

# **CONTRIBUTION OF LATE SHRI KUBERNATH TANJORKAR, LATE SMT. ANJALI MERH AND PROFESSOR C. V. CHANDRASEKHAR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BHARATANATYAM DANCE**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

In the initial learning days of Bharatanatyam classical dance in the Faculty of Performing Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Baroda, the Present Researcher had learnt items of Bharatanatyam dance style choreographed by the great Gurus like Late Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar, Late Guru Smt. Anjali Merh and Professor C.V. Chandrasekhar, hence impressed by the choreography of the items, wanted to know more about these great Gurus. From the information gathered from the students of the Gurus like Smt. Juthika Mahen, Smt. Parul Patel, Smt. Lalita Iyer and Smt. Parul Barot the present Researcher came to know about the huge contribution of the above mentioned Gurus in the development of Bharatanatyam dance style.

There is a lot of information available about many topics related to Bharatanatyam dance style, but sufficient information was not available about the immense contribution of the above mentioned three Gurus. Though some information was available in a few books, magazines and newspapers about their contribution, however, this information was not adequate when compared to the huge contributions of the great Gurus in the development of Bharatanatyam dance, which can benefit students of Bharatanatyam, as well as anyone who is related to Bharatanatyam dance style. The Present Researcher aims to be a good teacher, choreographer and a practising artist, therefore to connect to her personal queries, decided to pursue this query through proper scientific approach along with the discussion and help from her Guide Prof. (Dr.) Jagdish Gangani and her Guru Smt. Juthika Mahen and realized that there was a need to do research on this subject so that the present generation and future generation of dance students and dancers can benefit from it. It would be a great task if the information is made available to the dance students. It will be a humble attempt by the Present Researcher to give some unique information about the immense contributions of the above mentioned Gurus in the development of Bharatanatyam dance style.

Late Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar, Late Guru Smt. Anjali Merh, and Professor C.V. Chandrasekhar are the three prominent Gurus among the Gurus of Bharatanatyam dance style. They have contributed immensely through their teaching, music compositions and dance compositions. Therefore it is essential to study the teaching style, choreography style and other aspects related to dance of the great Gurus. It will be a polite attempt to explain the special features of their personality, teaching style, choreography style, their unique approach, technique, music composition and vision.

The Present Researcher was fortunate to learn Bharatanatyam from teachers like Shri Pradeep Barua, Smt. Juthika Mahen, Dr. Parul Shah, Dr. Ami Pandhya, Smt. Parul Patel, Smt. Lalita Thakkar, Smt. Jayanti Chandolkar, Smt. Rema Srikanth and Smt. Parul Barot who were students of these great Gurus. The Present Researcher was also fortunate to learn the topics of dance theory from Shri Harish Gangani and Prof. (Dr.) Jagdish Gangani, who knew the above mentioned Gurus very well. During the discussions with Prof. (Dr.) Jagdish Gangani about the immense contribution of the Gurus, there were many points in the discussion, on which information was not available. To know about these problems the Present Researcher had a number of sessions of discussion with Prof. (Dr.) Jagdish Gangani, who himself is a well-known Kathak dancer as well as a renowned Guru of Kathak dance style. During the discussion sessions a lot of points popped up in front of us.

In the research work information about the early life, family and education of the above mentioned three Gurus is elaborated. The immense contribution of the Gurus is immense is divided in three categories, namely, contribution in teaching, contribution as a choreographer and music composer depending upon the field of contribution. The Present Researcher has also provided views of students, and personalities from different walks of life about the above mentioned three Gurus, by conducting interviews or my email.

This information will benefit and will be extremely useful for the present and future generation of dance lovers, students of arts and Bharatanatyam dance particularly.

### **Need for the research on this Topic:**

Many books have been written by renowned authors and historians about origin and history of Bharatanatyam dance style which is a classical dance style from South India with a rich, ancient and primitive history. The need to do a research on the topic “Contribution of Late Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar, Late Smt. Anjali Merh, and Professor C.V.Chandrasekhar in the Development of Bharatanatyam Dance”, arises as all three Gurus have contributed immensely in the propagation and development of Bharatanatyam dance style in Gujarat, across India and in other countries through their teaching, programmes, lecture-demonstrations and workshops. They have also contributed immensely in the Department of Dance, Faculty of Performing Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara (Gujarat). They are well known in the field of dance, among artists, on government level and also among lay people. But there is also a lot of information, about the esteemed Gurus which should be given due importance, noted, documented and highlighted in the history of dance so that the future generation, especially dance students, dance practitioners, dance lovers and art lovers can learn, benefit, get inspired and motivated from the information.

