

NALANDAITE

CREATE. DANCE. LIVE



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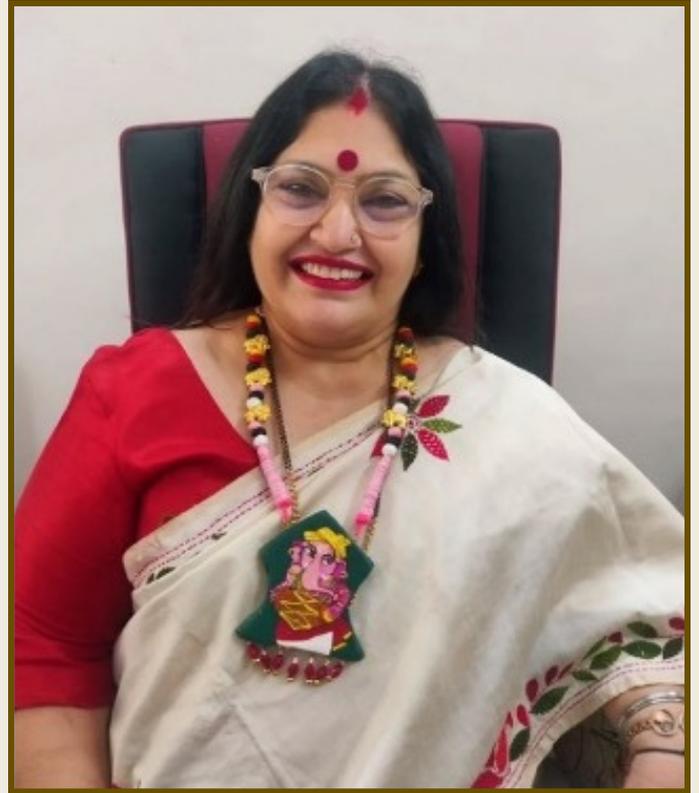


## *Principal's Desk*

Having our own magazine “Nalandaite” was my dream and last year it became a reality. I am extremely excited about the release of this year's volume of “Nalandaite”.

This time, our emphasis is on “Tradition Then and Now: the living legacy of NNKM”, which is most appropriate in today's times. Traditions are very important and must be followed and continued by the younger generation. This flow of tradition provides continuity and identity to a human being.

India is a country rich in tradition and culture. Indian arts are imbued with spiritualism and reflect the idea of “unity in diversity”. Indian Dance is no different, it is rich in its concept, purpose, knowledge, wisdom etc. NNKM takes pride in continuing the tradition of Indian



Dance and its learning with lot of emphasis on “Guru Shishya Parampara”, the age old teaching-learning tradition of our Ashrama system with modern approach yet sticking to the roots of tradition.

I congratulate the students of Nalanda for showing their enthusiasm for everything at Nalanda and for their contribution to the release of this volume of Nalandaite.

**- Dr. (Smt.) Uma Rele  
Director, Nalanda Dance Research Centre  
Principal, Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya**



## *Tradition Then and Now:*

# The Living Legacy of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya

In the heart of Mumbai, where tradition meets transformation, stands Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya—a pioneering institution founded in 1973 by the legendary Padma Bhushan Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele. A visionary in the world of Indian classical dance, Dr. Rele redefined the landscape of dance education in India by fusing the sacred Guru-Shishya Parampara with a structured academic framework. Her belief was clear and bold: classical dance deserves the same academic stature as any other discipline.

With its permanent affiliation to the University of Mumbai, Nalanda remains the only institution under its umbrella to offer graduate, postgraduate, and doctoral degrees in Indian classical dance. Over the past 52 years, the college has not only nurtured exceptional performers but also produced scholars, educators, and cultural ambassadors who carry the essence of Indian heritage into the modern world.

Dr. Kanak Rele's groundbreaking work in reviving and codifying Mohini Attam, along with her dedication to arts education, earned her national recognition. Among her many accolades are the Gaurav Puraskar (1989), the Padma Shri (1990), the title of Kala Vipanchee (2005), the Kalidas Samman (2006), the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, the M.S. Subbulakshmi Award, and the Padma Bhushan (2013). These honors stand as a testimony to a life devoted to the preservation and elevation of Indian classical arts.

Today, under the guidance of Dr. Smt. Uma Rele, Nalanda continues to thrive as a beacon of artistic integrity and academic excellence. With a strong emphasis on discipline, personal mentoring, and cultural depth, the institution remains committed to shaping well-rounded artists who embody the spirit of tradition then and now.

As Nalanda enters its golden years, it stands not only as an institution but as a movement—bridging the classical past with a vibrant, ever-evolving present.



**Bhagyada Chorge, BPA I**



# *Student's Editorial*

It is with immense pride that we present the Nalandaite Magazine of this year 2024-25, under Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya marking a milestone of completing 50 years. This magazine is not just a collection of creative works but a tribute to the institution's founder Padmabhushan Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele and our visionary leader and Principal Dr. Smt. Uma Rele whose dedication has guided us into a new era, shaping the youth into a thriving hub of knowledge, creativity and tradition.

The Nalandite Magazine offers an insight into the rich tapestry of the student life at Nalanda- highlighting research projects, literary works, performances and creative expressions from our academic year. It serves as a platform for recognizing the achievements of our students from their academic excellence to their contribution in the field of performing arts.

This year, we also celebrate the significant milestone of the global recognition of India's cultural heritage by including Natyashastra in UNESCO's memory of world register. For us, this moment holds special meaning as Natyashastra is not just a historical text, it is the foundation of what we practice and embody as dancers here in Nalanda. The Natyashastra encapsulates the essence of Bharata Natyam and other classical art forms providing a structured approach to performance, emotion and dance. We as students consider it our responsibility to preserve its legacy while making it relevant for our contemporary times here in Nalanda.

Through Nalandite magazine, we invite you on this journey with us – not only through the achievements of this year but also showcasing a reflection of who we are as an institution. From performances to academic endeavors and the traditions we uphold, every page in this magazine is a testament to the living breathing entity our institution is- a space where learning, tradition, creativity and art thrives.

Heartfelt gratitude to the magazine committee led by our esteemed principal Dr. Smt. Uma Rele, teacher coordinators and the dedicated students for their impactful contribution in bringing together Nalandite which serves as a reminder of our shared journey, our achievements and the legacy we continue to build together.



**Shruti Varier,  
MPA Part II**



# *Shining Stars of Nalanda*

## ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024

**01**



Bhoomi Ahuja  
Foundation 1

Bhagyada Chorge  
Foundation 2



**02**

**03**



Uthara Sharath  
BPA Part 1

Meera Wagh  
BPA Part 2



**04**



*Shining Stars of Nalanda*  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024

**05**



Riddhi Potnis  
BPA Degree

Simran Cherayil  
MPA Part 1



**06**

**07**



Gayatri Sathe  
MPA Part 2

Khushali Hirani  
MPA Human Movements



**08**



# *Unraveling Inner Talent*

## YOUTH FESTIVAL

### 2024-2025

Representing Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya at the University of Mumbai's Youth Festival 2024-25 as the student coordinator of the cultural committee has been an unforgettable experience. The journey, from meticulous registrations to the finals, was an inspiring showcase of determination, talent and teamwork.

The highlight of the festival was undoubtedly our team's performance in the Indian folk-dance segment. With vibrant energy and graceful synchronization, the students captivated the audience through Ghatu, a traditional folk form, from the Gurung community of Sikkim, securing consolation position in the Finals. Their remarkable display of dedication and artistry set a high standard for the competition.

Our students also participated in various events like Indian vocal, western light vocal, natyasangeet, rangoli making, quiz competition, debate, elocution, spot photography, installation, mono acting, poster making and storytelling, delivering performances infused with creativity.

Sakshi Apte, pursuing master's program in performing arts, secured 1<sup>st</sup> prize in elimination and 1<sup>st</sup> consolation position in the final round of storytelling. As well as Pratistha Nair, student of bachelor's program in performing arts secured 3<sup>rd</sup> prize in elocution round. Purva Naik, secured consolation prize for western light vocal.

There were several other participants who participated in other categories, though they did not secure a prize, their heartfelt efforts resonated deeply with the audience and left a lasting impact. Additionally, these segments highlighted the immense talent of our participants, who won admiration through their efforts, even in the face of challenges.

This success was made possible only by the unwavering guidance of our respected principal, Guru Smt. Dr. Uma Rele, and teacher coordinator, Mrs. Megha Mohad. Their consistent mentorship provided the foundation for our performances by encouraging us to push boundaries.

The camaraderie among us students was equally vital. From initial preparations to auditions and beyond, we supported and uplifted one another. The thrill of competing against other talented colleges pushed us to elevate our performances, showcasing the best of our abilities.

As the finals approached, the energetic atmosphere, combined with the trust placed in us by our college management, filled us with immense pride. Despite the stiff competition and numerous hurdles, we stood united as proud representatives of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya.

Now, as the curtains draw on this incredible journey, I find myself reflecting on these invaluable experiences. This festival, with its moments of triumph and learning, has been a testament to the collective resilience and effort of everyone involved. I am deeply grateful for all the memories made that will forever remain close to my heart.



**SHRUTI VARIER,**  
**MPA II Student Coordinator**



## *Winning moments in Summary...*



Event: **57<sup>th</sup> Inter-Collegiate Youth Festival – Folk Dance Finals**

Date: August 11, 2024

Theme: Traditional Indian Folk Dance

Venue: Thakur College of Science and Commerce, Mumbai

Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya's folk dance team secured the consolation prize in the finals of the folk-dance competition at the 57<sup>th</sup> Inter-Collegiate Youth Festival, Mumbai Zone III. The event took place at Thakur College of Science and Commerce on August 11, 2024. The performance was conceptualized and choreographed by our esteemed folk-dance Guru, Shri Prashant Bhafalekar.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our respected Principal, Dr. Smt. Uma Rele, and Teacher Coordinator, Smt. Megha Mohad, for their unwavering support and guidance. Special thanks to our dedicated student coordinators Ms. Shruti Varier, Ms. Kavya Varma, and Ms. Amanda Chetty for their invaluable efforts in organizing and leading the team.

Participants: Bhagyada Chorge, Savni Pednekar, Purva Naik, Bhumika Nath, Karthika Murugan, Prathishtha Nair, Lakshmi Nair, Devanshi Shinde, Vaishnavi Naiksatam, Kanak Darak



**Event: 57<sup>th</sup> Inter-Collegiate Youth Festival – Western Vocals Finals**

**Ms. Purva Naik** from Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya secured third place in the Zonal round and Consolation in the Final round of the Western Vocal, at the 57<sup>th</sup> Intercollegiate Youth Festival, Mumbai University – 2024.

**Event: 57<sup>th</sup> Inter-Collegiate Youth Festival – Elocution Competition Finals**

**Ms. Pratishtha Nair** from Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya secured third position in the zonal round of the elocution category B at the 57<sup>th</sup> Intercollegiate Youth Festival of Mumbai University in 2024. The topic she addressed was the critical issue of climate change as global emergency.



**Event: 57<sup>th</sup> Inter-Collegiate Youth Festival – Storytelling Finals**

**Ms. Sakshi Apte** from Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya won the first prize in Zonals and consolation prize in storytelling category A, at the 57<sup>th</sup> Intercollegiate Youth Festival, Mumbai University 2024.

**Event: 57<sup>th</sup> Inter-Collegiate Youth Festival – Mono Act Competition**

**Avantika Dipak Chougule**, student of BPA part – I, Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalay participated in the mono act competition in the zonal round of the Youth Festival of Mumbai University. We, with immense respect and gratitude for our Principal Dr. Smt. Uma Rele Ma'am, whose support has left a lasting impression, continue to inspire and shape the artistic journey of Nalanda's students.





# Youth Festival Certificates...



University of Mumbai  
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

57 Youth Festival  
(Zonal Round)

*Certificate of Merit*

This is to Certify that Ms. Nair Lakshmi Rajesh of Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya, Vile Parle participated and secured CONSOLATION in Indian Folk Dance competition at 57th Inter-Collegiate / Institute / Department Cultural Youth Festival (Zonal Round): 2024-25 organized at Thakur College of Science and Commerce, Kandivli (East) on August 11, 2024 for Zone III (Mumbai-III).

Mr. Nilesh Sawe  
Cultural Co-ordinator,  
University of Mumbai

Dr. Sunil Patil  
Director,  
Department of Students' Development,  
University of Mumbai

Date: August 11, 2024  
Place: Kandivli

University of Mumbai  
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

57 Youth Festival  
(Zonal Round)

*Certificate of Merit*

This is to Certify that Ms. Naik Purva Rajesh of Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya, Vile Parle participated and secured CONSOLATION in Indian Folk Dance competition at 57th Inter-Collegiate / Institute / Department Cultural Youth Festival (Zonal Round): 2024-25 organized at Thakur College of Science and Commerce, Kandivli (East) on August 11, 2024 for Zone III (Mumbai-III).

Mr. Nilesh Sawe  
Cultural Co-ordinator,  
University of Mumbai

Dr. Sunil Patil  
Director,  
Department of Students' Development,  
University of Mumbai

Date: August 11, 2024  
Place: Kandivli

University of Mumbai  
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

57 Youth Festival  
(Zonal Round)

*Certificate of Merit*

This is to Certify that Ms. Shinde Devanshi Navin of Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya, Vile Parle participated and secured CONSOLATION in Indian Folk Dance competition at 57th Inter-Collegiate / Institute / Department Cultural Youth Festival (Zonal Round): 2024-25 organized at Thakur College of Science and Commerce, Kandivli (East) on August 11, 2024 for Zone III (Mumbai-III).

Mr. Nilesh Sawe  
Cultural Co-ordinator,  
University of Mumbai

Dr. Sunil Patil  
Director,  
Department of Students' Development,  
University of Mumbai

Date: August 11, 2024  
Place: Kandivli

University of Mumbai  
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

57 Youth Festival  
(Zonal Round)

*Certificate of Merit*

This is to Certify that Ms. Apte Sakshi Dhananjay of Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya, Vile Parle participated and secured FIRST RANK in Story Telling Group A (Marathi) competition at 57th Inter-Collegiate / Institute / Department Cultural Youth Festival (Zonal Round): 2024-25 organized at Bhanumati Kishandas Shroff College of Arts and Maganlal Harjivinddas Shroff College of Commerce, Kandivli on August 16, 2024 for Zone III (Mumbai-III).

Mr. Nilesh Sawe  
Cultural Co-ordinator,  
University of Mumbai

Dr. Sunil Patil  
Director,  
Department of Students' Development,  
University of Mumbai

Date: August 16, 2024  
Place: Kandivli

University of Mumbai  
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

57 Youth Festival  
(Zonal Round)

*Certificate of Merit*

This is to Certify that Ms. Nadar Karthika Murugan of Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya, Vile Parle participated and secured CONSOLATION in Indian Folk Dance competition at 57th Inter-Collegiate / Institute / Department Cultural Youth Festival (Zonal Round): 2024-25 organized at Thakur College of Science and Commerce, Kandivli (East) on August 11, 2024 for Zone III (Mumbai-III).

Mr. Nilesh Sawe  
Cultural Co-ordinator,  
University of Mumbai

Dr. Sunil Patil  
Director,  
Department of Students' Development,  
University of Mumbai

Date: August 11, 2024  
Place: Kandivli

University of Mumbai  
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

57 Youth Festival  
(Zonal Round)

*Certificate of Merit*

This is to Certify that Ms. Naiksatam Vaishnavee Bipin of Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya, Vile Parle participated and secured CONSOLATION in Indian Folk Dance competition at 57th Inter-Collegiate / Institute / Department Cultural Youth Festival (Zonal Round): 2024-25 organized at Thakur College of Science and Commerce, Kandivli (East) on August 11, 2024 for Zone III (Mumbai-III).

Mr. Nilesh Sawe  
Cultural Co-ordinator,  
University of Mumbai

Dr. Sunil Patil  
Director,  
Department of Students' Development,  
University of Mumbai

Date: August 11, 2024  
Place: Kandivli



University of Mumbai  
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

57 Youth Festival  
(Zonal Round)

*Certificate of Merit*

This is to Certify that Ms. Naik Purva Rajesh of Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya, Vile Parle participated and secured **THIRD RANK** in Western Vocal Solo competition at 57th Inter-Collegiate / Institute / Department Cultural Youth Festival (Zonal Round): 2024-25 organized at Thakur College of Science and Commerce, Kandivli (East) on August 11, 2024 for Zone III (Mumbai-III).

Mr. Nilesh Sawe  
Cultural Co-ordinator,  
University of Mumbai

Dr. Sunil Patil  
Director,  
Department of Students' Development,  
University of Mumbai

Date: August 11, 2024  
Place: Kandivli

University of Mumbai  
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

57 Youth Festival  
(Zonal Round)

*Certificate of Merit*

This is to Certify that Ms. Darak Kanak Brijkshor of Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya, Vile Parle participated and secured **CONSOLATION** in Indian Folk Dance competition at 57th Inter-Collegiate / Institute / Department Cultural Youth Festival (Zonal Round): 2024-25 organized at Thakur College of Science and Commerce, Kandivli (East) on August 11, 2024 for Zone III (Mumbai-III).

Mr. Nilesh Sawe  
Cultural Co-ordinator,  
University of Mumbai

Dr. Sunil Patil  
Director,  
Department of Students' Development,  
University of Mumbai

Date: August 11, 2024  
Place: Kandivli

University of Mumbai  
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

57 Youth Festival  
(Zonal Round)

*Certificate of Merit*

This is to Certify that Ms. Nair Pratishtha Rajshree of Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya, Vile Parle participated and secured **CONSOLATION** in Indian Folk Dance competition at 57th Inter-Collegiate / Institute / Department Cultural Youth Festival (Zonal Round): 2024-25 organized at Thakur College of Science and Commerce, Kandivli (East) on August 11, 2024 for Zone III (Mumbai-III).

Mr. Nilesh Sawe  
Cultural Co-ordinator,  
University of Mumbai

Dr. Sunil Patil  
Director,  
Department of Students' Development,  
University of Mumbai

Date: August 11, 2024  
Place: Kandivli

University of Mumbai  
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

57 Youth Festival  
(Zonal Round)

*Certificate of Merit*

This is to Certify that Ms. Pednekar Savni Shailendra of Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya, Vile Parle participated and secured **CONSOLATION** in Indian Folk Dance competition at 57th Inter-Collegiate / Institute / Department Cultural Youth Festival (Zonal Round): 2024-25 organized at Thakur College of Science and Commerce, Kandivli (East) on August 11, 2024 for Zone III (Mumbai-III).

Mr. Nilesh Sawe  
Cultural Co-ordinator,  
University of Mumbai

Dr. Sunil Patil  
Director,  
Department of Students' Development,  
University of Mumbai

Date: August 11, 2024  
Place: Kandivli

University of Mumbai  
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

57 Youth Festival  
(Zonal Round)

*Certificate of Merit*

This is to Certify that Ms. Nair Pratishtha Rajshree of Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya, Vile Parle participated and secured **THIRD RANK** in Elocution Group B (Hindi or English) competition at 57th Inter-Collegiate / Institute / Department Cultural Youth Festival (Zonal Round): 2024-25 organized at Bhanumati Kishandas Shroff College of Arts and Maganlal Hargovinddas Shroff College of Commerce, Kandivli on August 16, 2024 for Zone III (Mumbai-III).

Mr. Nilesh Sawe  
Cultural Co-ordinator,  
University of Mumbai

Dr. Sunil Patil  
Director,  
Department of Students' Development,  
University of Mumbai

Date: August 16, 2024  
Place: Kandivli

University of Mumbai  
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

57 Youth Festival  
(Zonal Round)

*Certificate of Merit*

This is to Certify that Ms. Chorge Bhagyada Ekmath of Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya, Vile Parle participated and secured **CONSOLATION** in Indian Folk Dance competition at 57th Inter-Collegiate / Institute / Department Cultural Youth Festival (Zonal Round): 2024-25 organized at Thakur College of Science and Commerce, Kandivli (East) on August 11, 2024 for Zone III (Mumbai-III).

