with silver jewelry (Testbook).

Sattriya

The origin of the Sattriya dance form dates back to the 15th century and it originated in the state of Assam. This dance form was established as a means of religious expression. This dance form is performed as a part of the daily ritual ceremony or performed during the festivals.

Sattriya dance form is predominantly performed to express the mythological stories of Lord Vishnu, and Lord Krishna and also narrates the scenes of the famous epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. The dance form includes storytelling, demonstrative acting along music. The costumes worn in the Sattriya dance are divided into two categories based on gender: male costumes dhoti, cedar, and pagri turban, and female costumes ghur, cedar, together with kanchi waist wear.

Historically, for particular dance numbers, the outfits were made of pure silk or white with accents of blue, yellow, and red. ("Indian Classical Dance - List of 8 Classical Dances of India, Its History, Rasas, Aspects & Components").

These dance forms which have peculiar features are transmitted generation after generation along with passing elaborated and tangled techniques and cultural values associated with the dance forms. The indigenous dance form expresses the variety of cultural heritage of the countries, geographical distinctions, state variations, and traditions of art in those territories. This art form has the role of preserving the historical records of the country through visual and narrativity styles.

Dr. Ravikumar. D, in his article entitled "Ancient Dancing and Regional Personality: Sustaining Heritage in an Internationalized World", States, As a means of artistic expression and an inventory of historical tales or principles of indigenous Indian dance styles, such as Kathak, Orissi, and Sadiraattam, are essential to the nation's oral history. A diversified strategy, involving institutions of learning and artistic groups, is needed to preserve traditional dance. (Ravikumar. D 764)

As discussed above almost all the dance forms are known for expressive, spiritual, elegant demonstrative, intense, visionary, and evocative expressions. These dance

forms have their source in religious traditions and are performed in religious places such as temples. Every dance form had its unique style, individual history, distinctive costumes and remarkable themes to be expressed. By practicing the indigenous dance forms of India, the present generation can empower cultural connections in their territory. These traditional dance forms not only perform the duties from the aesthetic point of view, it also serves to convey the beliefs, faith, principles, values, reliance, and history. Kapila Vatsyayan, an Indian dance scholar, based on the round of ring styles of national arts, says

Indian dance was the first thing I analyzed, but I quickly realized that it was more than just a way to express different body segments; rather, it was the most modified evidence of a deeper and more delicate worldview and its unique speculative thinking. Therefore, whether correctly or incorrectly, I have come to the conclusion that "dance," particularly in the Indian context, cannot be seen in the absence of the most important framework of Indian philosophical thought and psychological concerns...

Indian dance forms play a crucial and essential role in preserving cultural identities, signifying the improvement of culture. It connects past values with the

present and transfers the cultural identities to the future generation.

Cultural Heritage Theory

The cultural heritage theory is a scholarly branch that focuses on how the Heritage of a country is formed, preserved, and supported in shaping the identities of a community or country.

It questions the general idea that Heritage was not established only in the past, focusing on Heritage that is created by the choices of human beings with interpretations.

Cultural heritage can be defined as the collection of significant properties of a culture that was awarded and transmitted across generations. There are two kinds of cultural heritage. One is tangible and the other one is intangible. The physical assets of the country, for instance Taj Mahal in Agra, are the cultural heritage of India. The other properties like tools, clothing, food books, including classical musical instruments, paintings, and findings of archaeology are the tangible cultural heritage of a community or country. Intangible cultural heritage refers to the conceptual ideas that come within the culture. For instance, folklore, customs, beliefs, dressing style, language, dialogues and superstitious beliefs do come under intangible cultural heritage. Expression

practices believe traditions represent Intangible cultural heritage that does not have a physical object but helps preserve the cultural identities of a country. Performing arts, oral traditions, practices of society, knowledge, practices related to the environment come under intangible cultural heritage. Dances one of the cultural practices of India and represents an intangible cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage theory highlights the role of traditional dance as an influential and high-powered weapon for safeguarding and expressing cultural identities, customs, values, and traditions. It helps in transmitting the traditional culture and values from generation to generation. Indigenous dance forms play a role in the substantial heritage of the country. These traditional dance forms are the source cultural medium to convey the cultural identity of dance symbolism. The dance forms help to safeguard the cultural identities expressions while the Indigenous dance forms are essential in preserving the cultural identities and transmitting the cultural identities across generations, it is also important to preserve the dance forms from globalization and modernization.

Bharatanatyam, Kathak, and Odissi--traditional Indian dance forms--are not only art forms but also the expressions of the cultural identity and heritage of various regions in the country. Each of these dance

forms contains centuries of history, mythology, and spirituality, and embodies the cultural diversity of India. But globalization, while presenting challenges, also provides opportunities for the preservation and transformation of traditional dance forms in modern society. (Ravikumar 762)

The indigenous dance forms can be preserved through digital preservation. Digital preservation of Indigenous dance forms can be done by collecting, recording, and preserving it in the digital form. It is also necessary to provide access to the digital collection of dance forms for the next generation to know about the value of indigenous dance forms. Yet, those who move abroad also cherish India's ancient dance styles and work to keep them alive. Diaspora lays a foundation for preserving Indian dance forms by introducing dance schools and cultural organizations abroad. The schools for teaching traditional dance forms, also called Gurukulam, play a vital role in preserving the dance forms. The significance of these dance forms can be realized from the fact that the Western dancers showed interest in learning this rich heritage of India by traveling to India to learn the dance forms. While the world has been changing every day, witnessing cultural shifts, these traditional dance forms with their minute details have been surviving for centuries.

Findings and Conclusion

Learning classical dance comes along with learning Indian literature, art, ancient text philosophy, religion, and mythology. It is a great cultural study that combines the mind with the spirit. Please dance forms while preserving the lyrics and the melodies of the past, captivating the importance of our fathers. Rhythm, facial expressions and costumes used in the dance forms are useful in exhibiting the different perspectives of the society and the practices. These traditional dance forms are soaked in the culture and tradition of India with its unique techniques. The research analyzed traditional dance forms from different states of India and their impact on creating and maintaining cultural identities. The research concludes by mentioning the idea preserving traditional dance forms is significant in preserving cultural identity. In this contemporary age where the world works for changes, it is challenging to preserve cultural heritages in the form of dance. The study also provided the ways using which traditional dance forms can be preserved from being faded in this changing world. The study brings to the conclusion that the adoption of these ideas provided in the research article would help preserve traditional dance forms. Continual existence and practice of the traditional dance forms would help maintain the rich cultural heritage of India.

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