### **Hypothesis:**

It will be a humble attempt to provide information regarding “Contribution of Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar, Late Smt. Anjali Merh, and Professor C.V.Chandrasekhar in the development of Bharatanatyam dance”, with real facts which are not known or mentioned so far. The Present Researcher has taken intense training in Bharatanatyam for more than ten years and is trying to develop herself as a good performer, researcher and a teacher of the dance form. To perform, teach and research, it is essential to study the history and the development of the form. Many great Gurus and stalwarts contributed immensely in the development of Bharatanatyam dance style in the history of dance. Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar, Smt. Anjali ben Merh and Professor C. V. Chandrasekhar are the three great Gurus who were foremost pioneers in the propagation and development of Bharatanatyam dance style, which is a classical dance style from South India, in Gujarat. The information of their contribution will be helpful for not only the students of Bharatanatyam dance style but to all who are connected and concerned with Bharatanatyam dance style in any way.

The topic was finalized after a deep study of it by the Present Researcher and after intense discussions with the Present Researcher's guide Prof. (Dr.) Jagdish Gangani, of the scope of this research work. The research work will try to provide facts and findings about all the aspects related to the topic.

Through this research the Present Researcher would like to bring into limelight the immense contributions of the three above mentioned Great maestros and the fact that they had great command over all the aspects of dance and will highlight the fact that they contributed immensely in dance education and in propogating Bharatanatyam, which is a South Indian classical dance style, in Gujarat.

### **Objectives:**

In recent years a lot of books and manuals have been written about Bharatanatyam classical dance style. Detailed information about the immense Contributions of Late Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar, Late Smt. Anjali Merh, and Professor C.V.Chandrasekhar in the development of Bharatanatyam dance, should also be highlighted and recorded in the history of dance. Therefore the objective will be to find out real facts and bring in notice the great contribution of the three Gurus, for the people who are interested in the art form of dance, dance students and future generations.

### **Review of Literature:**

The books, magazines, journals, thesis, dissertations, research articles and information available on internet related to the topic were referred to collect required data.

The collected data, information and facts about the presented subject are reviewed. Only accurate and feasible facts and solutions are written rest is omitted.

### **Research Methodology and Planning:**

The analytical method is followed for the thesis. The scientific approach is also followed in data collection. New found facts are presented in an adventurous manner.

Technical information in the thesis is put in a simplified manner, which a nontechnical person can also understand. The research is done in historical descriptive qualitative method.

The collected information is presented in a chapter wise index.

### **Methodology:**

In order to successfully complete any research project, it is obligatory on the part of the Researcher to select a suitable method of research, a good sample, reliable and valid tools of data collection and decision about appropriate statistical technique for the analysis of obtained data. There are a number of problems in the way of any investigation and researcher has to find proper solution before embarking upon the data collection phase.

As per the need and demand of the study, the Researcher employed the Qualitative Research Methodology for the collection of data.

Qualitative Research Methodology is based on data obtained by the researcher from first-hand observation, interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, and participant-observation, recordings made in natural settings, documents, and artifacts. The data are generally nonnumerical.

Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. Qualitative research is the opposite of quantitative research, which involves collecting and analyzing numerical data for statistical analysis. Qualitative research methods have been used in humanities and social sciences, anthropology, political science, psychology, social work, performing arts, fine-arts and educational research. Qualitative researchers study individuals' understanding of their social reality.

**Details of Qualitative Research methodology used by the Present Researcher are given in the following paragraphs.**

The Present Researcher Attended the Research Course Work of 15 credits organised by the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda in 2014-15. During 2 years of dissertation work for the Master of Performing Arts/Dance during 1996-1998 the Present Researcher learnt and understood the importance of following scientific research methodologies for any research work. The subject selected by Present Researcher being Dance falls in the category of Humanities and Social Science. Hence the Present Researcher followed the Qualitative Research Methodology.

The research methodology that was followed by the present researcher:

1. Reading of the already published books, treatises, magazines, journals and articles to understand the contribution of the above mentioned Gurus.
2. The Present Researcher also studied the research works and dissertations of other dancers.
3. The Present Researcher studied literature (Books, magazines, articles) available on the research topic. Researcher also studied the information available on the internet related to the research topic.
4. At every point there was detailed, critical and intense discussion of the Present Researcher with her Guide Prof. Jagdish Gangani.
5. Intense Discussions with Smt. Juthika Mahen about the research topic.
6. Conducted personal interviews and visits with the disciples, musicians, relatives, Gurus/teachers, experts, critics, artistes, performers, and people from different walks known to the above mentioned three Gurus.