Mr. Nilesh Sawe  
Cultural Co-ordinator,  
University of Mumbai

Dr. Sunil Patil  
Director,  
Department of Students' Development,  
University of Mumbai

Date: August 11, 2024  
Place: Kandivli

University of Mumbai  
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

57 Youth Festival  
(Zonal Round)

*Certificate of Merit*

This is to Certify that Ms. Nath Bhumika Pradeep of Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya, Vile Parle participated and secured **CONSOLATION** in Indian Folk Dance competition at 57th Inter-Collegiate / Institute / Department Cultural Youth Festival (Zonal Round): 2024-25 organized at Thakur College of Science and Commerce, Kandivli (East) on August 11, 2024 for Zone III (Mumbai-III).

Mr. Nilesh Sawe  
Cultural Co-ordinator,  
University of Mumbai

Dr. Sunil Patil  
Director,  
Department of Students' Development,  
University of Mumbai

Date: August 11, 2024  
Place: Kandivli



# *Nalanda Shines at Inter-Collegiate Festivals*

Event – **Vasudeva Nrutya Kala Manch- All India National Dance Competition**

Date – 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024



**Anushkaa Ramanatan**, a dedicated student of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya, from MPA Part II, has won the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize at the Vasudeva Nrutya Kala Manch – All India National Dance Competition, held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024 in Mumbai. Her grace and skill in Bharatanatyam shone through, earning her this prestigious recognition. Sincere gratitude is extended to Dr. Smt. Uma Rele Ma'am for her enduring guidance and commitment to nurturing young talent. Her passion for the arts continues to illuminate the path for aspiring dancers.

Event – **Extravaganza 7: National Level Dance Competition**

Date – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024

**Shruti Varier**, a talented student in MPA Part II, of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya, has secured the 1<sup>st</sup> position in the prestigious Dance Extravaganza 7: National Level Dance Competition, held in Mumbai.





Event – **Earthmantra**

Date – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Theme – Singing Competition

Venue – Bhavans College

**Purva Naik**, Student of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya secured first place in the singing competition for the event Earthmantra. She mesmerized the audience and judges with her soulful voice and remarkable stage presence. Her achievement reflects her hard work, passion, and dedication to art.

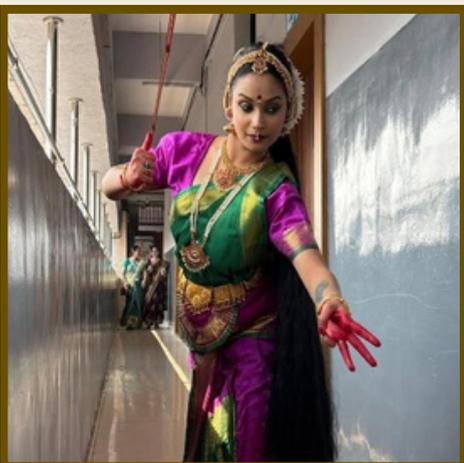
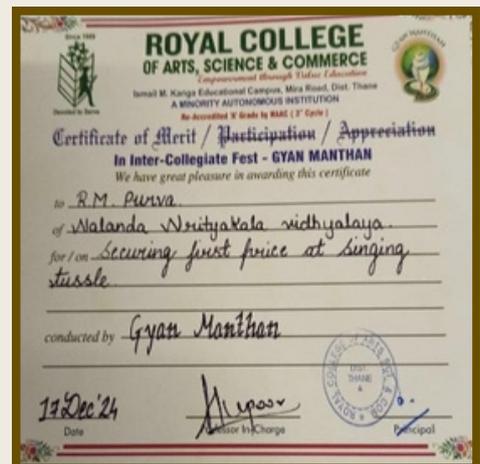
Event – **Gyan Mantha**

Date – 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Theme – Light Vocal

Venue – Royal College, Mira Road

**Purva Naik** student of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya, secured First Place in the Light Vocal category at the prestigious Inter-collegiate fest – ‘Gyan Mantha’. Her melodious rendition and confident stage presence demonstrated both artistic maturity and deep musical understanding, earning her well-deserved acclaim.



Event – **The Pehchaan Fest 2024**

Date – 21<sup>st</sup> December 2024

Venue – R J College of Arts and Science

At The Pehchaan Fest 2024, conducted by R J College of Arts and Science, our student of Nalanda, **Ms. Urvashi Guptabagged** 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in the Indian classical solo event by performing ‘Kali Kautuvam’.



**Event – The Pehchaan Fest 2024**

Date – 21<sup>st</sup> December 2024

Venue – R J College of Arts and Science

Nalanda's third year and second year bachelor's students secured the first prize in Indian folk-dance event, in which they performed a very popular Punjabi Folk 'Gidda', Conceptualized and choreographed by our very own folk-dance Guru Shri. Prashant Bhaflekar Sir. Our heartfelt gratitude to our principal Dr. Smt. Uma Rele Ma'am for her unwavering support that boosts the confidence in every dancer for their performance.

Participants: Kavya Varma, Krutika Sontakke, Asmi Gada, Karthika Nadar, Venkateshwari Nadar, Bhoomi Patel, Devanshi Shinde

**Event - Monarch**

Date – 18<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Theme – Singing and Dance Competition

Venue – Ramniranjan Jhunjhunwala College

**Purva Naik**, Student of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya, secured first place in both singing and dance competitions held at Ramniranjan Jhunjhunwala College. Her exceptional talent, dedication, and captivating performances in both art forms earned high praise from the judges and audience alike.





### Event - **Udaan Festival**

Date – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025

Venue – Nava Samaj Mandal Degree College

Students of DLLE committee of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya performed a Street Play at the Udaan Festival under the guidance of Dr. Patil V A, Teacher in charge of the DLLE unit at Nalanda.

Participants: Krutika Sontakke, Avantika Chougule, Venkateshwari Nadar, Hiya Ambekar, Purva Naik, Namrata boda, Arya sawant

### Event – **Dance Competition**

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025

Venue – St. Francis College

Nalanda students, Asmi Gada and Yadhresh Channar, won the solo dance competition at St. Francis College. Deepest gratitude is extended to Dr. Smt. Uma Rele Ma'am for her enduring guidance and commitment to nurturing young talent. Her passion for the arts continues to illuminate the path for aspiring dancers.





# Turning dreams into reality

## Hiya Kishore Ambekar: My journey to becoming FSIA Miss Mumbai 2024

At just 18 years old, the journey to becoming FSIA Miss Mumbai 2024 has been nothing short of extraordinary. I never imagined that a dream so big would come true, but as I stand here today, I reflect on how wonderful and transformative this experience has been for me. It has taught me more than just the value of perseverance, grace, and confidence; it has instilled in me the importance of purpose and passion in creating real change. The path to winning this prestigious title wasn't easy, but every moment of it was worth the effort. I participated not just to shine on stage but to use this platform for something meaningful — to help people and make a difference in the world around me. Winning FSIA Miss Mumbai 2024 has given me the unique opportunity to amplify causes close to my heart, and I am determined to use it to benefit others.

The purpose behind my pursuit of this title has always been bigger than the crown. I have always been passionate about education and the welfare of children, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds. Growing up, I saw how education can change lives, and I want to be a part of that change. Through this title, I aim to create opportunities for these children and ensure that they have access to the tools they need to succeed.

Equally important to me is raising awareness around menstruation — an issue that is often taboo and misunderstood. Menstrual hygiene and health are critical aspects of women's well-being, and many in underserved communities lack the education and resources to manage their menstrual health properly. I want to break the silence, remove the stigma, and provide solutions to ensure that every girl and woman has access to sanitary products and the knowledge they deserve.

Helping the needy has always been close to my heart, and now, with the platform I have gained through this title, I am committed to addressing their needs more effectively. Whether it's supporting food banks, providing healthcare, or giving back to communities in other ways, I intend to make the most of my time as FSIA Miss Mumbai 2024 to uplift and empower as many people as I can.



**Hiya Kishore Ambekar**  
**BPA Part I**

This journey is about more than just earning a title—it's about creating meaningful change. As I step into this new chapter following my achievement as FSIA Miss Mumbai 2024, I am launching a project focused on the welfare of underprivileged children and menstruation awareness. With deep gratitude for the platform I've been given, I'm committed to working tirelessly to turn these ideas into action and to make a lasting impact. This is just the beginning, and with the support of those around me, I hope to inspire others and contribute to building a more compassionate and equitable world for all.



# *Artistic Essence in Motion*

## Performing arts events (2024 - 2025)



Theme – **The Seven Chakras**

Date – 14<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Venue – NCPA, Mumbai

The students, principal Ma'am and alumni of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya, performed 'The Seven Chakras' (seen through the lenses of Mahabharata) – Nalanda's home production at the experimental theatre of NCPA. Conceptualized by Dr. Smt. Uma Rele, the Chakras emphasized the significance of different human psyches. Sincere gratitude to our respected principal Ma'am, and all the teachers for their immense support, guidance and efforts to make this event a grand success.

**Performers:** Dr. Uma Rele, Prarthana Patil, Swati Churadiya, Radhika Nair, Taamohar Biswas, Anushkaa Ramanatan, Kavya Pujara, Avantika Pawar, Shruti Varier, Kavya Varma, Urvashi Gupta, Gauri Ajith, Jainami Gada, Mohanraj Acharya, Vishal Bhokre, Meera Wagh, Amanda Chetty, Amit munge



Event – **Sindhu Nair's Ghungroo Festival**

Date – 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2024

Venue – CIDCO Auditorium, Vashi, Mumbai

Our talented Nalanda students, performed at Sindhu Nair's Ghungroo Festival, held at CIDCO Auditorium, Vashi – Mumbai. A worthy depiction of 'Ardhanari Nateshwara' by **Mohanraj Acharya and Meera Wagh** under the guidance of Dr. Smt. Uma Rele and Dr. Smt. Vaidehi Rele Lal. We are thankful to our Respected Principal Ma'am, Dr. Smt. Uma Rele and our dear Teacher Dr. Smt. Vaidehi Rele Lal for their constant support and encouragement.



Event – **Hare Krishna Festival 2024**

Date – 14<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Theme – Jagannath Namaha

Venue – ISKCON Temple, Juhu

Nalanda performed at the Hare Krishna Festival 2024, curated by Guru Lata Surendra ji.

Our principal Ma'am, Dr. Smt. Uma Rele and the Nalanda Troupe performed a dance drama titled 'Jagannath Namaha', in various classical styles – Bharata Natyam, Kathak, and Odissi at the Holy ISKCON temple, Juhu.

Deepest gratitude to Guru Lata Surendra Ji for organizing this beautiful event and including Nalanda in it, and to our Principal, Dr. Smt. Uma Rele Ma'am, for bringing forth this visually captivating dance piece."

**Performers:** Dr. Uma rele, Prarthana patil, Swati Churadiya, Taamohar Biswas, Shruti Varier, Avantika Pawar, Kavya Pujara, Anushkaa Ramanatan, Simran Cherayil, Kanak Darak, Kavya Varma, Urvashi Gupta, Gauri Ajith, Jainami Gada, Mohanraj Acharya Meera Wagh, Krutika Sontakke, Amanda Chetty



## Event – **Shri Krishna Bhakti Mahotsav**

Date – 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2024

Venue – Vallabh Nidhi Haveli, Juhu

The students of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya conceptualized, choreographed and performed four timeless tales of Lord Krishna in divine presence of deities residing in Vallabh Nidhi Haveli, Juhu. The conceptualized themes were namely,

‘Bhaktī Nirantar’ led by Gautami Joshi, Babusha Jain & Arpita Gupta  
‘Giridhara Govinda’ led by Simran Cherayil, Arup Mahanta & Kimaya More



‘Madhava Madhu Smrutaha’ led by Kavya Pujara, Anushka Ramanatan & Aleena Khan

‘Āndāl Arāadhanai’ led by Shruti Varier, Avantika Pawar, Medhavi Shrivastava & Vishruti Manek

We are blessed to have our guiding light, our principal Dr. Smt Uma Rele Ma’am for giving us the opportunity in nurturing our creative vision and choreographic ideas into action

### **Performers:**

– In ‘Bhaktī Nirantar’: Gautami Joshi, Babusha Jain, Arpita Gupta, Kajal Thakur, Bhumi Ahuja, Ashmi Shrimali, Eshita Mehta, Rampal Singh Avantika Chougule, Kirti Sable, Sejal Dubla, Devanshi Shinde, Vvani Jain, Karthika Murugan Bhumi Patel, Urvashi Gupta, Kavya Varma, Sakshi Apte, Preshit Meher, Kshitij Kowe

– In ‘Giridhar Govinda’: Simran Cherayil, Kimaya More, Arup Mahanta, Upasana Shingala, Amit Munge, Hiya Kishore Ambekar, Abhirati Asudani, Harshita Vasudeo, Yadhresh Channar, Purva Naik, Fiyona Koprea, Sanika More, Lakshmi Nair, Asmi Gada, Venkateshwari Nadar, Gauri Ajith, Vaishnavi Naiksatam, Pragati Ankam, Sayli Najwale, Maitreyee Ingle

– In ‘Madhava Madhu Smrutaha’: Kavya Pujara, Anushka Ramanatan, Aleena Khan, Arya Sawant, Shashikala Rathod, Samiksha More, Nandini Subash, Vaishnavi Gondhalekar, Rutu Sakharpekar, Samta Amane, Bhumika Nath, Devika Sakhare, Pratishtha Nair, Dhanila Sunil, Uthara Sharath, Meera Wagh, Lakshmi Priya Nair, Roshni Kamble, Gauri Jathe

– In ‘Āndāl Arāadhanai’: Shruti Varier, Avantika Pawar, Medhavi Shrivastava, Vishruti Manek, Kanak Darak, Jainami Gada, Mohanraj Acharya, Krutika Sontakke, Akanksha Salunkhe, Aditi Mitra, Sneha Patil, Amanda Chetty, Aleena Nair, Bhagyada Chorge, Rajrupa Mitra, Ananya Aithal, Namrata Boda



**Event – Ashish Utsav Puru Kalp**

Date – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2024

Venue – Kanak Sabha, Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya

'Ashish Utsav' Puru Kalp' which was organized by Sunil Sunkara and Dr. Piyush Raj, in collaboration with Nalanda, was entrancingly put together with several talks, lecture demonstrations, and seminars on the Pedagogy of Dance.

The Director and Principal of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya Dr. Smt. Uma Rele Ma'am spoke on the 'Pedagogy of Dance' focusing on Bharata Natyam and Mohini Attam followed by magnificent presentation 'Pratidnya' by students of Nalanda under the guidance of Mr. Taamohar Biswas Sir.

**Performers:** Taamohar Biswas, Karthika Nadar, Venkateshwari Nadar, Kavya Varma, Urvashi Gupta, Gauri Ajith, Jainami Gada, Mohanraj Acharya, Meera Wagh, Preshit Meher, Kanak Darak, Anushkaa Ramanatan



Event: Giridhara Govinda – **A Thematic Lecture Demonstration**

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Venue: Utpal Shanghvi Global School

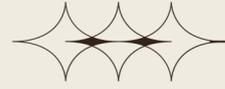
Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya presented a rich and thought-provoking lecture demonstration by Dr. Smt. Vaidehi Rele Lal Ma'am, assisted by the master's students of Nalanda, showcasing the thematic presentation, Giridhara Govinda. This unique production explored the same narrative through three classical Indian dance forms: Bharata Natyam, Kathak, and Mohini Attam.

The presentation depicted a significant episode from Lord Krishna's leelas, wherein the people of Vrindavan are guided away from ritualistic worship of Lord Indra, towards the veneration of Govardhana Parvata — a symbol of nature's nurturing essence. The performance culminated with the powerful image of Lord Krishna lifting the Govardhana Parvata, reflecting the victory of humility and faith over pride and misplaced authority.

Following the performance, Dr. Smt. Vaidehi Rele Lal and her students conducted an engaging interactive session, initiating discussions on the morals of the story, the relevance of devotion and humility, and the importance of respecting nature and cultivating virtuous human values.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Dr. Smt. Uma Rele Ma'am for her consistent support and inspirational leadership. Her vision continues to elevate the standards of classical dance education and presentation at Nalanda.

**Performers:** Simran Cherayil, Shruti Varier, Kimaya More, Gautami Joshi, Avantika Pawar, Kavya Pujara, Anushkaa Ramanatan, Maitreyee Ingle, Gauri Jathe Sayli, Najwale Kanak Darak, Richa Rajeevan, Sakshi Apte, Preshit Meher, Vaishnavee Naiksatam



### Event – **Avahan**

Date – 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Theme – Offering to Guru Padmabhushan Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele

Our Principal Ma'am, Dr. Smt. Uma Rele performed in 'Avahan', curated by for Guru Dr. Lata Surendraji. Through 'Avahan', Uma Ma'am offered diksha to her Guru Padmabhushan Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele Ma'am – an ode to her through her choreographed dance pieces on enlightening concepts of Gyan, Karma, and Bhakti Marga. Uma Ma'am and Nalanda Troupe explored the concepts further and presented at NCPA, Mumbai.

We are wholeheartedly thankful to our esteemed principal Ma'am Dr. Smt. Uma Rele for not only continuing Guru Padmabhushan Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele Ma'am's dream and vision but redefining it and taking it beyond what she imagined.

**Performers:** Dr. Uma Rele, Taamohar Biswas, Anushkaa Ramanatan, Simran Cherayil



### Events – **Chembur Fine Arts Nrityotsavam Festival**

Date – 10<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Venue – Chembur Fine Arts

The students of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya presented 'Shakti Swaroopam' conceptualized and presented under the guidance of Dr. Smt Uma Rele Ma'am, an expression of divine feminine energy through a portrayal of the three Devis: Goddess Saraswati, Goddess Lakshmi, and Goddess Durga.

The vibrant sequence commenced with Saraswati Namostubhyam in Ragam Abheri, a shloka in the praise of Goddess Saraswati and then transitioned to Mahalaxmi Keertanam in Ragam Shankarabharanam set to Talam Mishra Chapu, showcasing the concept of Asta Laxmi (the eight forms of Devi). The sequence was concluded by Simhavahini Varnamin Ragam Ranjani and Talam Adi, dedicated to fierce goddess, Durga.

**Performers:** Taamohar Biswas, Kavya Verma, Gauri Ajith, Mohanraj Acharya, Avantika Pawar, Shruti Varier





Event: **Prachodayat**

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2024

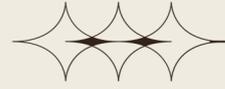
Venue: Mysore Association

The students of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya had the honor of presenting the world-renowned dance composition 'Chandana Charchita' Ashtapadi, originally curated by Padma Bhushan Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele Ma'am. This masterpiece was performed under the guidance of Guru Dr. Smt. Uma Rele Ma'am, at Prachodayat – event curated by Guru Dr. Lata Surendra Ji.

'Chandana Charchita' is a celebrated composition by the poet Jayadeva, transporting the audience into the divine realm of Lord Krishna and his gopis constantly vying for his attention. Set to the melodious Ragam Kapiand rhythmic Talam Adi, the piece beautifully portrays the playful and devotional love between Lord Krishna and the gopis. Krishna's form, adorned with sandalwood, and the gopis' complete surrender in love capture the essence of Madhura Bhava Bhakti. This divine presentation embodies the transcendental union of the soul with the supreme, celebrating a love that goes beyond earthly desires into pure spiritual ecstasy.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Smt. Uma Rele Ma'am for her unwavering guidance, support, and mentorship. Her dedication to nurturing young artists and upholding the vision of Guru Dr. Smt. Kanak Relehas been instrumental in shaping this beautiful presentation.

**Performers:** Taamohar Biswas, Shruti Varier Avantika Pawar Mohanraj Acharya Gauri Ajith Kavya Varma



Theme – **Navavidha Bhakti**

Date – 17<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Venue – Sai Baba Math, Vile Parle

Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya performed at the Sai Baba Math at Vile Parle. The concept of surrendering to the Lord may be different for each individual. Hence, the concept of Navavidha bhakti was presented.

Madhava Madhu Smrutaha – The playful Krishna playing the flute and capturing everyone's mind and heart and helping Draupadi when needed by eating a grain of rice.

Govardhana Giridhara – The naughty Bala Krishna lifting the mighty Govardhana Parvata against Lord Indra to break down his ego.