Questionnaire was given to them for their basic information and regarding the research topic. Present Researcher also collected information and data about the above mentioned Gurus and for research work by phone interviews, emails and using other internet platforms.

7. Collected information was analysed and important points and facts related to thesis were noted and discussed with the Guide Prof. (Dr.) Jagdish Gangani in depth. Fortunately her guide being a proven dancer and dance teacher, who also knew all the three Gurus very well, shared lots of information with her. From that researcher made a list of important, relevant points about the research topic.
8. The Present Researcher analysed the data collected, made a list of important and relevant findings from the summary of all inputs. She summarised the data, and made a list of contribution of the Gurus.
9. Collected some pictures and some important documents while interviewing various students of the Gurus, dancers and dance teachers known to the Gurus, to learn and collect more facts about the research topic. Some of these pictures are included in this thesis.
10. Going and working in the archives and libraries and studying articles, magazines and books of different authors related to the research topic.
  - A. Library of Faculty of Performing Arts, The M. S. University of Baroda, Baroda.
  - B. Oriental Institute, The M. S. University of Baroda, Baroda.
  - C. Darpana Academy, Ahmedabad.
  - D. Shri Kirit Joshi Library, IITE, Gandhinagar
11. Visited the universities with Bharatanatyam departments such Pune

University, Banasthali and Kalakshetra.

**12.** The compilation of the data as per my requirement.

This is basic methodology that I have followed



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## CHAPTER 1 : JOURNEY OF DANCE FROM TEMPLE TO THEATRE

In this chapter, the origin of dance has been described. How dance originated according to mythological stories mentioned in Natyashastra is described in this chapter. Natyashastra of Bharatmuni is the most important and first text for all practical and theoretical purpose for all dancers. The journey of dance from its origin and development during different periods of history is discussed further in this chapter. The status of Indian dance during the rule of Indian kings, Mughal rule and British rule is described in this Chapter. Further information is given about the revival of classical Indian dance by various personalities like Rabindranath Tagore, E. Krishna Iyer, Rukmini devi, Uday Shankar etc. and their contribution is described in brief.

## CHAPTER 2 : CLASSICAL DANCE AND GUJARAT

Many dancers, dance Gurus and dance institutions have contributed in the development and propagation of classical dance in Gujarat. Some dancers belonging to Gujarat have contributed immensely to the development of Classical dance in India. In this chapter the famous Classical dancers of Gujarat are introduced in brief. Information about the renowned dance Gurus of Gujarat, who contributed in the development of classical dance in Gujarat is introduced, described and discussed further in chapter. Brief Information about the famous classical dance institution which have contributed in the development of dance is also mentioned in this chapter.

### CHAPTER3 : CONTRIBUTION OF DEPARTMENT OF DANCE, FACULTY OF PERFORMING ARTS, THE M.S.UNIVERSITY OF BARODA, VADODARA, GUJARAT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DANCE/BHARATANATYAM/KATHAK DANCE.

The ‘College of Indian music, dance and dramatics’ was the dream and vision of The Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III, which was the first college to start dance courses till postgraduate and doctoral levels in India. It was because of the establishment of this College that students from Baroda, Gujarat, India and also other countries got an opportunity to learn classical dance from great gurus like Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar, Pandit Shri Sunderlal Gangani, Guru Smt. Anjali Merh and Prof. C. V. Chandrasekhar. In this chapter introduction of Maharaja Sayajirao’s immense contribution in the field of education and specially art education is briefed. The Researcher has discussed about the establishment of the Department of Dance, Faculty of Performing Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat and is of the opinion that all the teachers who have taught at the Department of Dance, Faculty of Performing Arts, The M.S.University of Baroda, Vadodara (Gujarat) have contributed immensely in the development of Bharatanatyam dance. Hence their contribution to this art form is acknowledged and analysed in this chapter in brief.

### CHAPTER 4 : CONTRIBUTIONS OF LATE GURU SHRI KUBERNATH TANJORKAR

Contributions of Late Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar are detailed in this chapter. This chapter is divided into four major parts or subchapters, which are Profile, Contribution in context of teaching, Contribution as a choreographer and a music composer, Views of disciples, and personalities from different walks. In the beginning of this chapter the Present Researcher has discussed the early education

and training of Late Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar. Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar, belonged to the family of traditional dancers and musicians from South India. The Present Researcher has found that his family members were pioneers in propagating Bharatanatyam dance style in Baroda through their performances and choreographies on traditional as well as modern themes, which should be noted in the history of dance in India and particularly in the history of Bharatanatyam dance. When Maharaja Sayajirao married the princess of Mysore, Chimna bai, Bharatanatyam dancers came as a part of the art troupe with the princess. The Present Researcher has found that Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar, being an heir to this illustrious family in Baroda, and contributed through the choreographies he inherited from his family. The details of the training of Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar in Guru Shishya Parampara are made known. The unique features of the training are analysed, which was instrumental in building the personality of Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar as a great Guru and choreographer. The unique qualities of Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar as a good dancer, good nattuvnar, and singer par excellence, as a mridangist and as an excellent choreographer are noted in the Chapter. Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar was trained in Karnatic music style as well as Hindustani music style. The Present Researcher has found that he had knowledge of 400 ragas and that he could sing in a very high as well as low pitch and also sang in the traditional rustic style of Karnatic music. He was an expert in abhinaya, and could express all the navarasas mentioned in the Natyashastra only with his eyes, without moving any muscle of his face. He expressed the navarasa perfectly.

The Present Researcher has found that the biggest contribution of Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar was preserving and propagating the Tanjore style of Bharatanatyam, in Gujarat as well as across the country. He was an expert of literature. He knew many Sanskrit verses by heart. He knew many languages including Sanskrit, Tamil, Gujarati, Hindi and Marathi. He has choreographed in these languages and enriched Bharatanatyam dance style. His contribution to the Maharaja Sayajirao University as a Bharatanatyam dance faculty member is noteworthy and should be noted in the history of dance. He laid a strong base for the

Department of dance and was instrumental in training many students. The Present Researcher has further analysed his dance choreographies and mentioned its unique features.

By conducting interviews of the disciples and other sources, the Researcher has collected information regarding many items choreographed by Late Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar and has analysed these to find that he has made great contribution in this field that should be noted in history of dance in Gujarat and India. The chapter also discusses his contribution in the field of composing music for dances that he choreographed. In the last subchapter the Researcher has listed the views of his disciples and personalities from different walks of life on Late Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar.

## CHAPTER 5 : CONTRIBUTIONS OF LATE SMT. ANJALI MERH

Details of the immense contributions of Late Guru Smt. Anjali Merh are noted and documented in this chapter, which is divided in four sub-chapters, Profile, Contribution in context of teaching, Contribution as a choreographer and a music composer, Views of disciples, and personalities from different walks. In the beginning of this chapter the Researcher has given information about the early education and training of Late Smt. Anjali Merh, her parent's encouragement and her training in Kalkshetra. Smt. Anjali Merh learnt Bharatanatyam, Karnatic music, Nattuvangam, Tamil and all the aspects of Bharatanatyam at Kalakshetra, which made her a good dancer, a Guru par excellence and a great choreographer. The journey of Smt. Anjali Merh as a dance student from Kalakshetra, dance teacher and performer in Bombay and finally as a Head of the Department of Dance, in the College of Indian music, dance and dramatics in Baroda is made known in the Chapter. She contributed immensely as an academician in the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, as dancer, choreographer and musician to the growth and development of these fields in Baroda, in Gujarat and all over India through her teachings and her programmes. She made

a strong foundation of the Department of Dance. She taught and choreographed many dance items. She propagated the Kalakshetra dance style in Baroda. Having analysed the dance items choreographed by her, the Present Researcher has found that she was the first dancer to choreograph a whole Bharatanatyam *Margam* in Gujarati. This important finding should be noted in the history of dance. The Present Researcher has analysed the dance items choreographed by her and has found some unique features introduced by her in this field. The Present Researcher has also found that she choreographed many items in this field in regional languages including Gujarati, Marathi and Bengali which was a revolutionary step during that period. She choreographed dance dramas like ‘Ramayana’ and ‘Chandramaulishwara Kuruwanji’. She was the first *Bharatanatyam* dancer to choreograph Kuravanji in Gujarati language. This great contribution should be recorded in the history of classical dance. The Present Researcher has analysed Kuravanji to find the unique features introduced by her in the field of dance drama. She also introduced innovations in the costume of the dance drama. The Present Researcher has analysed her items and found some unique features of these items. Another great contribution of Late Smt. Anjali Merh was the writing of two books, ‘Nartan Darshika’ and ‘Chandramaulishwara Kuravanji’. She was among the first few pioneer’s dancers who contributed as an author by writing books on classical Bharatanatyam dance style. The books written by Smt. Anjali Merh are very useful for dancers, and Bharatanatyam dance students particularly.