**Performers:** Kimaya More, Simran Cherayil, Vaishnavee Naiksatam, Gauri Ajith, Asmi Gada, Lakshmi Nair, Upasana Shingala, Amit Munge, Venkateshwari Nadar, Yadhresh Channar, Fiyona Koprea, Hiya Ambekar, Purva Naik, Maitreyee Ingle



Event – **Anand Utsav**

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Venue: Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya

Anand Utsav, a vibrant celebration of classical dance, was held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya in association with the Guru Kundanlal Gangani Foundation. The event beautifully merged tradition with artistry, offering a glimpse into the timeless elegance of Kathak. A spellbinding Tarana was presented by the MPA I and MPA II Kathak students of Nalanda, reflecting their dedication, discipline, and expressive depth. A special note of gratitude to Dr. Smt. Uma Rele for her steadfast guidance and support, which continue to inspire and shape the artistic journey of Nalanda's students.

**Performers:** Urvashi Srivastava, Medhavi Srivastava, Arup Mahanta, Gauri Jathe, Maitree Ingle, Kshitij Kove, Babusha Jain, Arpita Gupta, Eshani Sathe, Rutuja Nandkarni, Vivek Mishra, Pushkharaj Bhagwat, Alka Gujar, Rajendra Gangani, Radhika Sathe, Jonaki Raghvan, Sunil Sunkara.



Event: **Anand Utsav**

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Venue: Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya

Nalanda proudly presented its premiere production, Sva-Abhivyakti, an immersive union of poetry, dance, and music. This innovative production brought together four classical Indian dance styles—Bharata Natyam, Kathak, Odissi, and Mohini Attam—seamlessly blended to create an artistic interpretation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's collection of Gujarati poems, Aankh Aa Dhanya Che.

These evocative poems were beautifully recited and translated into English by the esteemed film journalist Smt. Bhawana Somaaya, under the conceptualization and artistic direction of Dr. Smt. Uma Rele Ma'am, as part of Anand Utsav, a collaborative endeavor between the Guru Kundanlal Gangani Foundation of Guru Rajendra Gangani ji and Nalanda Dance Research Centre.

Heartfelt gratitude is extended to Dr. Smt. Uma Rele for her visionary leadership and dedication to the classical arts. Her ability to merge tradition with contemporary expression continues to inspire excellence and creativity in every production she touches.

**Performers:** Dr. Vaidehi Rele Lal, Sanatan Chakravarty, Ankur Ballal, Swati Churadiya, Taamohar Biswas, Nayana Prakash, Shruti Varier, Avantika Pawar, Kimaya More, Kavya Pujara, Anushkaa Ramanatan, Simran Cherayil, Kavya Varma, Gauri Ajith, and Mohanraj Acharya

Theme: **Katyayani**

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2025

Venue: VPMS LJNJ Mahila Mahavidyalaya

Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya presented 'Katyayani', a powerful portrayal of the fierce and radiant goddess born to vanquish the demon Mahishasura. The performance explored the strength, determination, and divine energy of Devi Katyayani, a symbol of feminine power and cosmic justice, brought to life through the expressive vocabulary of Indian classical dance.

The performance was enriched by the esteemed presence of Principal Dr. Smt. Uma Rele Ma'am, who graced the occasion and shared her insightful reflections on the relevance and depth of classical dance in today's world. Her words served as an inspiration to the students and audience alike. Also in attendance was our respected teacher Dr. Vijay Patil Sir, whose presence added further encouragement and warmth to the event.

Sincere gratitude is extended to Dr. Smt. Uma Rele for her enduring guidance and commitment to nurturing young talent. Her passion for the arts continues to illuminate the path for aspiring dancers, fostering a deep respect for tradition while encouraging innovation and expressive freedom.

The performers were students from the BPA Degree program, showcasing their dedication and evolving artistry.

**Performers:** Kavya Varma, Urvashi Gupta, Gauri Ajith, Jainami Gada, Mohanraj Acharya, Vishal Bhokre, Meera Wagh, and LakshmiPriya Nair.



**Event – Earthmantra**

Date – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Theme – Singing Competition

Venue – Bhavans College

Event: Nalanda Production Premier

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Venue: Kanak Sabha, Nalanda Dance Research Centre

Nalanda proudly premiered its latest dance production, 'Asamatvam Ayogyam', a bold and thought-provoking work presented through four classical dance forms—Bharata Natyam, Mohini Attam, Kathak, and Odissi.

This multidisciplinary production brought together a stellar cast of performers. The seamless integration of diverse classical traditions made for a compelling and artistically rich performance. A heartfelt gratitude is extended to Dr. Smt. Uma Rele, whose artistic vision and fearless exploration of complex themes continue to redefine the boundaries of classical dance.

**Performers:** Dr. Uma Rele, Dr. Vaidehi Rele Lal, Prarthana Patil, Radhika Nair, Taamohar Biswas, Avantika Pawar, Kimaya More, Gautami Joshi, Karthika Nadar, Venkateshwari Nadar, Preshit Meher, Shruti Varier, Kavya Varma, Urvashi Gupta, Gauri Ajith, Jainami Gada, Mohanraj Acharya, Meera Wagh, Amanda Chetty, Amit Munge, Maitreyee Ingle, Chitwan Majitia, Soumya Chodhary, Samta Amane, Devika Sakhare, Shreya Malvankar, and Gauri Jathe.



**Event: Patotsava 2024: Giridhara Govinda – A Thematic Lecture Demonstration**

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Venue: Shri Vallabhanidhi Haveli, Juhu

Theme: A Spiritual Journey through Classical Dance – From Invocation to Divine Love

Nalanda Troupe performed at Shri Vallabhanidhi Haveli, Juhu, on the occasion of Patotsava 2024, celebrating 40 years of their establishment. It commenced with an invocatory prayer to Lord Ganesha, followed by Krishna Karnamrutam – Radha depicting her manmatha awasthas in love as hit by the love arrows of Madana, longing to become one with Krishna. The performance culminated in the vibrant enactment of the Dashavatara, illustrating the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu with powerful expression and rhythmic precision.

**Performers:** Taamohar Biswas, Preshit Meher, Roshni Kamble, Vaishnavi Naiksatam, Kakkarayil Richa Rajeevan, Sakshi Apte, Devanshi Shinde, and Lakshmi Nair



**Event: Sanskruti Art Festival**

Date: 26th January 2025

Venue: Balasaheb Thakare Ground, Mira Road, Mumbai

Nalanda Troupe was elated to perform at the prestigious Sanskruti Festival 2025. The performance began with a vibrant Kasturi Tilakam, it gracefully transitioned into a Kadanakuthuhalam Tillana, the rhythmic patterns brought energy and flair. It concluded with the sacred Dashavatara Shloka, invoking divine presence.

A sincere thank you to Guru Kashmira Trivedi ji and her wonderful team.

**Performers:** Dr. Vaidehi Rele Lal, Taamohar Biswas, Swati Churadiya, Sejal Deole, Rutuja Nadkarni, Nayana Prakash, Avantika Pawar, Shruti Varier, Gautami Joshi, Mohanraj Acharya, Lakshmipriya Nair

**Event: Evam 2025**

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025

Theme: Panchamahabhutas – celebrating the five elements and their powers

Venue: Gokul Sion Hall, Mumbai

Students of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya shine on stage, melding the timeless grace of Bharata Natyam, Kathak, and Mohini Attam. Each movement is a tribute to Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Space. An artistic offering rooted in tradition, blossoming in expression

**Participants:** Dr. Vaidehi Rele Lal, Taamohar Biswas, Swati Churadiya, Sejal Deole, Rutuja Nadkarni, Nayana Prakash, Avantika Pawar, Shruti Varier, Gautami Joshi, Mohanraj Acharya, Lakshmipriya Nair



**Event: Coast Guard Day 2025**

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025

Theme: Panchamahabhutas – A dance production celebrating the five elements and their powers

Venue: Mahalakshmi Racecourse

The Nalanda Troupe proudly graced the stage on Coast Guard Day 2025, at the prestigious Mahalakshmi Racecourse, presenting



‘Panchamahabhutas’ — a tribute to the elemental forces of nature, through the elegance of Bharata Natyam, the rhythm of Kathak, and the grace of Mohini Attam, dancers brought the cosmic five to life in a confluence of classical traditions.

The performance honored the guardians of our seas with divine artistry. Each movement echoed strength, balance, and spiritual connection.

**Performers:** Dr. Vaidehi Rele Lal, Taamohar Biswas, Swati Churadiya, Sejal Deole, Rutuja Nadkarni, Nayana Prakash, Avantika Pawar, Shruti Varier, Gautami Joshi, Mohanraj Acharya, Lakshmipriya Nair



**Event: Student Exchange Program**

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Venue: St. Teresa's Institute of Education

Students of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya visited St. Teresa's Institute of Education and interacted with the students of B.Ed. under the exchange program on the topic of Drama and Art in education. The students of B.Ed. demonstrated different teaching methodologies, which would help with effective learning, while the students of Nalanda demonstrated the use of dance and arts in teaching.

**Participants:** MPA Part I (2024-25)



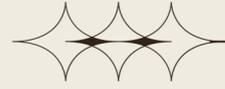
**Event: Celebrating The Queens of Abhinaya**

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Venue: The Studio Theatre, NMACC, Mumbai

Nalanda students were honored to celebrate the remarkable legacy of Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele Ma'am, a Mohini Attam maestro and a stalwart in the field of classical dance, at the prestigious NMACC. Our heartfelt gratitude to our Principal Ma'am, Dr. Smt. Uma Rele, for her invaluable encouragement and support.

**Performers:** Smt. Madhuri Deshmukh, Smt. Megha Mohad, Smt. Saji Nair, Roshni Kamble, Meera Wagh, Gauri Ajith



**Event: Natyanjali 2025**

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Venue: Sri Subramania Samaj Temple Complex, Chhedanagar, Chembur, Mumbai

Natyanjali is an annual dance festival held during Mahashivratri. The students of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya presented a Padam dedicated to Lord Shiva titled 'Yedduku Ittanai' as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Natyotsav and Nataraja Aradhanai on February 18, 2025, at Sri Subramania Samaj Temple Complex, Chembur, Mumbai.

**Participants:** Shruti Varier, Avantika Pawar, Anushkaa Ramanatan, Kavya Pujara, Kimaya More, Simran Cherayil, Gautami Joshi



**Event: Sanskriti Mahotsav 2025**

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Venue: Veer Savarkar Auditorium, Mumbai

The Nalanda Troupe was elated to perform at the prestigious Sanskriti Mahotsav 2025, dedicated to the legendary Padmabhushan Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele Ma'am, and organized by Guru Shila Mehta ji. It was a heartfelt tribute to Nalanda's founder and a celebration of her enduring legacy.

The Nalanda troupe presented a Sanskrit devotional work, 'Krishna Karnamrutam' by Bilvamangalam Swamiyar. The performance opened with an invocation

to Lord Ganesha and explored the longing of the women of Mathura, struck by the five love arrows of Manmatha—lotus, ashoka, mango flower, jasmine, and nilotpala—as they yearned for Krishna, who was in Mathura to confront Kamsa. The piece concluded with striking Dashavatara poses, blending nritta and nrityain a spiritually resonant presentation.

Conceptualized and choreographed by Dr. Uma Rele Ma'am, the production was a rich reflection of devotion and classical artistry. Heartfelt gratitude to our Principal Ma'am for her vision and dedication, which continues to uphold and expand the artistic values passed down by Dr. Kanak Rele.

**Performers:** Taamohar Biswas, Preshit Meher, Kanak Darak, Vaishnavee Naiksatam, Mohanraj Acharya, Kavya Varma, Urvashi Gupta, Lakshmi Nair, and Devanshi Shinde.





મુંબઈ, રવિવાર તા. ૪ મે, ૨૦૨૫

મુંબઈ



સાસ્ત્રીય અને લોકનૃત્યનો સંગમઃ બાંદરા- કુર્લા કોમ્પ્લેક્સમાં આયોજિત વેવ્સ (વર્લ્ડ ઓડિયો- વિઝ્યુઅલ સમીટ)ના શનિવારના ત્રીજા દિવસે સાસ્ત્રીય નૃત્ય, લોકનૃત્ય અને માર્શલ- આર્ટની કલાકારો દ્વારા રજૂઆત કરવામાં આવી હતી. કેરળની નૃત્યાંગનાઓ દ્વારા મોહિની- અટ્ટમ નૃત્ય રજૂ કરવામાં આવ્યું હતું. જ્યારે લોકકલાકારો દ્વારા વાધના ઓહરા પહેરીને અને શરરને ચીતરામણ કરીને વાધ- નૃત્યની રજૂઆત કરવામાં આવી હતી. જ્યારે પારંપારિક યુધ્ધ- કલા (માર્શલ આર્ટ) કલાઈપટ્ટુના પ્રયોગો જોઈને દર્શકો ગ્ર રહી ગયા હતા.

Event: **WAVES Audio Visual Summit 2025**

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2025

Venue: NMAAC, Jio World Convention Centre, BKC, Mumbai

Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya performed at the prestigious 'WAVES' Audio-Visual Summit, organized by the Ministry of Culture and Sangeet Natak Akademi at the NMAAC, Jio World Convention Centre, BKC, Mumbai.

Our talented students presented Mohini Attam under the guidance of Prof. Megha Mohad, faculty in the department of Mohini Attam. The piece, choreographed by the Late Padmabhushan Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele Ma'am, renowned for her contributions to Mohini Attam – this was a fitting tribute to her legacy.

The soulful music, composed by the Late Kavalam Narayana Panicker, beautifully uplifted the mood and enhanced the elegance of the art form.

The performance began with a traditional Ganapati in ragam Aarabhi and talam Adi, followed by Shri Krishnakarunaamrutam, and concluded with Jiva and a Mangalam.

A heartfelt thank you to our beloved Principal, Dr. Smt.Uma Rele, for her constant support and guidance that brought the entire presentation together as a whole.

**Performers:** Smt. Megha Mohad, Kavya Varma, Lakshmi Priya Nair, Gauri Ajith, Jainami Gada



# Vanita: An Ode to the Spirit of Mythical Women...

## A Dr. Usha RK Production

On the evening of 26<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 6:30 PM, the stage at Kanaka Sabha, Nalanda Dance Research Centre came alive with the luminous energy of Vanita — a visionary production curated by Dr. Usha RK. In a time when the wisdom of the past often feels like a distant echo, Vanita — a visionary production curated by Dr. Usha RK — emerges as a luminous reminder of the timeless qualities embodied by exemplary women from Indian mythology and ancient wisdom. Soul-stirring and deeply evocative, this production is more than a dance performance; it is a profound journey into the heart of strength, wisdom, valor, and unconditional love.

Vanita is a tribute — a reverent offering — to the unsung qualities of legendary women whose stories we have heard since childhood, yet whose spirit we sometimes forget to summon when darkness clouds our paths. Dr. Usha RK masterfully brings these figures into the spotlight, not merely as characters of old tales, but as living embodiments of ideals that continue to guide and inspire.

The evening unfolded with a deeply evocative introduction by Dr. Vaidehi Rele Lal, who, through a graceful and thoughtful performance, set the mood for the journey ahead. Her performance was not merely an opening act but a moving encapsulation of the core themes of Vanita. With each nuanced gesture and expressive movement, she painted the spirit of the women whose tales were about to be brought to life. Her interpretation laid a strong emotional and philosophical foundation, weaving together the characteristics of wisdom, love, courage, and intellectual pursuit that would be explored throughout the production.

The production unfolded like a sacred manuscript, each chapter brought to life by distinguished artists who interpreted the spirit of these women with finesse and sensitivity:

Maha Saraswati, the fountainhead of knowledge and wisdom, was portrayed with serene grace by Smt. Shreyasi Gopinath. Through her fluid movements and evocative abhinaya (expression), she breathed life into the goddess's essence, leaving the audience spellbound with the sheer purity of her depiction.

Radha, the eternal symbol of unconditional, selfless love, was brought to vivid life by Smt. Nandini Ganesan. With her flawless technique and deeply emotive expressions, she bridged mythology with personal experience, allowing every heart in the audience to resonate with Radha's boundless devotion.





Draupadi, the fiery emblem of courage and resilience, was powerfully rendered by Smt. Naviya Natarajan. Her commanding stage presence transported the audience to the dramatic and painful moment of Draupadi's disrobement — a moment of profound injustice that she met not with submission, but with fierce and righteous questioning of dharma itself. The strength she conveyed was palpable, igniting a collective sense of awe.

Gargi, the philosopher-seer who defied convention to seek knowledge over societal approval, was embodied by Smt. Keerthana Ravi. Her crisp, sharp movements and radiant charm vividly portrayed the difficult choices faced by women who dared to tread unconventional paths. Her performance was an inspiring homage to intellectual bravery.

Each portrayal was not merely a reenactment, but a deeply personal reimagining — making these mythological women not relics of a forgotten past, but companions on our contemporary journeys.

Vanita is a production that stays with you long after the lights dim, and the stage falls silent. It reminds us that our cultural stories are not just heritage to be preserved but living philosophies that illuminate our way forward. Productions like these are vital — they nurture our roots while allowing our spirits to soar towards new heights of understanding and introspection.

Dr. Usha RK's Vanita is a triumphant celebration of womanhood, resilience, and wisdom — a must-experience for anyone who seeks not just entertainment, but enlightenment through art.



**Written by,  
Bhagyada Chorge, BPA I**



# *Culmination Point* **Annual Day 2024-25**

## DAY I

Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya's 2-day annual day fiesta took place on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> March. The first day of the annual day function commenced with a grand procession led by the college principal, Dr. Smt. Uma Rele and the chief guest, who were also the recipients of Kanak Shakti Puraskar 2025. The procession was followed by the lighting of the lamp ceremony, which marked the beginning of the event.

The first performance of the day was the beginner batch of Bharata Natyam dancers who performed Ganesh Shloka and Adavus, and further other batches performed Jatiswaram, Varnam, and Keertanam. Odissi dancers performed their Vandana, Kathak students presented their taal, concluding with senior Kathak students who performed Tarana.

The dancers, dressed in traditional attire, presented a mesmerizing performance of the classical dance form. The recital was well received by the audience, who appreciated the dancers' skill and precision. On the occasion of International Women's Day, Nalanda awarded women stalwarts for their contribution in society.





## BPA Part I – Kathak

The students of BPA 1 Kathak performed a Vandana, in praise of lord Shiva, the Lord of Dance. Further, they presented Taal Teentaal comprising the compositions according to the traditional repertoire of Kathak such as Uthaan Thaata, Paran Judi Aamad, Tode, Tukde, Paran, Kavita etc. They concluded the performance with a ladi.

Musicians: Shri Vivek Mishra ji on Tabla and Shri Pushkaraj Bhagwat ji on Vocals and Harmonium and teacher in charge and on padhant Smt Sejal Deole ma'am and Ms Rutuja Nadkarni mam.

**Performers:** Devika Sakhare, Seepy Namdeo, Shreya Malvankar, Sanika More, Soumya Chaudhary, Chitvan Makhija



## MPA Part I & Part II – Kathak

The Students of MPA Part II began with Shiva Vandana set to Taal, Teen taal and Raag Bhupali. This was followed by the same group performing the rhythmic compositions of Thaata, uthaan, Aamad, todas, Paran, Tatkar on the 12 matra taal, Choutaal.

MPA Part I students concluded the recital with a Tarana. This composition is based on 11 matras and is set to raag Mishra Megh.

**Musicians:** On vocals & harmonium(nagma) Shri. Pushkaraj bhagvat ji, on tabla we have Shri Vivek Mishra ji, & on padhant we have- Dr. Varada pandit and Smt. Jonaki Raghavan Ji.

**Performers:** Arpita Gupta, Medhavi Srivastava, Vishruti Manek, Babusha Jain, Aleena Khan, Arup Mahanta, Gauri Jathe, Maitreyee Ingle, Kshitij Kowe





### **BPA Degree – Bharata Natyam**

The students of Bachelors of performing arts Degree performed Kharaharapriya Varnam. Varnam is a nritya item where we find the blend of jatis and sahyams challenging the dancer's ability to do both. The nayika of this varnam talks about her love towards Lord Shiva, to her sakhi, by describing his qualities like the serpent that rests on his neck, his majestic walk, his matted locks that are adorned with the crescent moon and ganga. She requests her sakhi to go quickly and bring him to her, if she does so, she will get 'koti puniyam'. The nayika further questions her sakhi asking her, 'sakhi, why are you still thinking?' What is the confusion? By the end the nayika describes him dancing in the Kanaka Sabha, with the orchestra being, sage tumburu and sage naradar who are singing for the lord, lord brahma and lord Vishnu who are playing the cymbals, nandi playing the maddalam, and all the sages who are singing his praise. Even though both his kundalam are dancing with him, if I see this beautiful sight, all my sorrows would go away this instant. What are you thinking about sakhi, please bring him to me.

This beautiful composition is composed by Shri Dandayuta Pani Pillai in the language Tamizh. This varnam, is in the ragam Kharaharapriya, talam Adi. The teacher in-charge was Dr. Meenakshi iyer Gangopadhyay.

### **Musicians:**

On Nattuvangam: Dr. Meenakshi iyer Gangopadhyay

Vocals: Smt. Sandhya Pisharody

Mridangam: Shri. Dakshinamurthy Pillai

Violin: Shri. Balasubramanian

Flute: Shri. Raghvendra Baaliga

**Performers:** Mohanraj Acharya, Vishal Bhokre, Gauri Ajith, Jainami Gada, Krutika Sontakke, Urvashi Gupta, Lakshmi Priya Nair, Meera Wagh, Kavya Varma



### **BPA Part I – Bharata Natyam**

The students of BPA Part I presented a beautiful and intricate piece of Bharata Natyam—Jatiswaram. Jatiswaram is a pure dance or nritya piece that highlights the dancer's mastery over rhythm, precision, and grace. The students showcased complex footwork and intricate rhythmic patterns while being set to a melodious swara composition. It seamlessly blended jatis with swaras, creating a mesmerizing visual and auditory experience. Though Jatiswaram does not involve abhinaya, it was a crucial part of the recital as it showcased the dancer's command over tala, laya, and anga shuddham. Traditionally set in Carnatic ragams, this piece embodied the pure joy of dance and the beauty of synchronized movement with music. The students invited the audience to immerse themselves in the vibrant energy and technical brilliance of this Jatiswaram. This Jatiswaram was set to ragam Cakravam and Talam - Rupaka. The teacher in charge was Smt. Dr. Vaidehi Rele Lal.

#### **Musicians:**

On Nattuvangam: Smt. Dr. Vaidehi Rele Lal  
Vocals: Smt. Sandhya Pisharody  
Mridangam: Shri. Dakshinamurthy Pillai  
Violin: Shri. Balasubramanian  
Flute: Shri. Raghvendra Baaliga

**Performers:** Aleena Nair, Anushka More, Bhagyada Chorge, Fiyona Koprea, Kirti Sable, Nandini S., Samiksha More, Savni Pednekar, Shreya Nair, Vaishnavi Gondhalekar



### **MPA Part II – Bharata Natyam**

The students of MPA Part II Bharata Natyam presented Shree Rama Keertanam, a soulful dance drama that brought to life the timeless glory of Lord Rama. Set to the divine verses of Shree Ramachandra Bhajan, composed by Sant Tulsidas, this performance was a representation of Lord Rama's virtues: his unwavering righteousness, compassion, and indomitable courage. Through expressive narrative, this performance intricately wove three powerful episodes from the Ramayana, showcasing the encounter of Soorpanakha, the abduction of Sita (Sita Haran), and the epic battle leading to the fall of Ravana. Through this ultimate triumph of dharma over adharma, the divine virtues of Lord Rama continued to uplift humanity and restore faith.

#### **Musicians:**

On Nattuvangam: their teacher in-charge Dr. Smt. Uma Rele  
Vocals: Smt. Sandhya Pisharody  
Mridangam: Shri. Dakshinamurthy Pillai  
Violin: Shri. Balasubramanian  
Flute: Shri. Raghvendra Baaliga

**Performers:** Anushkaa Ramanatan, Avantika Pawar, Gautami Joshi, Kavya Pujara, Kimaya More, Shruti Varier, Simran Cherayil



### **Odissi Certification & Elective**

The students from Odissi Certification Course and Odissi Electives, presented Mangalacharan, a traditional invocation in Odissi, seeking divine blessings for an auspicious beginning.

The performance encompassed:

- Pushpanjali – To Lord Jagannatha
- Bhumi Pranam – A salutation to Mother Earth, seeking blessings and forgiveness
- Namami Sloka – A prayer to Lord Ganesha, remover of obstacles
- Sabha Pranam – A final bow to our teachers, musicians, and audience

Set in Raga Baradi and Eka Tala, this piece blends rhythm, grace, and devotion.

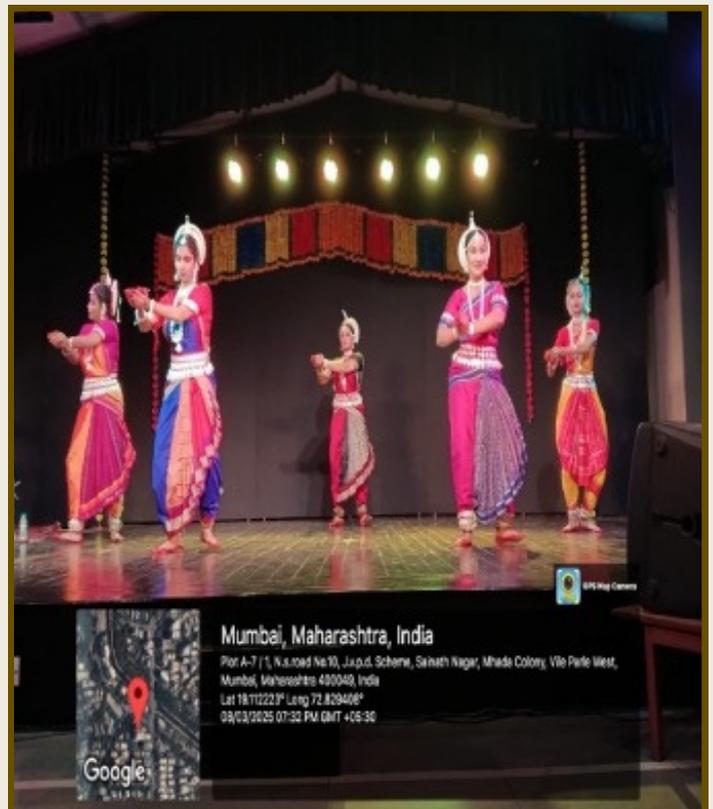
### **Musicians:**

Vocals: Pragati Ankam

Mardala: Our teacher, Shri Sanatan Chakravarty

Manjira: Chitvan Majithia

**Performers:** Rajshree Mallick, Sanskriti Malaviya, Bindu Salian, Risha Lodha, Sanjana Patil, Rajrupa Mitra



# DAY 2



The 2-day annual function of Nalanda was a resounding success, featuring a diverse range of cultural performances. The Bharata Natyam, Kathak and Folk Dance performances were particularly well-received, showcasing the talent and skill of the dancers. The event was well attended, and the audience appreciated the creativity and enthusiasm of the performers.

On this day students who have been the best Library users participated in DLLE and cultural activities were honored.

The Prize Distribution Ceremony held at this event celebrated the outstanding achievements of participants in various fields.

## BPA Part II – Bharata Natyam

The students of BPA Part II were honored to present a Padam, 'Yeda Kittanai', a poignant expression of devotion and longing. In this traditional Nindā Stuti, the devotee is troubled by Lord Shiva's seeming indifference. With heartfelt emotion, the devotee asks, 'Have I revealed your secrets? Why then do you ignore me?'

Set to the enchanting Ragam Surutti and Tālam Rupaka, this Padam has been choreographed by the renowned Padma Bhushan Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele ma'am.

They concluded with, a tribute to Lord Nataraja with a shloka, penned by our talented classmate Kum. Karthika Nadar, and choreographed by our teacher-in-charge Smt. Radhika Nair ma'am.

### Musicians:

On Nattuvangam: Smt. Radhika Nair ma'am

Vocals: Smt. Sandhya Pisharody

Mridangam: Shri. Dakshinamurthy Pillai

Violin: Shri. Balasubramanian

Flute: Shri. Raghvendra Baaliga

**Performers:** Devanshi Shinde, Lakshmi Nair, Bhoomi Patel, Karthika Murugan, Venkateshwari Nadar, Uthara Sharath, Divya Gharat, Aditi Mitra, Dhanila Sunil, Pratishtha Nair, Asmi Gada, Vvani Jain





### MPA Part I – Bharata Natyam

The students of MPA Part I performed Varnam under the able guidance of Dr. Meenakshi Iyer Gangopadhyay

Varnam - One of the most important items in the Margam of Bharatanatyam marking the end of Purvardha of the margam. Varnam comprises both Nritta as well as Nritya and is composed in praise of a particular deity. The above Varnam is in praise of Lord Krishna. This beautiful piece is composed by Shri Papanasan Sivan in Tamil language.

Here, Nayika asks the lord if it is fair to play these tricks while manmatha arrows hit her. She tells you who are the torch bearer of the cowherd clan please come and bless me.

#### Musicians:

On Nattuvangam: Dr. Meenakshi Iyer Gangopadhyay  
Vocals: Smt. Sandhya Pisharody

Mridangam: Shri. Dakshinamurthy Pillai

Violin: Shri. Balasubramanian

Flute: Shri. Raghvendra Baaliga

**Performers:** Kanak Darak, Vaishnavi Naiksatam, Roshni Kamble, Sakshi Apt, Richa Rajeevan, Preshit Meher

### Foundation II – Bharata Natyam

The foundation II class presented a mesmerizing Shabdham performance, centered around the divine and enchanting figure of Lord Krishna choreographed and conceptualized by Shri. Taamohar Biswas. The composition, a classical dance item from the Bharatanatyam tradition, beautifully brought to life the essence of devotion and the timeless stories of Krishna.

Shabdham is a vibrant dance composition that combines rhythm, melody and expressive storytelling, where the dancer invokes divine qualities through structured movements and emotive gestures. In this performance, the story focused on the many facets of Krishna's divine play (leela) - from his childhood pranks to his important teachings behind every mischief.

#### Musicians:

On Nattuvangam: Shri. Taamohar Biswas

Vocals: Smt. Sandhya Pisharody

Mridangam: Shri. Dakshinamurthy Pillai

Violin: Shri. Balasubramanian

Flute: Shri. Raghvendra Baaliga

**Performers:** Aarya Sawant, Amit Munge, Bhoomi Ahuja, Kajal Thakur, Mrunali Pawar, Namrata Boda, Shashikala Rathod, Upasana Shingala



## BPA Part I – Bharata Natyam

The students of BPA, Part I, were honored to present the vibrant and energetic Bharatanatyam piece, Tillana. Tillana is a nritya composition typically performed to conclude the Bharatanatyam repertoire. Known for its dynamic and lively movements, it is a highly energetic dance form. The composition is structured in Pancha Jaati, allowing for a wide variety of intricate footwork, a hallmark of Bharatanatyam. This piece is characterized by both expressive and graceful movements, beautifully celebrating rhythm and melody.

The Tillana also includes a small Sahityam segment, which is a devotional praise of Lord Shiva, sung in Tamil.

Raagam: Hamsanandi

Taalam: Aadi Taalam

Composed by: Padmashree K. N. Dandayudhapani Pillai

The performance was followed by the Mangalam, a traditional final bow to the stage marking the end of the entire program. Teacher in charge - Dr. Smt. Vaidehi Rele Lal ma'am

### Musicians:

On Nattuvangam: Dr. Smt. Vaidehi Rele Lal ma'am

Vocals: Smt. Sandhya Pisharody.

Mridangam: Shri. Dakshinamurthy Pillai.

Violin: Shri. Balasubramanian.

Flute: Shri. Raghvendra Baaliga



**Performers:** Hiya Ambekar, Purva Naik, Bhumika Nath, Amanda Chetty, Eshita Mehta, Avantika Chougule, Rajrupa Mitra, Yadhresh Channar, Ashmi Shrimali, Ananya Aithal





# *Broadening Perspectives*

## Workshops

**'Mukhaja Abhinaya in Dance'**

**– by Kalashree Guru Shri C Gopalkrishnan Nair**

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024**



Nalanda's Student Council Committee and Alumni Association organized a workshop on Mukhaja Abhinaya by Kalashree Guru Shri C Gopalkrishnan Nair on Founders Day held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024, to commemorate the 87<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Padmabhushan Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele. Kalashree Gopal Sir is one of the most revered Kathakali maestros, who always have been closely associated with Nalanda and Kanak Rele Ma'am in her research work on Abhinaya. He was a prime member of her team for the development and propagation of Indian Classical Dance, especially Mohini Attam and was a senior respected faculty at Nalanda for many years. The session encompassed the profound meaning of even a tiny delicate movement of upangas (minor limbs) in abhinaya and the massive impact it creates on the bhavas and rasas for both the dancer and audience alike. The session was truly an eye-opener for the budding dancers and an excellent start to the academic year as it set the right tone for the Nritya aspect of the dance. The practice exercises shared by Sir on various upangas such as eyes, eyebrows, lips, cheeks, chin, nose were especially noteworthy, which we would carry with us throughout our journey as dancers.



## Exploring Abhinaya in Kathak

– by Dr. Malabika Mitra

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Dr. Malabika Mitra is one of the foremost Kathak exponents in India with outstanding excellence and more than decades of practice. Nalanda's student council committee presented a Kathak workshop in collaboration with her, exploring the intricate nuances of abhinaya in Kathak. Dr. Malabika delved into the fundamental elements of storytelling through facial expressions, hand gestures, and body movements, weaving different elements of emotions through her abhinaya. The session highlighted various abhinaya techniques, allowing participants to better convey emotions and narratives through dance. Practical demonstrations and exercises were included, offering hands-on experience. Participants' key takeaways were a deeper understanding of how to connect more effectively with their audience through expressive storytelling.



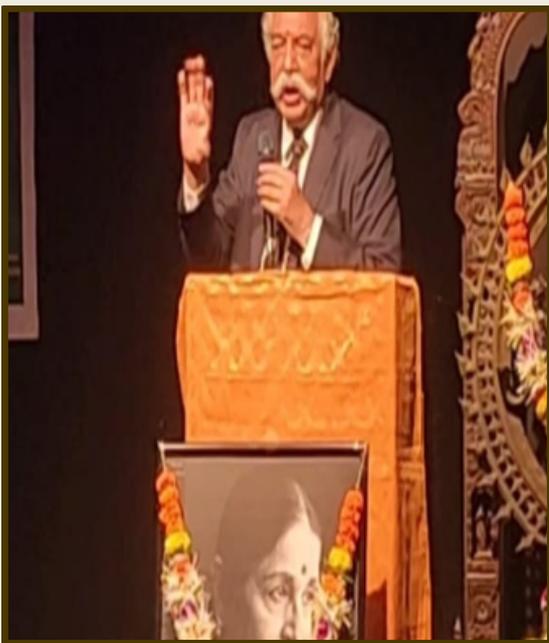
## 'Satsanga Series'

Lecture on Indian ways of war with special reference to Mahabharata and Kautilya's Arthashastra

– by Major Gen G.D Bakshi

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Nalanda's DLLE and IQAC committee organized/relaunched the 'Satsanga Series' in September 2024. As part of this unique programme, Nalanda invited Retired Major General G.D Bakshi, a highly respected war veteran and member of the Indian Army for a lecture on 'Indian ways of War with special reference to Mahabharata and Kautilya's Arthashastra'. It was profoundly interesting to know some of the many war strategies that our soldiers forge during attacks, some of which are in fact sourced from our ancient texts such as Mahabharata and Arthashastra





Bakshi Sir's rigor and passion for the service of the nation reignited the fire of patriotism within the attendees at Kanaka Sabha. The energy of the auditorium was simply pulsating filled with valor and pride for our dear soldier brothers at the borders. The Nalanda troupe gave a fiery start to the event showcasing one of its productions, 'Pratidnya', which showcased some of the critical episodes from Mahabharata. Along with Bakshi Sir, Kanaka Sabha was also blessed by the presence of many other army personnel who protected us on Ground Zero; they included, Retired Brigadier Vinod Sharma, Retired Lt. Colonel Dhiren Nanavati, Brigadier Hiren Desai, Retired Colonel Shekhawat and Major Prakash Kapale.

## Is Social Media – Boon or Bane?

– by Dr. Usha RK

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Dr. Usha RK – Arts Consultant, Former Member Secretary MOC & Director Cultural Centre Embassy of India Moscow – delivered an insightful session on the theme – social media – Boon or Bane? At Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya. She emphasized the need to uphold the dignity and authenticity of classical dance amidst the massive popularization of semi-classical dance forms in India as well as influences of Bollywood choreographies, which sometimes forms a hindrance to the true essence of classical dance forms in India. In recent years, numerous examples of obtrusive posts have been circulated which doesn't portray the true nature of classical dance forms; this session was designed to clear the myths and lay down the right netiquette to follow as dancers/artists. Needless to say, the session was thought provoking and made one question what content needs to be put out for public display in social media. The session was followed by an interactive Q&A session with the participants.





### **'Nriya Parvata'**

**Kathak Workshop – by Guru Shri Pt. Rajendra Gangani ji**

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> November 2024**



Nalanda's student council committee and Alumni Association organized a two-day Kathak workshop to learn some of the intricacies of the dance form from Legendary Guru Shri Pandit Rajendra Gangani ji. Filled with energetic performance and elegant abhinaya, the two-day session witnessed the grace of Guruji on the students which not only enriched their minds but also broadened their perspective about how to approach a dance piece differently. Indeed, blessed to have his presence at Nalanda campus.

### **Dance career in weddings: A career perspective**

**– by Dr. Sandip Soparrkar**

**Date: 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

Nalanda's DLLE and IQAC committees hosted a lecture demonstration on 'Dance careers in Indian weddings' – A career perspective by renowned choreographer Dr. Sandip Soparrkar. With years of rich experience in choreographing and conducting high-profile weddings, Sandip Sir guided us with an insightful session on navigating successful dance career in the wedding industry. With the help of real-life examples, he explained to us how huge the wedding choreography industry is in India and how we as artists can contribute to it.



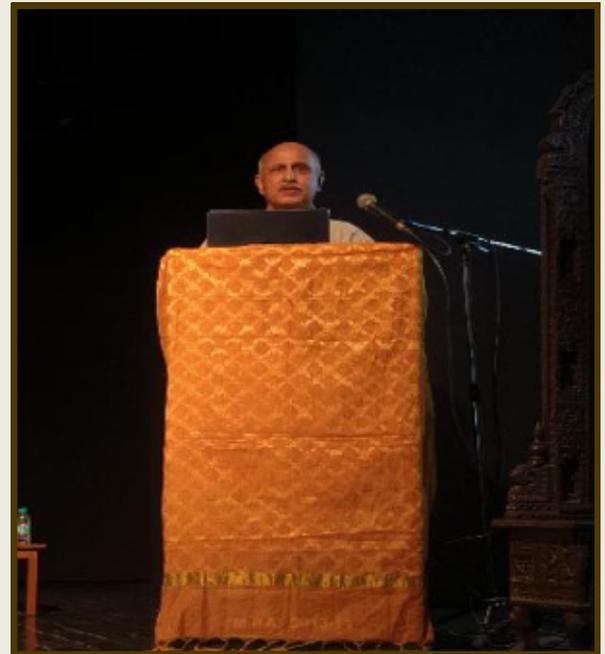


## Lecture on Intellectual Property Rights/IPR in Performing Arts

– by Advocate Mr. Sanjay Kher

Date: 28th February 2025

Nalanda's College Development Committee (CDC) and IQAC jointly organized an intensive lecture on IPR in Performing Arts, in association with Advocate Mr. Sanjay Kher, a renowned practicing lawyer with decades of experience in IPR. Sanjay Sir's deep insightful session not only broadened our perspective about the various types of creative works which falls under the gamut of IPR, but it also highlighted how we as artists can preserve our creative works from duplication or copyright issues. Sir provided us with a strong overview of key concepts on copyright and related rights, trademarks & patents which are relevant topics in today's time ought to be known by every dancer/content creator. The session was followed by a meaningful Q&A session, which garnered a lot of enthusiasm amongst the attendees. As dancers, choreographers and artists, we are constantly under the threat of our ideas being duplicated without prior authorization in social media; the session was relevant and much needed to be discussed in an open forum.



## Stress Management and Yoga Workshop

– by Mrs. Meeta Brahmhatt and Ms. Trupti Rathod

Date: 11<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> March 2025

During March 2025, Nalanda's Student Counseling Cell and IQAC conducted two enriching sessions on Yoga and Stress Management to equip the students to navigate the stressed exam time with ease and prudence. The sessions were conducted by renowned Counselor Mrs. Meeta Brahmhatt and Yoga Expert Ms. Trupti Rathod.