The chapter also discusses her contribution in writing the lyrics and composing the music for dances that she choreographed. In the last subchapter the Researcher has listed the views of disciples and personalities from different walks of life about Late Smt. Anjali Merh. The Researcher has found some unique features about Anjali Merh’s contribution as a performer, Academician, Guru and choreographer which should be noted in the history of Bharatanatyam dance.

## CHAPTER6: CONTRIBUTIONS OF PROFESSOR C.V.CHANDRASEKHAR

Eminent dancer Rukmini Devi enlarged the scope of Bharatanatyam and put it on a broader base. Following the footsteps of his Guru, Professor C. V. Chandrasekhar

experimented with many aspects of Bharatanatyam dance including technique, music, costumes, and production of dance dramas and choreography of varied items. This further enlarged the scope of Bharatanatyam dance style. After doing a scientific and critical analysis of Professor C. V. Chandrasekhar's dance dramas, the Present Researcher has found many elements of Bharatanatyam enriched and strengthened by him. These have added more scope to the Bharatanatyam dance style. He was one of the first few pioneers who propagated and made Bharatanatyam popular in North India, particularly in Banaras and Gujarat through his teaching, performances and programmes. He contributed immensely in this field particularly in Banaras and Baroda. He has thus covered a vast area across the country, which should be noted in the history of Bharatanatyam. Because of his great contribution in the propagation, development and growth of Bharatanatyam in Gujarat, over all standard of the technique of Bharatanatyam improved. The Present Researcher has found and analysed his unique features as a Bharatanatyam dancer like his perfect posture, his forceful, vigorous and perfect footwork, subtle abhinaya and many more, which made him a unique, inspiring, and one of the best male Bharatanatyam dancers of India.

The Present Researcher found that Professor C.V.Chandrasekhar experimented with ideas and choreographed dance dramas on modern and contemporary themes with new vision like Krida, Panchamahabhootam, Vasantvilas, Bhumija, Ritusamhara, Meghadootam, Aparajita etc. A note should be made in history of dance regarding this. He experimented by using different languages like Hindi, Bengali and Gujarati. He has contributed immensely through his choreography by using forceful and vigorous movements which are apt for male dancers. He has introduced innovations in all the four types of Abhinaya that is Vachika abhinaya, Angika abhinaya, Aharya abhinaya and Satvika abhinaya. In the Angika abhinaya, he used and introduced movements, sthanakas, bhramaris, utplavanas, nadai and postures within the frame work of Bharatanatyam dance. The combination of all this was the essence of his unique dance style.

The Present Researcher found that Professor C. V. Chandrasekhar had a vast knowledge of Carnatic and Hindustani music. The Present Researcher analysed his singing and found the reasons of his unique singing style and music composition. The Present Researcher has found

that the jati bhedas and gati bhedas used in the composition of Jatis composed by Professor C.V. Chandrasekhar was his unique contribution. He introduced new bols to enhance the musical composition. The Present Researcher has found and has analysed many unique features of Professor C.V.Chandrasekhar as a dancer, Guru, academician nattuvnar, singer, choreographer and music composer by interviewing his students and other scholars who knew him.

In the last subchapter the Present Researcher has listed the views of disciples and personalities of different walks for Prof. C.V.Chandrasekhar. The immense contribution of Professor C.V.Chandrasekhar in Gujarat, Indian and in many countries of the world should be noted in the history of Dance.

#### Chapter 7: Conclusion

The detail study of the contributions of the above mentioned three Gurus in the development of Bharatanatyam Dance is systematically collected, reviewed, and analysed mentioned and written in this chapter. The Present Researcher has found the contributions of the above mentioned Gurus in the fields of performance, teaching of Bharatanatyam dance choreography, composition of music, the unique features of their style, their efforts in propagating Bharatanatyam and making Bharatanatyam popular, which should be noted in the history of Dance in general and Bharatanatyam in particular. Through this research work the immense contributions of the above mentioned three Gurus will be documented in the history of the teaching, performance, choreography and composition of Bharatanatyam in India and the world.