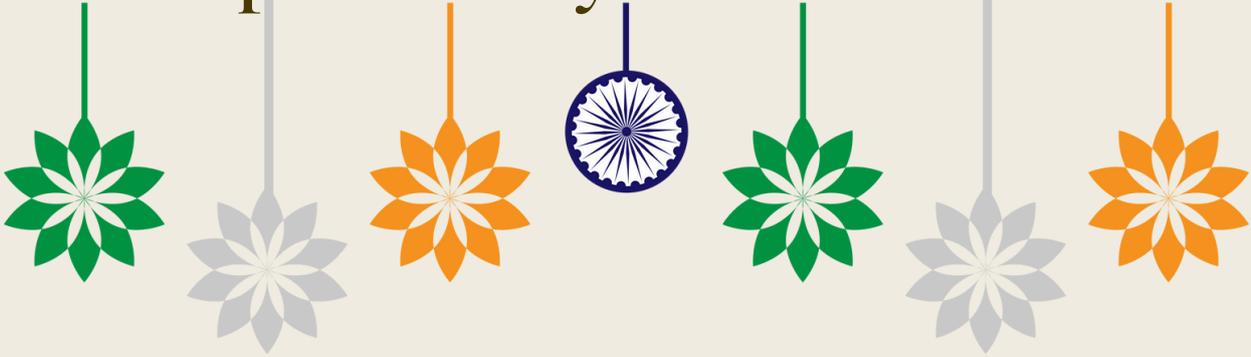
The sessions focused on maintaining a healthy mind/body and a positive attitude while preparing for the exams. Meeta Ma'am offered us valuable coping mechanisms to face the exams with a balanced mindset. Trupti Ma'am gave us simple but effective yoga postures and breathing techniques to enhance our concentration and reduce anxiety.

Both the sessions were much needed as they helped calm the minds of peers and offered a much-needed break from the academic pressure.





# *Celebrating our Glorious Mother India* Republic Day Celebrations



**76<sup>th</sup> Republic Day**

**'Swarnim Bharat – Virasat aur Vikas' – Celebration at Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya  
26<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

The Republic Day celebrations at Nalanda were filled with immense pride, enthusiasm, and joy. It was a day when the spirit of patriotism was deeply felt by every member of our institution. The event began with the unfurling of the national flag by our principal Dr. Smt. Uma Rele Ma'am, a moment that filled every heart with respect and love for our great nation. As the tricolour soared high in the sky, we all stood together and sang the national anthem with deep reverence, creating a truly emotional and unforgettable start to the day.

Following the flag hoisting and anthem, the celebration continued with an impressive showcase of talent by our students. Staying true to the theme of 'Swarnim Bharat – Virasat aur Vikas' (Golden India – Heritage



and Development), the performances and presentations highlighted the rich cultural heritage of our country while also celebrating its dynamic progress.

Our talented students showcased their creativity and skills through an array of activities such as photography exhibitions, tattoo making, eloquent speeches, expressive mono-acts, poems, captivating dramas, musical performances, painting and hand-crafted bookmarks.



Through diverse performances—from drama and mono-acts to poetry, pop ups, bookmarks, tattoos, and paintings—the student brought to life the theme ‘Swarnim Bharat – Virasat aur Vikas’ with great enthusiasm. Each presentation celebrated India’s rich heritage and progressive future, making the vision of a golden India truly come alive. Throughout the day, the air at Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya was vibrant with enthusiasm, creativity, and patriotic fervor. Each event was a testament to the dedication and talent of our students, who worked hard to make the day memorable and meaningful. The theme was not only celebrated but deeply embodied through every activity, reminding us all the importance of honoring our glorious past while striving for a bright and progressive future.

Students were felicitated with beautifully crafted participation and winner certificates, designed by Librarian Smt. Ramya Shreejesh. The event’s success was made possible by the dedicated efforts of the Cultural Committee, teacher coordinators Smt. Megha Mohad and Dr. Vaidehi Lal, the non-teaching staff, and the enthusiastic participation of all students. The celebration concluded with light refreshments for everyone, and a special note of thanks to Principal Smt. Uma Rele for her unwavering support and inspiring leadership. The 76th Republic Day at Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya was a memorable tribute to India’s glorious past and a hopeful vision for its bright, progressive future.

#### Credits:

- Poem recitation by Jainami Gada BPA Degree - ‘क्यों रुकते हैं वादे 27 को?’
- Drama ‘कथा सुनो रे’ by the Students of BPA I
- Monologue from the popular drama ‘तो मी नव्हेच’ by Sakshi Apte from MPA I
- Musical presentation ‘पोवाडा’ by the students of MPA I
- Tattoo art and bookmarks by the Students of BPA II
- Paintings (Mythological Story Narration - from ‘भगवद गीता’) by Vaishnavi Gondhalekar from BPA I
- Rangoli by the students of Foundation II





# Trip to Eco-Govardhan Village

## A Vasundhara Club Initiative



Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya's Green Club 'VASUNDHARA' organized a Sustainability Tour to Eco Govardhan Village, situated at village Galatare, district Palghar on 18th and 19th Jan 2025. It was indeed a mesmerizing experience.

The Eco village is developed by ISKON, as a dream project of the founder director of ISKON Shri Prabhupad Swami. The lush green gardens with variety of flowers and medicinal herbs, the place is surrounded by Sahyadri hills. The village is completely self-sufficient with a variety of Sustainability projects such as Biogas plant, Vermi Compost plant, Solid waste plant, Water harvesting and many such projects.

The students enjoyed the serene atmosphere at the Madanmohan temple, Govardhan temple and melodious bhajans crating the blissful ambiance.

18 students with the faculty coordinator for VASUNDHARA Dr. Madhuri Deshmukh along with HOD Dr. Meenakshi Iyer Gangopadhyay enjoyed the tour. Special Thanks to the management of NNKM President Mr. Rahul Rele and Principal Mam Dr. Smt. Uma Rele for the financial support.





# *Celebrating Our Heritage* Nalanda Celebrates Sanskrit Day

संस्कृत दिवस

Sanskrit Day was jointly organized by IQAC of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya and Sanskrit Surabhi on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Venue- Kanak Sabha

Time: 10:30 to 12:30

The programme started with invocation as per the Indian tradition. Principal Dr. Uma Rele shared her views on the significance of the Sanskrit language. Students of Foundation II presented a Sanskrit Play.

A fun activity was conducted by students of Degree class; they presented famous Hindi dialogues in Sanskrit and audience was to recognize the original dialogue. BPA Part I students presented Dhivara gaan (Koli gita) in Sanskrit. BPA Part II students conducted a Game activity in Sanskrit which enhanced the colloquial vocabulary of Sanskrit. The response of students as well as the faculty members to the Game activities was spontaneous and delightful. Lastly MPA II students presented a beautiful adaptation of Svapanavasavdattam (A very famous play by Bhasa).

Compeering of the event was done by Dr. Chinmayi Deodhar.



# *A Year-Round Reading Fiesta* Library Events 2024-25

## Book Exhibition

On the occasion of Sanskrit Day on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024, a vibrant celebration was organized on campus, blending cultural heritage with academic enthusiasm. The event aimed to honour the classical language of Sanskrit and its timeless contributions to literature, philosophy, and science.

As part of the celebration, a book exhibition was also held, showcasing a rich collection of Sanskrit texts, translations, commentaries, and modern works inspired by ancient Indian knowledge systems. The exhibition attracted both student and faculty who explored the curated selection with great interest.



## Vachan Sankalp Maharashtratrache

A Series of Activities were conducted under Vachan Sankalp Maharashtratrache initiative.

Sr.no	Name of the Activity	Date
1	Mass Reading Activity	Jan 2, 2025
2	Library Book Exhibition	Jan 3, 2025
3	E-Quiz Competition	Jan 8, 2025
4	Author Talk	Jan 15, 2025
5	Book Review Competition-Oral	Jan 16, 2025
6	Written Book Review Competition	Jan 18, 2025
7	Certificate and Prize Distribution	Jan 23, 2025



### **Mass Reading Activity - 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2025**

Nalanda's Knowledge Resource Centre and IQAC Department organised a 'Mass Reading programme in Kanaka Sabha. The program was well received from both students and teachers. The participants engaged in a peaceful reading session, choosing books of their interest, while our Principal, Dr. Smt. Uma Rele shared inspiring words to set the tone for the day. It was attended by 36 participants.

### **Library Book Exhibition - 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2025**

The library organized a 'Book Exhibition' showcasing its incredible collection of books across various genres, including fiction, non-fiction, self-help, personality development and more. The event attracted students, teachers and staff alike. They were equally enthralled and appreciative of the thematic display. The exhibition successfully promoted reading habits and provided a platform for knowledge sharing, making it a memorable and enriching experience for all participants. It was attended by 43 participants.



### **E-Quiz Competition – 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

An 'E-Quiz Competition' was organised under 'Vachan Sankalp Maharashtra' initiative. Google Quiz form consisting of 20 questions of total 40 marks were distributed in the class wise WhatsApp groups of the college. The Questions were based on fiction, popular books and self-help books. The E-Quiz received an overwhelming response from all the classes. A total of 65 students participated in the competition. Total 7 students scored 38 marks.



## Author Talk 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Author Talk on 'Indra' – by Shri Utkarsh Patel

Nalanda's Knowledge Resource Centre and IQAC Department organised an Author Talk on Indian mythology character 'Indra' – also referred to as Lord of thunder and rains, in association with Shri Utkarsh Patel – a renowned mythologist and a celebrated author, accredited for his literary works on Indra, Kannagi, Shakuntala, Draupadi and more. The event was conducted as a part of an Govt of Maharashtra initiative under Vachan Sankalp Maharashtra to foster reading habits amongst the college students. The session encompassed the life story of Indra – the rise and fall of a hero; Utkarsh Sir explained to us about the different myths, folklore and legends surrounding the character, which led to his popularity during ancient times, but also his downfall in modern society. The session was concluded with an interactive Q&A session. The event was truly an enriching experience for both the students and teachers alike.



## Book Review Competition (Oral) 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Under the inspiring initiative of the Government of Maharashtra, Vachan Sankalp Maharashtra, our institution successfully organized a Book Review Competition to promote the joy of reading and critical thinking among students. Out of the 9 registered participants, 5 enthusiastic students actively participated in the event, showcasing their reading insights and analytical skills. The competition was conducted in three languages—English, Hindi, and Marathi—reflecting the diversity of literature and the linguistic richness of Maharashtra. Each participant was given 5–7 minutes to present their book reviews, followed by a brief Q&A session with our esteemed judges.



The books reviewed ranged from different genres, offering a rich variety of perspectives. The competition was judged by two faculty members, Dr. Smt Meenakshi Iyer Gangopadhyay (Head of the Dept) and Dr. Smt. Madhuri Deshmukh (Associate Professor) who assessed the participants on clarity, depth of analysis, creativity, and presentation skills. Their valuable feedback encouraged and motivated the participants.

This program reinforced the vision of Vachan Sankalp Maharashtra by nurturing a culture of reading and thoughtful analysis among students. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all the participants and winners, as well as gratitude to the judges and organizing team for making this event a success.



### Written Book Review Competition–18<sup>th</sup> January

The Written Book Review Competition was conducted under the initiative Vachan Sankalp Maharashtra. A total of 9 students registered for the activity. Dr. Smt. Meenakshi Iyer Gangopadhyay, HOD and IQAC coordinator judged the written book reviews. Two students were declared winners.



### Prize Distribution – 26<sup>th</sup> January 2025

On the momentous occasion of the 76th Republic Day (2025), our institution proudly hosted the Prize Distribution Ceremony for the Vachan Sankalp Maharashtra initiative. This special event celebrated the dedication and enthusiasm of participants who showcased their literary and analytical skills through various competitions like Book review (written and oral) and E-Quiz competition.

The winners of the Book Review Competition (both written and oral) and outstanding performers of the E-Quiz were felicitated with certificates and gifts, recognizing their commitment to reading and knowledge enhancement. E-certificates were provided to all the participants.





## Book Cover Design Competition

It was organized on 11<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2025 by the library, offering students a platform to showcase their creativity and design skills. The event encouraged participants to imagine and design original book covers for a genre or theme of their choice, blending visual storytelling with aesthetic appeal.

The competition saw an impressive array of entries, each reflecting a unique perspective and artistic flair. After much deliberation, the jury selected two winners whose work stood out for their creativity. It was decided that the Winner's book covers will be used as front and back cover for the upcoming issue of student's magazine-Nalandaite!



## Best Library User

On 9 March 2025, Best library users for the year 2023-24 and 2024-25 were announced. The award is given to students who have spent the most time in library and utilized its resources to the utmost potential for their own betterment. They were felicitated with certificates and gifts at the hand of Principal Dr. Smt. Uma Rele.

### Best Library Users (2023-2024)

Shruti Warriar, MPA I

Anushka Ranganathan, MPA I

Simran Cherayil, MPA I

### Best Library Users (2024-2025)

Kimaya More, MPA II

Kanak Darak, MPA II





## *Winners speak...*

### **Kanak Darak, MPA I**

I am truly honoured and humbled to have received the Best Library User Award! I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for this recognition.

This award wouldn't have been possible without the exceptional resources, support, and guidance provided by our library. I appreciate the tireless efforts of our Librarian, who has been instrumental in creating a conducive learning environment.

Thank you for fostering a culture of reading, research, and innovation. Your dedication to promoting literacy and lifelong learning is truly commendable.

I also appreciate all the activities conducted by library committee this year to uplift our enthusiasm and inclination towards reading, be it academic or any other genre.



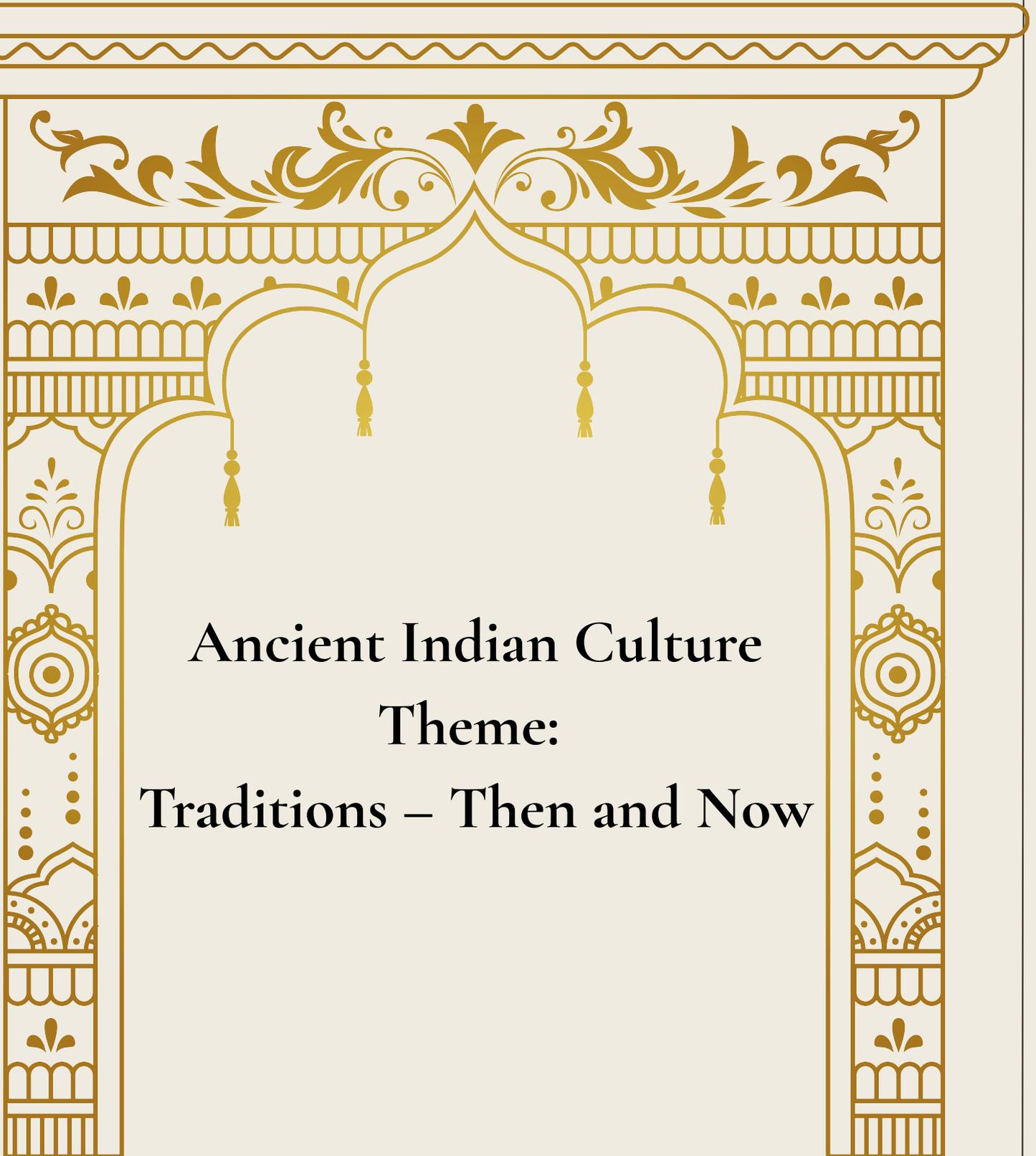
### **Shruti Varier, MPA II**

Receiving the best Library User Award for the academic year 2023-24, has been an honor for me. The Library at Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya has always been more than just a resource – it's been a space of reflection and discovery for me. I'm truly grateful for this recognition and for the environment that allows us to go beyond the classroom, explore independently and nurture our curiosity towards classical arts.



# *Ideas Take Shape*

## Project Spotlight



**Ancient Indian Culture**

**Theme:**

**Traditions – Then and Now**



# Unveiling the Intersection of Beauty and Spirituality in Indian Temple Architecture

Indian temple architecture is a magnificent confluence of art, devotion, and cosmic symbolism. Unlike mere places of worship, these temples are meticulously designed to reflect both the physical and metaphysical realms. Every pillar, sculpture, and dome is a testament to the harmony between beauty and spirituality, embodying a philosophy that transforms stone into sacred sanctuaries.

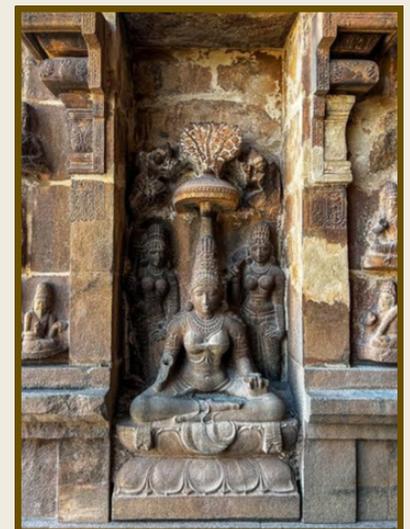


## Sacred Geometry: The Blueprint of the Divine

The foundation of Indian temple architecture is deeply rooted in Vastu Shastra and Shilpa Shastra, ancient sciences that dictate the proportions, orientation, and layout of temples. The temple is often designed as a microcosm of the universe, with the central sanctum (garbhagriha) symbolizing the divine core. The towering shikhara (spire) above represents the spiritual ascent, guiding devotees toward enlightenment. The symmetrical and intricate layouts ensure harmony with cosmic energy, making the temple a space where the divine and earthly realms converge.

## Sculptural Narratives: Stories in Stone

Indian temples are adorned with exquisite carvings that depict gods, goddesses, celestial beings, and mythological episodes. These sculptures are not mere decorations but visual scriptures that convey philosophical and spiritual ideas. The elaborate panels in Chola temples, the celestial nymphs (apsaras) of Khajuraho, and the intricate deities of Hoysala temples narrate tales of devotion, dharma, and cosmic balance. Through these sculptures, beauty becomes a medium to express spirituality, evoking awe and reverence in devotees.



## Aesthetic Grandeur: The Fusion of Art and Devotion

The grandeur of temple architecture is further amplified by its aesthetic elements. Ornate pillars, finely sculpted ceilings, and intricately carved doorways transport visitors into a divine realm. Temples like the Brihadeeswarar Temple in Tamil Nadu or the Sun Temple in Konark are masterpieces that showcase how artistry is seamlessly woven into spiritual expression. The rhythmic repetition of motifs, the use of symmetry, and the grandeur of proportions create a space that feels ethereal yet deeply rooted in tradition.



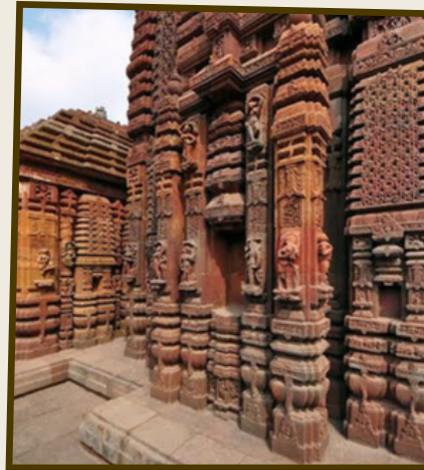
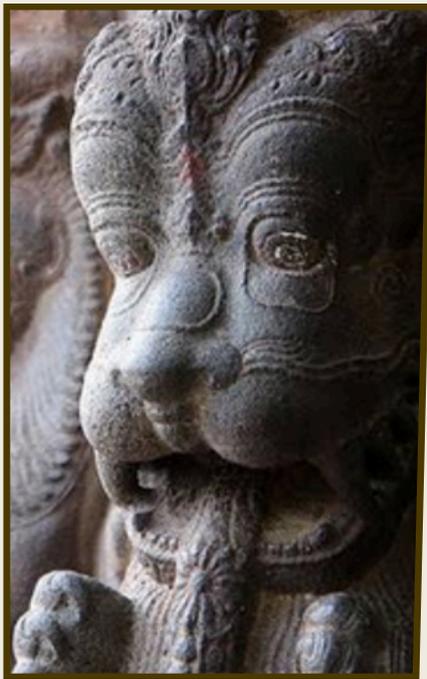
### Spiritual Experience: Beyond the Physical Structure

A temple is not just an architectural marvel; it is an experience. The rituals, chants, and rhythmic beats of temple bells enhance the spiritual ambiance, inviting devotees to immerse themselves in divine contemplation. Walking through the temple corridors, circumambulating the sanctum, and witnessing the rituals evoke a sense of transcendence. The very structure of the temple guides one's journey from the external world into an inner sanctum of peace and enlightenment.



### Conclusion: A Living Tradition

Indian temple architecture is a living tradition that continues to evolve while retaining its essence. It is a celebration of beauty infused with divine purpose, a testament to the timeless relationship between art and spirituality. Even today, these temples stand as sacred bridges between the material and the spiritual, reminding us that true beauty is not just in form but in its ability to elevate the soul.



### List of references

Book- Michell, George. The Hindu Temple: An Introduction to Its Meaning and Forms. University of Chicago Press, 1977.

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA): <https://ignca.gov.in>

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI): <https://asi.nic.in>



**Amanda Chetty**

**BPA Part I**



# Indian Temple Architecture: A Detailed Exploration (with focus on Buddhist Style Architecture)

## INTRODUCTION

Indian temple architecture is a remarkable fusion of spirituality, art, and engineering, reflecting the country's rich cultural and religious heritage. These temples are not merely places of worship but monuments of devotion, philosophical symbolism, and architectural brilliance. Designed according to ancient texts like the Shilpa Shastras and Vastu Shastra, Indian temples are built with precise mathematical and geometric principles, ensuring harmony with cosmic energy.

The diversity in temple architecture across India is shaped by regional influences, climatic conditions, and dynastic patronage. Broadly categorized into Nagara (North Indian), Dravidian (South Indian), and Vesara (a hybrid of both), each style has distinct structural elements, yet all temples share a central sanctum (Garbhagriha), a towering spire (Shikhara or Vimana), and a sacred pathway (Pradakshina).

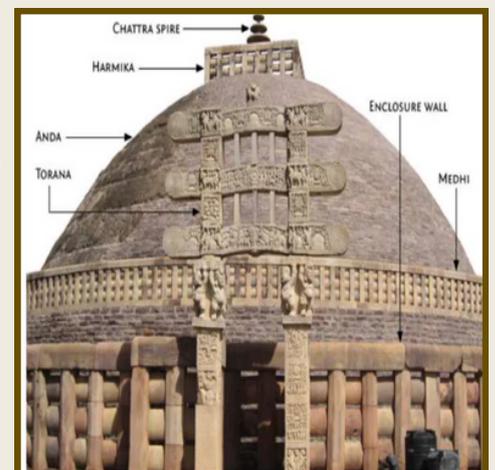
Beyond their spiritual significance, Indian temples have historically served as centres of education, art, dance, and economic activity, housing intricate sculptures, murals, and inscriptions that narrate epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata. From the exquisite carvings of Khajuraho to the majestic Dravidian gopurams of Tamil Nadu, these architectural marvels continue to awe visitors and devotees alike. Today, modern temples integrate traditional styles with contemporary materials, preserving the essence of Indian temple architecture while adapting to changing times.

## ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA

### 1. Vedic Period (1500-500 BCE)

The Vedic period in India focused more on performing rituals than on idol worship, so this period did not see growth of formal temple structures. Instead, the religious structures were simple open-air altars used for fire sacrifices (Yajnas), which were temporary in nature. Given the non-permanent nature of the structures, readily available materials like wood, bamboo, and thatch were used, reflecting the nomadic and agrarian lifestyle of the time. Early sacred sites were linked to natural elements like rivers, mountains, and trees, which later influenced temple locations.

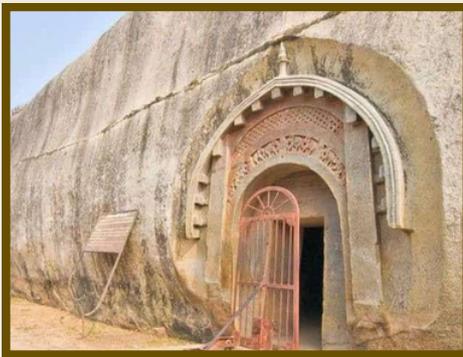
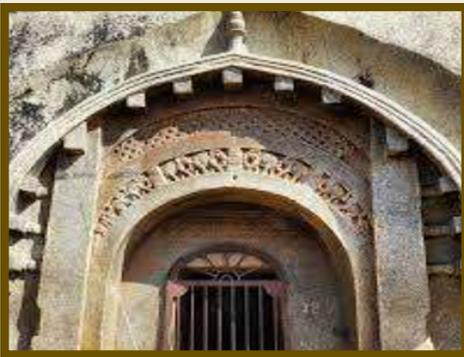
The concept of Vastu Shastra, an early form of Indian architecture that drew on balance and spatial harmony, was used to structure these sacred spaces.





## 2. Early Structural Developments (500 BCE – 300 AD; The Gautama Buddha & Maurya Periods)

As societies became more societal and religious beliefs and societal structures became more formalized, permanent stone architecture gradually emerged. Some early forms of temple architecture involved carving structures directly into mountains and rocks. The Mauryan period under Asoka (273–232 BCE) witnessed commission of stupas (Buddhist monuments), pillars and rock edicts. One of the earliest and very historically significant pillars erected by Asoka is the Sarnath Pillar – the four lions standing back-to-back is the most magnificent one. This is popularly known as the 'Lion Capital of Asoka' and was adopted as the National Emblem of India in 1950. Amongst the stupas, the Sanchi Stupa which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site – is historically significant since it was built to enshrine Gautama Buddha's relics.

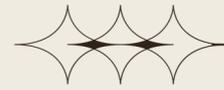


The Lomas Rishi Caves in Barabar Hills (Bihar) under the Mauryan Dynasty – is considered one of the oldest rock-cut caves, resulting of Maurya's gratitude towards the Ajivikas sect, an indigenous ascetic sect emerging during the same period as Asoka. A man-made cave, the Lomas Rishi consists of a large rectangular hall and a small oval chamber, fronted by an arched doorway carved to replicate the roof of a thatched hut, complete with wooden beams.

## 3. Rock-Cut and Early Structural Temples (200 BCE – 600 AD; Satavahana dynasty, Gupta Period)

The Ajanta Caves, located in the Aurangabad district of Maharashtra, are a group of rock-cut caves renowned for their exquisite paintings and sculptures, displaying an extensive portrayal of life during Buddha's me. There is a series of 30 Buddhist rock-cut temples and monasteries in Ajanta which are now classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The earliest caves were created under the patronage of the Satavahana Satavahana dynasty (200-100 BCE) and primarily served as prayer halls (Chaityas) and monastic residences (Viharas) by the member of the dynasty. The later caves were built under the patronage of Emperor Harisena of the Vakataka dynasty (500-600 AD), marked by intricate paintings and elaborate sculptures. Ajanta is globally known for its murals, which depict scenes from Buddha's life, Jataka tales, and courtly life. The paintings employ natural pigments and showcase advanced shading and perspective techniques, illustrating themes of compassion, devotion, and Buddhist philosophy.





The Gupta period (400-600 AD) is often regarded as the golden age of Indian art and architecture, particularly in the development of temple architecture. During this era, Hindu temple construction evolved from simple rock-cut structures to more elaborate structural temples made of stone and brick. The concept of the shikhara (tower above the sanctum) began in a simple form. The later Gupta temples had a small curvilinear shikharas. This period also witnessed construction of 'Garbhagrihas' – the most sacred part of temple premise with a small square chamber that house the deity's idol. The concept of Mandapa/prayer hall before the shrine was also introduced during this period. Although during the earlier Gupta Period, temple walls did not feature any significant ornamentation, the temples in later period featured large sculptural panels depicting Hindu deities like Vishnu, Shiva, and Durga. The Dashavatara Temple at Deogarh – one of the earliest stone temples, has intricate reliefs narrating Vishnu's ten incarnations. The temple features Garbhagriha, Mandapa and Shikhara. Outline of Dashavatara temple featuring Garbhagriha, Mandapa and Shikhara

#### **4. Fully Developed Temple Architecture (600 –1300 AD)**

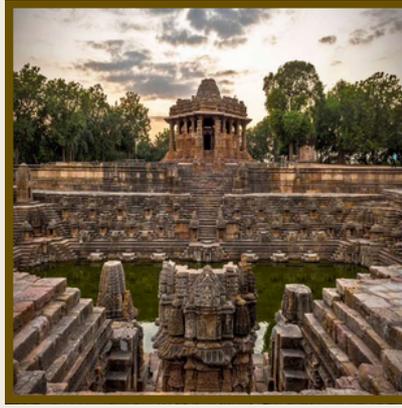
The architectural features developed during the Gupta period laid the foundation for later temple styles mainly in North and South India, but influences were also seen in Eastern as well as Western style architecture. Let us explore this in detail:

**A. Nagara Style (North India):** Developed in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh. Characterized by similar features which we see in later Gupta period, included structures such as;

- Shikharas over the Garbhagriha,
- Multiple smaller towers – Urushringas around the main shikhara
- Multiple mandapas, including Ardha-Mandapa (half-hall) and Maha-Mandapa (great hall)
- Nagara temples were built on raised platforms called Jayatis – with elaborate carvings in order to give the temple an aesthetic look
- Entrances consist of intricate carvings of deities, floral motifs, and mythological themes. The door lintels often depict Lakshmi, Ganga, or Yamuna.
- Over time, the Nagara style evolved into regional sub-styles: Rekha-Prasada: Tall, curving shikhara (seen in Khajuraho temples), Phamsana: Pyramid-shaped shikhara (early Odisha temples), Valabhi: Rectangular structures with barrel-vaulted roofs.
- Notable examples of Nagara style architecture –
  - Khajuraho Temples (Madhya Pradesh) – Highly ornate, famous for their erotic sculptures and multiple shikharas;
  - Sun Temple, Modhera (Gujarat) – Unique stepwell structure and richly carved walls;
  - Kandariya Mahadev Temple (Madhya Pradesh) – A classic example of fully developed Nagara architecture.



**Khajuraho Temples (MP)**



**Sun Temple (Modera)**



**Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (MP)**

**B. Dravida Style (South India):** Flourished in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka. Characterized by:

- Pyramidal Vimanas (stepped tower) – unlike the shikhara of Nagara temples, the vimanas is a stepped pyramid that tapers towards the top;
- Ornate entrance towers called the Gopuram – which are huge, elaborately carved entrance towers. Often taller than the main vimana, gopurams are decorated with sculptures of gods, demons, celestial beings and stories from epics;
- Similar to Nagara temples, Mandapas are also seen in Dravidian style temple architecture. In addition to Ardha-Mandapa and Maha-Mandapa, we also see Kalyana-Mandapa (for temple weddings);
- Dravidian temples also have high boundary walls called prakara surrounding the complex. Inside, there are multiple shrines, water tanks, pillared corridors, and gardens. This is a feature which is different from Nagara style architecture.
- Additionally, most Dravidian temples have large temple tanks for ritual purification. The Golden Lotus Tank in the Meenakshi Temple is a famous example.
- Notable examples of Dravidian style architecture –
  - Brihadeeswarar Temple (Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu) – Built by the Cholas, featuring the tallest vimana in South India.
  - Meenakshi Temple (Madurai, Tamil Nadu) – Known for its huge, colourful gopurams and temple tank.
  - Ramanathaswamy Temple (Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu) – Has the longest pillared corridor in the world.
  - Shore Temple (Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu) – A Pallava-era stone temple with Dravidian-style vimanas.



**Meenakshi Temple**

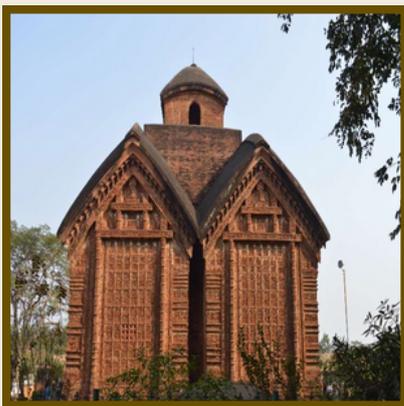


**Shore Temple**



**C. Kalinga Style (East India):** Seen across Odisha, Bengal and Assam. This style is a regional variant of Nagara architecture with distinct features unique to Odisha. Distinct features include,

- Natamandira (Dance Hall) – Found in later temples for ritual dances, Rekha Deul (Tall Spire) – The sanctum has a beehive-shaped tower with rising vertical ribs, Pidhha Deul (Pyramidal Mandapa) – The jagamohana (also known as mandapa) has a stepped pyramidal shape
- Highly intricate carvings of deities, apsaras (celestial dancers), and mythological scenes. Erotic sculptures (similar to Khajuraho temples) are seen in some temples in addition to depictions of Hindu epics like Ramayana & Mahabharata.
- Temples face the east, allowing the first rays of the sun to enter. Built within enclosed courtyards of temple walls, there are multiple smaller shrines
- Some of the Bengal temple architecture use terraco an instead of stone. Curved roof designs (Chala style) inspired by thatched village huts. Example: Kantajew Temple (Bangladesh), Bishnupur Temples (West Bengal).
- Assamese temples used a blend of Kalinga and local Ahom styles. Dome-like shikhara instead of Nagara-style towers. Example: Kamakhya Temple, Umananda Temple.



**Bishnupur Terraco a Temples, West Bengal**



**Kamakhya Temple, Guwahati , Assam**

**D. Maru-Gurjara (Solanki), Nagara, and Jain temple architecture (Western India):** Predominant in Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra. This style is known for intricate carvings, multi-tiered spires, and elaborate mandapas. Distinct features include,

- Highly ornate and intricate carvings, multi-tiered, stepped shikharas, Toranas (archways) at entrances,
- Jain and Hindu temples in Gujarat & Rajasthan often use white marble (Dilwara Temples). Maharashtra's temples use black basalt stone (Ellora caves)
- The main temple of Shri Mahalakshmi Temple in Kolhapur is made of black stone, adorned with intricate carvings and sculptures, several mandapas used for religious ceremonies, decorated with exquisite carvings and sculptures depicting Hindu mythology scenes



## 5. Later Developments (13th – 21st Century)

Islamic invasions (12th – 16th century) led to the decline of temple-building in North India, while South India saw continued growth. Despite Islamic rule in many parts of India, Hindu dynasties like the Rajputs, Vijayanagara Empire, and Marathas continued temple construction, often in more fortified and hidden locations. Vijayanagara Empire (14th – 17th century) revived Dravidian temple architecture and built grand temples like the Virupaksha and Vittala Temple, Hampi and Ranganathaswamy Temple, TN. The Rajput rulers continued Nagara-style temple construction in Rajasthan and Gujarat. Temples were built inside forts for protection, intricate marble carvings were seen in the temples such as the Dilwara Jain Temples in Mount Abu. By the 17th and 18th centuries, temple architecture assimilated elements from Islamic styles:

- Use of domes and arches in some temple designs
- Ornamental gateways (Toranas) influenced by Mughal architecture
- Fusion architecture in Rajasthan, where temples had Rajput and Mughal influences



**Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple (Mathura) –**  
which was rebuilt multiple times, reflecting mixed influences

The Colonial period (18th – 19th century) saw the influence of European styles in temple construction. Revival of temple construction under British rule took place during the 19th century, often funded by wealthy Hindu patrons. 20th & 21st century witnessed temples built with reinforced concrete, steel, and glass. Modern adaptations of ancient styles seen in Akshardham Temple (Delhi, 2005) and ISCKON temples worldwide.



## **WHAT AN INDIAN TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE LOOK LIKE TODAY?**

We take one of the latest examples of Shree Ram Janmabhoomi Temple in Ayodhya (construction began August 2020, consecrated January 2024) to understand how the modern-day construction looks like. The Shree Ram Janmabhoomi Temple in Ayodhya is inspired by Nagara-style temple architecture, however it also incorporates modern-day engineering and sustainable practices. The traditional structural elements of Shikaras, Mandapas and Garbhagriha continue to dominate the temple architecture. The premise is constructed using pink sandstone from Rajasthan, similar to temples in Khajuraho. No use of steel or concrete, making it a purely stone-based structure. There are about ~392 ornately carved sandstone pillars within the temple complex. The temple stands on a 14-meter-deep foundation designed to withstand earthquakes and uses roller-compacted concrete (RCC) in the foundation for durability. RCC – which are used to create stronger structures, is one of the newer technological innovations seen in the construction space, something which our historical structures lacked. Other key modern features that the temple complex harnesses include,

- Large-scale rainwater collection and filtration activities for temple use, thereby reducing dependency on external water sources,
- Modern visitor management systems for handling large crowds,
- Advanced LED lighting for energy efficiency and high-quality acoustic systems for Aarti and chanting,
- The temple is equipped with CCTV surveillance for security. Live-streaming of daily rituals and aartis for global devotees,
- Solar panels installed to power lighting and basic utilities. Reduces carbon footprint and ensures energy efficiency,
- Ramps, lifts, and wheelchair accessibility for elderly and differently-abled devotees,
- Well-connected via highways, railways, and a new Ayodhya airport. Modern parking, restrooms, and food courts for visitors.

The Shree Ram Janmabhoomi Temple truly blends ancient Indian architecture with cutting-edge technology. It is earthquake-resistant, eco-friendly, digitally advanced, and visitor-friendly, making it a 21st century marvel while preserving tradition.

## **GLOBAL CROSS-CULTURAL INFLUENCES OF INDIAN TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE**

Indian temple architecture has had a profound influence on temple designs across Asia, especially in Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and even parts of Europe and North America. Over centuries, traders, travellers, and missionaries carried Indian architectural styles to different regions, where they blended with local traditions to create unique temple structures.



### **A. Southeast Asia: Strongest Influence of Indian Temple Architecture**

- Angkor Wat (12th century CE, Cambodia) is the largest Hindu temple complex in the world, heavily inspired by Dravidian temple designs. Key features include shikhara-like stepped pyramidal towers resembling South Indian vimanas, mandapas and gopurams, relief carvings of Hindu epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata
- Borobudur (9th century CE, Java, Indonesia) – The world’s largest Buddhist temple, influenced by Gupta-era stupas and Indian Buddhist rock-cut architecture
- Balinese Temples: Hindu-Buddhist fusion, resembling South Indian temple structures
- Thailand: Ayu haya & Chiang Mai Temples – Thai temples/Wat have prang towers (similar to Nagara shikhara). Example: Wat Arun, Bangkok – Features stepped pyramidal towers like Indian vimanas.

### **B. Central Asia & China: Spread Through Buddhism**

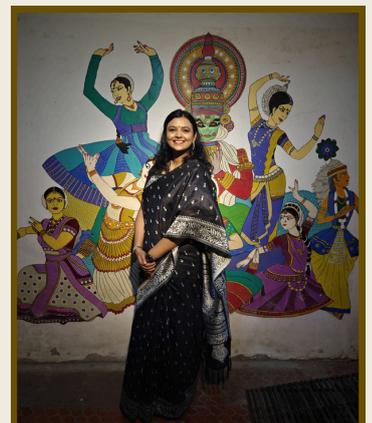
- Afghanistan & Pakistan: Gandhara temples (2nd–5th century CE, now in Pakistan & Afghanistan) combined Greek and Indian architectural elements. Bamiyan Buddha Statues (Afghanistan, destroyed in 2001) – were inspired by Indian rock-cut cave temples
- China & Japan: Pagoda Architecture from Indian Stupas. Chinese pagodas evolved from Indian stupas introduced by Buddhist monks
- Japanese Temples (Todai-ji, Nara) – Built on Indian Buddhist temple principles

### **C. Europe & North America: Modern Adaptations**

British architects incorporated Indian temple designs into European buildings. Examples: The Royal Pavilion (Brighton, UK) has elements of Indian architecture. Indian diaspora communities have built traditional-style temples in the USA, UK, Canada, Australia, and Africa. Examples: Swaminarayan & ISKCON Temples Worldwide, Akshardham Temple (Delhi & USA) – Inspired by Nagara and Maru-Gurjarati styles. BAPS Swaminarayan Temples (UK, USA, Canada, Africa) replicate traditional Gujarati temple styles.

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**Rajrupa Mitra**  
**BPA Part I**



# Beauty & Spirituality in Jain and Buddhist traditions



This article explores the deep connection between aesthetics and spirituality in Jain and Buddhist traditions, focusing on how art and architecture express philosophical and ethical ideals over time. Through a comparative analysis of temples, stupas, sculptures, symbolic motifs, and literary narratives, it reveals how both religions use visual and spatial forms to convey complex spiritual messages. The study also highlights the evolving role of women in religious narratives and examines how traditional aesthetics are reinterpreted in contemporary sacred spaces, demonstrating that beauty in these traditions is not ornamental but integral to spiritual practice.

## Historical Foundations of Sacred Aesthetics

In Jainism, beauty manifests through precision and discipline. Jain temples are renowned for their intricate carvings, symmetrical designs, and harmonious compositions. These artistic choices are not simply decorative but are deeply symbolic. The emphasis on balance and order reflects core Jain values such as non-violence, asceticism, and the soul's quest for liberation. Temples like those at Ranakpur and Dilwara stand as masterpieces of marble architecture, where each carved detail contributes to an atmosphere of serene contemplation. The calm, meditative postures of Tirthankara sculptures further reflect the Jain ideal of detachment and inner peace.



By contrast Buddhist art and architecture tend toward simplicity and symbolic resonance. Rather than focusing on ornamentation, Buddhist spaces often promote mindfulness and detachment from the material world. The stupa, for example, is a powerful symbol of the cycle of birth and rebirth and the path toward Nirvana. Structures such as the Sanchi Stupa and Borobudur integrate cosmic symbolism into their form, guiding devotees on a spiritual journey. Similarly, the monastic caves of Ajanta and Ellora are carved directly into the rock, emphasizing harmony with nature and the introspective life of the monk.



### Architecture Spiritual Experience and Gendered Aesthetic in Jain and Buddhist traditions

In both Jainism and Buddhism, architecture serves as a vehicle for spiritual transformation. Jain temples, like those at Dilwara, exemplify cosmic harmony through intricate marble filigree and symbolic imagery, guiding devotees toward inner purification.

Recurring motifs such as the Samavasarana—a divine preaching assemble- emphasise universal spiritual

access. Buddhist structures, while often more minimalist, achieve similar goals. The Sanchi Stupa's simplicity aids meditation, while its toranas narrate moral teachings. The Mahabodhi Temple blends symbolic elegance with sacred function. Aesthetic symbolism plays a vital role: Jain motifs like the lotus and kalasha signify purity, while Buddhist mudras and the Dharma Wheel convey key spiritual teachings and the cycle of existence.

The role of women in Jain and Buddhist traditions is complex and often paradoxical. On one hand, traditional literature reflects prevailing social norms that associated women with worldly attachments; on the other, these same texts also highlight women's capacity for spiritual insight and moral strength. In the Jātaka tale of Syama, for instance, the character's physical allure does not impede her path to enlightenment—in fact, it becomes the very ground upon which her transformation unfolds. In Jain stories, women often renounce luxury and embrace ascetic life, underscoring the tradition's emphasis on inner beauty and self-control.

In both religions, the integration of ethics and aesthetics challenges the Western dichotomy that separates morality from beauty. Jain temples, with their rigorous symmetry and purity of form, mirror the moral discipline required of the faithful. Buddhist art, with its serene imagery and symbolic motifs, encourages detachment, mindfulness, and compassion. Beauty is thus not indulgent but instructive—it teaches, guides, and uplifts.



**BUDDHIST JATAKA TALES**



**JAIN JATAKA TALES**



## Beauty Then and Now: Continuity and Transformation

As Jain and Buddhist traditions evolve, their architectural and aesthetic expressions continue to reflect enduring spiritual values while embracing modern innovations. Ancient sacred spaces were designed to inspire awe and contemplation, guiding devotees toward inner transformation. Today, contemporary temples—like the Lotus Temple in Delhi—integrate traditional symbolism with modern design elements such as natural light, open-air structures, and minimalist aesthetics, creating environments conducive to meditation. Similarly, modern Jain temples preserve intricate craftsmanship while incorporating new materials for accessibility and function. These developments are not departures but continuations of tradition, adapting timeless ideals to contemporary contexts. Ultimately, Jain and Buddhist art and architecture reveal that beauty is not superficial but a profound expression of faith—an ever-evolving medium through which the sacred becomes visible, ethics are embodied, and spiritual insight is cultivated.

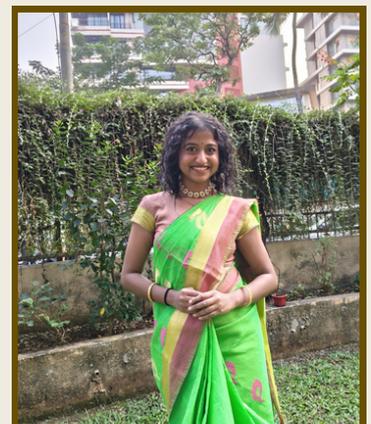


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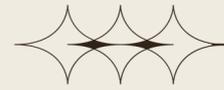
This project draws on David Shulman's "The Aesthetics of Asceticism" to explore how Indian religious traditions like Jainism and Buddhism use beauty not as indulgence, but as a path to spiritual insight. Shulman shows how aesthetic expression—through art, narrative, and ritual—deepens rather than contradicts ascetic ideals.

Susan L. Huntington's *The Art of Ancient India* complements this by tracing the architectural and artistic evolution of sacred spaces. Her work highlights how temples and stupas are not just structures, but spiritual maps, embodying philosophical and ethical values.

Together, these references ground the project's central theme: that in Jain and Buddhist traditions, aesthetic form is a vital expression of spiritual meaning.



**Bhagyada Chorge**  
**BPA Part I**



# The Influence of the Indian Epic Ramayana on Southeast Asian Art Forms

Faculty In-charge: **Dr. Meenakshi Iyer Gangopadhyay**  
Semester VI

The Indian epic Ramayana has profoundly influenced Southeast Asian cultures art literature and performing arts. This influence spans centuries and reflects the region's historical interactions with India through trade religion, and cultural exchanges. The adaptation of the Ramayana in Southeast Asia showcases the remarkable ways in which this ancient Indian epic was localized and incorporated into diverse cultural contexts.

## CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS CONTEXT

**Spread of Hinduism and Buddhism:** The Ramayana was introduced to Southeast Asia along with Hinduism and Buddhism. India traders, schools, and missionaries brought the epic to regions such as Indonesia Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Malaysia. It became intertwined with local belief systems, merging with animist and indigenous traditions.

**Localization and Adaptation:** While the core narrative of the Ramayana remained intact, Southeast Asian versions incorporated often highlighted regional values, moral codes, and aesthetics, resulting in unique renditions like:

**Ramakien in Thailand:** **Ramakien** is the national epic of Thailand, adapted from the Indian Ramayana. It narrates the tale of Prince Rama, his wife Sita, and the loyal Hanuman in their quest to defeat the demon king Thotsakan (Ravana). The epic has been localized to reflect Thai culture and values. The most significant version of the Ramakien was authored by **King Rama I** (1782–1809), who standardized and preserved the narrative. **King Rama II** contributed by adapting the story into dramatic

and artistic forms, further cementing its place in Thai culture. The Ramakien is celebrated in Thai dance-drama and depicted in art, notably the murals at the **Temple of the Emerald Buddha** in Bangkok. It remains a cornerstone of Thai literature, showcasing the blend of Indian influence with Thai traditions.

**Reamker in Cambodia:** **Reamker** is the Cambodian adaptation of the Indian epic Ramayana. The story follows the adventures of Prince Rama, his wife Sita, and Hanuman, focusing on themes of love, loyalty, and the triumph of good over evil. It reflects Cambodian culture and traditions, incorporating local beliefs and artistic styles. The most notable version of the Reamker was composed during the reign of **King Ang Duong** (1841–1860). King Ang Duong is credited with preserving and promoting the Reamker as a literary and cultural treasure. The Reamker is an essential part of Cambodian classical art, often performed in traditional dance dramas and depicted in bas-reliefs at Angkor Wat. It remains a vital representation of Cambodian heritage and literature.

**Hikayatseri Rama in Malaysia:** **Hikayat Seri Rama** is the Malaysian adaptation of the Indian epic Ramayana, presented in traditional Malay literature. The story narrates the adventures of Seri Rama (Rama), his wife Sita Dewi (Sita), and the heroic Hanuman as they confront the demon king Rawana (Ravana). It is imbued with Malay cultural elements and Islamic influences, setting it apart from other regional adaptations. The **writer(s)** of Hikayat Seri Rama remain anonymous, as it is a work of classical Malay



literature passed down orally and later transcribed by court scribes during the Malacca Sultanate era. It reflects the storytelling tradition of the time, integrating local beliefs and customs. Hikayat Seri Rama plays a significant role in Malay cultural history and is performed in traditional shadow puppetry, **Wayang Kulit**, especially in Kelantan. It showcases the fusion of Indian and Malay literary traditions, illustrating the adaptability of universal stories in local contexts.

Phra Lak Phra Lam in Laos: **Phra Lak Phra Lam** is the Lao adaptation of the Indian Ramayana, deeply rooted in the cultural and religious traditions of Laos. The epic tells the story of Phra Lak (Lakshmana) and Phra Lam (Rama), focusing on themes of dharma, loyalty, and the triumph of good over evil. Unlike other versions, this Lao retelling emphasizes Buddhist morals and local cultural elements. The **writer(s)** of Phra Lak Phra Lam remain anonymous, as it is part of the oral literary tradition of Laos. The story was later transcribed by monks and scholars in palm-leaf manuscripts, preserving it as part of Lao literary heritage. Phra Lak Phra Lam is celebrated in traditional Lao performances and rituals, often performed in temple festivals. It remains a key part of Lao culture, reflecting the blend of Indian epic traditions and Buddhist teachings.

Kakawin in Indonesia: **Ramayana** in Indonesia is a revered adaptation of the Indian epic, woven into the fabric of Indonesian culture and enriched with local traditions. It narrates the adventures of Prince Rama, his wife Sita, and the loyal Hanuman, focusing on themes of devotion, duty, and the triumph of good over evil. The Indonesian Ramayana has been preserved and adapted over centuries through oral tradition, shadow puppetry (**Wayang Kulit**), and dance dramas. The Kakawin Ramayana, written in **Old**

**Javanese** by an anonymous poet in the 9th century, is the most notable literary version. This version was heavily inspired by the Sanskrit Ramayana but adapted to fit Javanese cultural and religious contexts. The Ramayana is performed in iconic traditional dances, such as the **Ramayana Ballet** at Prambanan Temple. It remains a cornerstone of Indonesian art and literature, showcasing the integration of Hindu influence into Indonesian culture.

Yama Zatdaw in Burma: In Myanmar (Burma), the **Ramayana** is known as **Yama Zatdaw** and is considered the Burmese adaptation of the Indian epic. The story follows the adventures of Prince Rama, Princess Sita, and Hanuman as they confront the demon king Ravana, with themes of righteousness, loyalty, and the triumph of good over evil. The exact writer(s) of Yama Zatdaw are unknown, as it has been passed down through oral traditions and later adapted into written and performance forms. Burmese kings and court poets, particularly during the **Konbaung Dynasty** (18th-19th centuries), played a significant role in shaping its theatrical and literary adaptations. Yama Zatdaw is often performed as a traditional dance-drama in royal ceremonies and cultural festivals, incorporating Buddhist morals and Burmese cultural elements. It remains an integral part of Myanmar's artistic and literary heritage, reflecting the localization of Indian epic traditions.

In Sri Lanka, the Ramayana is known as "**Rama Ravana Katha**" or "**Ravana Katha**", which refers to the story of Rama and Ravana. The epic is widely recognized in Sri Lankan culture, and various places in the country are associated with the events of the Ramayana, such as **Ravana Ella Falls** and **Sita Amman Temple**. The Sri Lankan version of the Ramayana integrates local beliefs and traditions while maintaining the core



storyline of the original Indian epic. The epic recounts the tale of Prince Rama, his wife Sita, and Hanuman as they battle Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. The story has deep connections to Sri Lankan geography, with many locations like Ravana Ella Falls and Sigiriya linked to the events of the Ramayana. The writer(s) of the Ramayana in its original form is Valmiki, an Indian sage who composed the Sanskrit epic. However, in Sri Lanka, the narrative has been adapted and localized over centuries, often incorporating Buddhist perspectives and folklore. There is no specific Sri Lankan author attributed to these adaptations. The **Ramayana** influences Sri Lankan culture through dance, art, and festivals, such as **Ravana's legend**, which is explored as part of the country's historical narrative.

**Literature:** The Ramayana was adapted into numerous regional versions across South Asia, with each culture preserving the core themes while infusing local customs and languages. In India, Valmiki's Ramayana is the foundational text, but it was translated and reinterpreted in regional languages such as Tamil, Bengali, and Hindi. In Sri Lanka, it is known as the Ravana Katha; in Thailand, it is called the Ramakien; in Cambodia, it is Reamker; and in Indonesia, it is the Kakawin Ramayana. Each version reflects local narratives, customs, and sometimes integrates moral teachings from Hinduism, Buddhism, or local folklore.

**Theater and Dance:** The Ramayana significantly influenced South Asian traditional theater and dance forms. In India, the story is depicted in performances like Ramlila, a dramatic enactment of the Ramayana during the festival of Dussehra,

particularly in Northern India. Kathakali, a classical dance drama from Kerala, enacts Ramayana stories, especially focusing on the battles between Rama and Ravana. Kuchipudi and Bharatanatyam in South India also incorporate Ramayana themes into their performances. In Thailand, the Ramakien is performed in the traditional Khon dance-drama, where artists wear elaborate costumes to narrate the story. In Cambodia, the Reamker is performed through traditional dance, where the epic's key scenes are visually represented.

**Sculpture and Architecture:** The influence of the Ramayana is evident in temple architecture and sculpture throughout South Asia. In India, temples like those at Khajuraho and Angkor Wat (Cambodia) feature elaborate sculptures that depict scenes from the Ramayana. The Angkor Wat temple complex, built by the Khmer Empire, features extensive bas-reliefs depicting the story of Rama's battle with Ravana. In Thailand, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha in Bangkok houses murals depicting scenes from the Ramakien, while in Indonesia, the ancient Prambanan Temple in Java has relief panels that illustrate the Kakawin Ramayana.

**Art and Murals:** The Ramayana's impact on visual art can be seen in the murals that decorate temples, palaces, and other structures. In India, particularly in Rajasthan, Madhubani, and Pahari painting styles, artists often depict scenes from the Ramayana. In Sri Lanka, murals in Sigiriya and the Sita Amman Temple depict moments from the Ramayana story. Similarly, in Indonesia, the murals at Borobudur and Prambanan temples depict scenes from the Ramayana, combining both artistic beauty and religious significance.



Folklore and Popular Culture: The Ramayana has also been integrated into South Asian folklore and popular culture. The Ramayana provides a framework for folk narratives, stories, and legends in regions like Nepal, Bangladesh, and Indonesia, where its characters and themes are referenced in local myths and legends. In Sri Lanka, Ravana is considered a prominent figure in Sri Lankan history and myth, with the epic's themes playing an important role in national identity.

The Ramayana has profoundly influenced South Asian art forms for over a millennium, shaping literature, dance, sculpture, and cultural traditions by blending Hindu, Buddhist, and local elements.



**Gauri Ajith Puthukattil**  
**BPA Degree**



**Ramayana**, an Indian epic originally written by Sage Valmiki has travelled worldwide. Its influence has been seen in the Southeast Asian countries. The aspects do have a touch of flavors of the Indian epic but have been molded according to the respective countries in such a way that it gets accepted by the people effortlessly.

The countries that are seen with Ramayana in their literature heavily are Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia and Indonesia.

### THE INFLUENCE OF RAMAYANA IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES:

- **Sri Lanka:** The country where the other half of Ramayana occurred, is a historical site with Ravana as a hero. From the place of Sita's captivity to the place that grows the exotic herbs. Their narrative of "Ramayana" or "Ramayanaya" was known to them at least since the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The epic is not with Rama as the lead but Ravana as the main character, not as a hero but a powerful and a just king with an abundance of knowledge. In the Sri Lankan texts we also see the importance of Sita in the epic and her stay etc. the Lankan land itself plays the most important role in the epic. The epic has been adapted by many Buddhists and Hindu traditions. We see it especially amongst the Tamil speaking Hindus. When we speak of the island it is spoken as a place with civilisation at its peak with flying chariots and such things which gives a sense of pride to the Sri Lankan people.
- **Thailand:** The Thai people were familiar with the epic since the Sukhothai period or the Sukhodaya period beginning from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. We see the influence of epic from some records that state that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sukhothai king was named Ram Kamhaeng, when translated means "Mighty Ram". The epic is called "Ramakein". Even though it is a religious story, it is mostly leaning towards the societal norms, royal traditions for the people. They see Rama as a king throughout and Shinta (Sita) as his consort who is a lot more resilient who didn't go through any tragedy. She was known for her devotion to Rama. Even though Ravana is a villain, he is not entirely considered pure evil, but as a complex figure, powerful king with divine qualities. More than the gods we see a lot of influence of the Buddhist ideologies like karma, virtues and reincarnation.
- **Cambodia:** "Reamker", the Cambodian Ramayana unlike other countries have a lot lesser documents available. The Ramakerti 1 is a poem of 5034 verses, telling the adolescent days of Rama to the death of Indrajit in the great battle of Lanka. The Ramakerti 2 is another poem of 1774 verses taking the story from the early days of the reign of Ram in Ayodhya to his rift between queen Sita who was turning down any matrimonial reconciliation. The rest of the versions of the poem remain unfinished and hence no further texts came out. The absence of the Ramayanan texts increases ipso facto as the authors misinterpreted "Khmer Ramakerti".



- **Laos:** In the “Phra Lak Phra Lam”, Rama even though is the central figure is seen more as an ideal king without any divine qualities as opposed to Indian version where he is the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Sita is presented as a symbol of devotion, purity, virtue and did not go through “Agni Pariksha”. The ten headed demon isn’t considered purely evil just like in the Thai culture. The battle scenes and war strategies may be altered to fit Lao historical and cultural narratives. We see a lot of Buddhist influence with little to no divine intervention just like in the Thai culture.
- **Malaysia:** The “Hikayat Seri Rama” or “Hikayat Rama” is the Malay version of the Ramayana which is a Muslim country has adapted the epic in accordance with their culture retaining the Hindu origin of the story but has been molded to fit their culture. Just like in other Southeast Asian countries the characters representation is the same and Hanuman has a larger importance in the Malay texts as a loyal companion. The story even emphasizes on the importance of kingship as a duty toward the people, aligning with the Islamic concept of just rule.
- **Indonesia:** In the Javanese, Balinese and the Sudanese cultures Ramayana is a central part of their traditions. The Kakawain, the Ramakavaca, Serat Rama Keling (which is the modern Javanese version) are the names of the Javanese and Balinese version of the epic. There are versions of the Ramayana developed by Sufi preachers and Muslims that integrate the story into Java's Islamic history. Allah replaces Brahma, and Dasaratha is considered Adam's great-grandson.

#### **DISCUSS THE INFLUENCE ON THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN ARTFORMS:**

- **SCULPTURE:** The Prambanan Temple in Indonesia consists of a lot of sculptures of Rama in exile, his battle with Ravana, rescue of Sita with intricate details with Hanuman as well on the side. The Wayang Kulit even though isn’t strictly a sculpture is a shadow puppetry where leather puppets are carved out in the shape of the characters from the epic. Temples at Angkor in Cambodia can be seen with sculptures heavily influenced by the epic with the characters dressed, draped like the Indian sculptures are shown with a very distinct element of the Khmer artistry with the sculptures having that particular smile and facial features. The Ramayana influenced Thai art, especially during the Sukhothai and Ayutthaya periods (13th–18th centuries). The sculptures in the Thai art are very intricate to its minutest level and very well ornated, they have symmetry, flowing drapes etc. the Wat Phra Kaew and Wat Arun temples have the sculptures of the characters. The Laoatian sculptures are a lot simpler than the ones found in Cambodia and other such countries. The Malay sculptures are very much arrested in the pose where virtues, morality etc are seen the most.



- **PERFORMING ARTS:** Kolam is a traditional performance art in Malaysia, especially in the Tamil community, that draws inspiration from both the Ramayana and local folklore. This dance-drama combines music, storytelling, and acting to narrate episodes from the Ramayana. The musical journey of Malaysia also includes instruments like Mridangam and table etc. Dances like Lakhon Khol a masked dance and Apsara dance where the divine females that appear in the epic are portrayed are widely performed with Ramayana as their concept in Cambodia. Khon performances combine classical Thai dance with a narrative drama. The dances are slow and graceful, with intricate hand movements (mudras) and footwork. The masked dancer's express emotions through their facial expressions and body movements.
- **LITERATURE:** Poems like Kambara Ramayana by the Tamil poet Kambar are quite popular amongst the Tamil immigrants in Malaysia. The Lao Pali that is a traditional Buddhist poetry in Cambodia also has a shadow of the Ramayana as they have incorporated numerous themes from the epic. The Ramakien has inspired many literary adaptations and poetic works in Thailand. For example, Phra Abhai Mani, an epic poem by the Thai poet Sunthorn Phu, draws on the Ramakien's themes, particularly the relationship between Rama and Sita. The epic Ramayan has influenced the culture of the Southeast Asian countries so much that certain places like "Ayuthhaya" exist till date that may have been inspired by Ayodhya, the birth of the hero Ram.

## CONCLUSION

The Indian epic as discussed can be seen influencing so many cultures with our understanding that a religious poetry as popular as Ramayana is widely accepted by the world with no one questioning its existence. We see this trade of cultures happening due to trade, immigration, wars, and most importantly tolerance to accept. With this we understand that the Indian culture was widely accepted but due to the rise of Islam and Buddhism, Hinduism lost its popularity.



**Kavya Varma**  
**BPA Degree**



# Introduction to Tribal, Folk, and Classical Dance

## Composite Culture Through Folk Dances of India

Faculty In-charge: Ms. Madhuri Deshmukh Semester II

# RAJASTHAN

### Introduction

Folk dance in India is an essential part of the country's rich cultural heritage.

Rooted deeply in Tradition, these dances are not only a form of artistic expression but also a medium through which community celebrates festivals, express their daily lives, and honor rituals and historical events. India's vast cultural diversity has led to the development of countless regional and community-based folk dances, each with its unique style, rhythm and narrative. Eg. Rajasthani Folk Dance: Ghoomar



**Ghoomar**

Unlike classical dance forms, which are highly structured and formalized, folk dances of India are typically informal, spontaneous and participatory in nature. These dances are performed by ordinary people of the particular community and are passed down orally from generation to generation, making them an important means to preserve local customs, values and stories. They can be performed solo or in groups, often, and in many state's dances, involves the use of traditional music and instruments.



While they may vary from state to state, all folk dances share a few common elements — vibrant costumes, rhythmic movements, community participation and a close link to lifestyle and culture of people. Unlike classical dance forms, which are highly structured and formalized, folk dances of India are typically informal, spontaneous and participatory in nature.

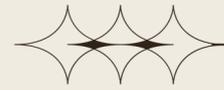
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While they may vary from state to state, all folk dances share a few common elements — vibrant costumes, rhythmic movements, community participation and a close link to lifestyle and culture of people.

India has a rich and diverse cultural heritage and its folk dances are an integral part of this vibrant tradition. They are usually performed during festivals, celebrations and religious events.



**WOMEN PERFORMING GHOOMAR IN WEDDING; SHOWCASING VIBRANCY**



## **Significance of Folk dances of India**

Folk dance holds immense importance and significance, not just as a form of entertainment, but also a medium through which cultural, social and historical traditions are passed down through generation. The significance is listed below:

### **1.) CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND EXPRESSION**

Folk dances are an important means of preserving and transmitting cultural traditions and customs. They allow communities to retain their cultural identity, passing down their stories, values and rituals to future generations. These dances often reflect history, mythology and way of life of specific regions or communities.

### **2.) SOCIAL UNITY AND COMMUNITY BONDING**

Folk dances are often performed during festivals, weddings, and other social events, promoting unity and camaraderie among community members. These dances create a sense of collective identity and are a way of celebrating togetherness, whether it is harvest season or religious festivals. By participating in these dances, individuals strengthen their bonds, contributing to a sense of belonging.

### **3.) EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL CONNECTION**

Folk dance provides a means of expressing emotions and sentiments such as joy, grief, devotion and celebration. The movements, music and rhythm involved in the dances allow individuals to express their innermost feelings and connect with their emotions on a deeper level. Folk dances often serve as acts of reverence, helping people to feel spiritually connected to their beliefs.

### **4.) CONNECTION TO NATURE AND AGRICULTURAL CYCLES**

In many parts of India, folk dances are closely linked to agricultural cycles. They are often performed to mark changing seasons, harvest festivals, or sowing times. Folk dances also reflect a deep connection with nature and natural elements like water, earth and the sky.

## **FOLK DANCE: GHOOMAR**

Ghoomar is a traditional folk dance of Rajasthan. It was the Bhil tribe who performed it to worship Goddess Saraswati which was later embraced by Rajputs. The dance is chiefly performed by women with veiled who wear flowing dresses called ghagharas. The dance typically involve performers pirouetting while moving in and out of a wide circle. The word ghoomna describes the twirling movement of the dances and is the basis of the word ghoomar. According to the traditional rituals, newly wedded brides are expected to dance ghoomar on being welcomed to her new marital home. Ghoomar is often performed on special occasions such as weddings, festivals and religious occasions which sometimes last for hours.



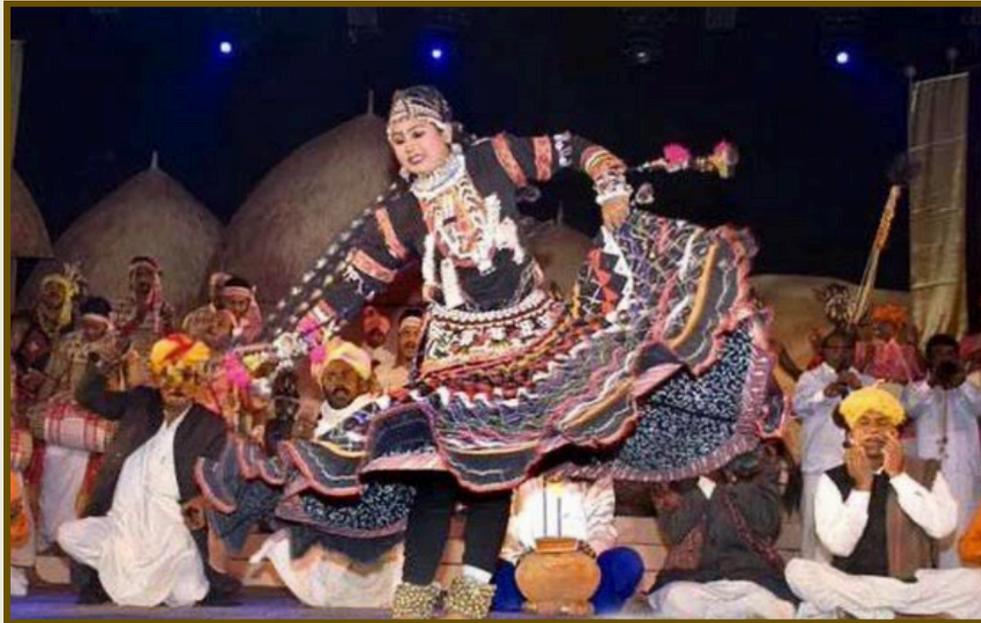
Looking back at the history of this folk dance, Bheels were a strong community at that time and were in constant war with Rajput kings. After much fighting, peace was made and they began interacting with each other. Ghoomar was performed by local women at Rajputana, later on Rajput elite women also started participating in the dance. Men were not allowed at these dances. Ghoomar became popular in the Indian state of Rajasthan during the reigns of Rajput kings, and is typically performed by women on auspicious occasions. Women perform ghoomar with ghonghat on their head while covering their face. The dance form acquires different style and slight change in attire with the different regions of Rajasthan. Ghoomar is performed with faster beats in areas adjoining Gujarat, steps similar to Garba style, while slower beats in Dhaulapur, Karauli, Braj kshetra, similarly difference in attire and dancing style can be seen in Udaipur, Kota, Bundi, etc.

Since Ghoomar is a festive dance, colours become part of the celebrations. The colours, designs and twirling robes of Rajasthan have always been mesmerizing to other Indian and Western women for years.

The folk dance form of Ghoomar, which originated in Marwar, the traditional capital of Rajasthan in historical times, popularized outfits like Chaniya Choli or Ghaghara Choli. The dancing dot patterns of Bandhani in the designs, mirror work, kundan jewellery, shining necklaces, colourful bangles are all part of adorning accessories that go toward the decorative look of the Ghoomar dress. It is paying homage to the Goddess and akin to also started participating in the dance. Men were not allowed at these dances. Ghoomar became popular in the Indian state of Rajasthan during the reigns of Rajput kings, and is typically performed by women on



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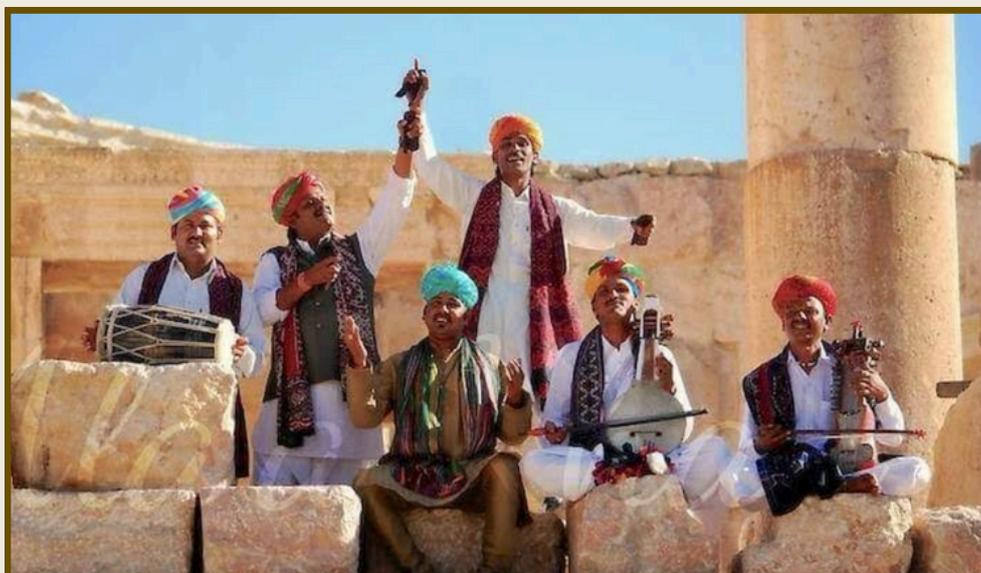


### **DANCING DOT PATTERNED GHOOMAR ATTIRE WITH SILVER JEWELLERY**

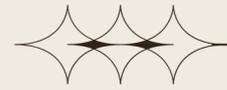
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Dhol, drums, thali (metal plates), manjira, clash cymbals and a harmonium are some of the instruments used as accompaniments.

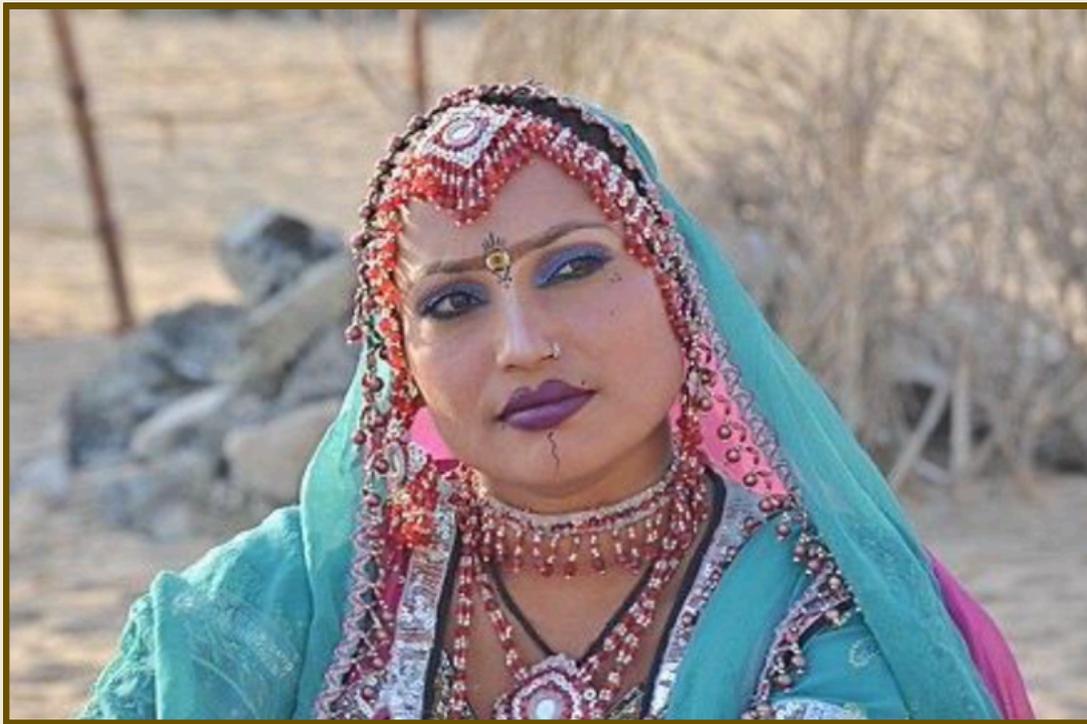


### **INSTRUMENTS AND ACCOMPANISTS IN GHOOMAR**



## FOLK DANCE: KALBELIYA

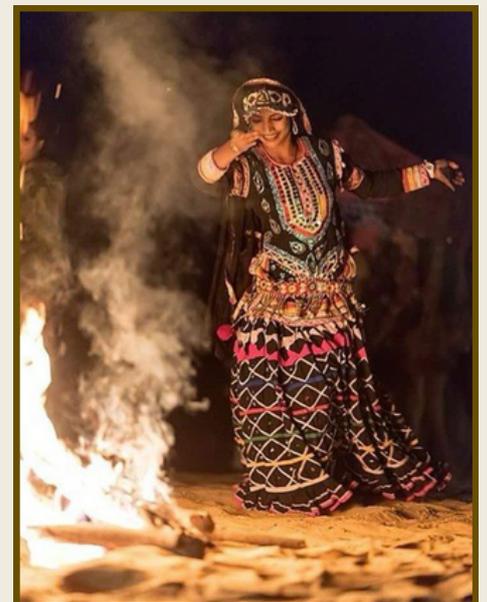
The Kalbelia dance, folk dance of Rajasthan performed as a celebration, is an integral part of Kalbelia culture. Their dances and songs are a matter of pride and a marker of identity for the Kalbelias as they represent the creative adaptation of this community of snake charmers to changing socio-economic conditions and their own role in rural Rajasthani society.



**TYPICAL ATTIRE OF KALBELIA COMMUNITY WOMAN**

The dancers are women in black flowing who dance and twirl, replicating the movements of a serpent. They wear an upper body cloth called an angrakhi and a headcloth known as the odhani, the lower body cloth is called the lehenga, All these clothes are a mix of red and black hues and are embroidered.

The male participants play musical instruments, such as the pung, a woodwind, instrument, traditionally played to capture snakes, the dulf, been, the khanjari - a percussion instrument, morchang, khuralio and the dholak to create the rhythm on which the dancers perform. The dancers are tattooed in traditional designs and wear jewellery and garments richly embroidered with small mirrors and silver threads. As the performance progresses, the rhythm becomes faster and faster and so does the dance.





Kalbélia songs are based on stories taken from folklore and mythology and special dances are performed during Holi. The Kalbélias have a reputation for composing lyrics spontaneously and improvising songs during performances. These songs and dances are a part of an oral tradition that is handed down generations and for which there are neither texts nor any training manuals. In 2010, the Kalbélia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan were declared a part of its Intangible Heritage. Kalbélias are followers of Sage Kanifnath, who drank a bowl of poison and was blessed with control over venomous snakes and animals.

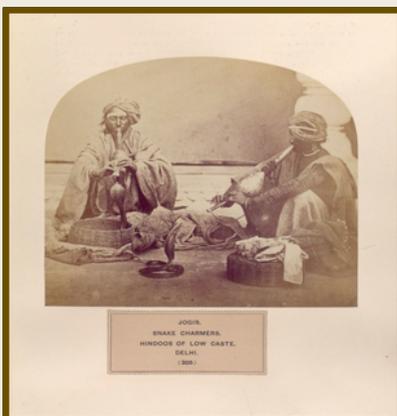


**KALBELIA COSTUME & ACCESSORIES RESEMBLING SNAKE**



**MAN PLAYING PONGGI**

Kalbélias are divided in two main groups, the Daliwal and Nerva. The Kalbélias moved frequently from one place to another in ancient times. Their traditional occupation is catching snakes and trading snake venom. They rear snakes, dogs, hens, horses, donkeys, pigs and goats. Hence, the dance movements and the costumes of their community bear a resemblance to those of serpents. They are also called Sapera and Jogira, Gattiwala and Poogiwaras. The largest cluster of the Kalbélias is in Pali district, followed by significant other groups in Ajmer, Chittorgarh and Udaipur district. They live a nomadic life and belong to scheduled tribes.



**MEN CONTROLLING SNAKES**



**WHEN SAGE KANIFNATH DRANK VENOMOUS POISON AND WAS BLESSED WITH CONTROL OVER SNAKES**



**Sanika More, BPA Part I**



# MAHARASHTRA

महाराष्ट्र, पश्चिम भारतात स्थित एक राज्य आहे. जे आपल्या समृद्ध आणि विविध लोककला यांसाठी प्रसिद्ध आहे. जी विद्यमानपिढ्या सांस्कृतिक वारशाचा भाग बनमी आहे.

महाराष्ट्राची लोकवंरंपरा, जी संगीत, न्हाय, नाटक, सण आणि प्रथांमध्ये समाविष्ट आहे, ग्रामीण जीवनाशी हाटदवणे जोडलेली आहे. आणि सामान्य माणसांच्या दैनंदिन जीवन, संघर्ष आणि उत्सवांचक प्रतिबिंब आहे. महाराष्ट्राच्या लोकसंस्कृतीचा वारसा ग्रामीण परंपरांमध्ये रुजलेला आहे. लावणी, कोळी, लेझीम, दहीकाला,

दशावतार, तमाशा, वारली आणि इतर अनेक लोकनृत्ये ही सहसा सण, ऋतू, पीक उत्पन्न आणि महत्त्वाच्या जीवनातील घटनांचा उत्सव साजरा करण्यासाठी केली जातात. हे महाराष्ट्राच्या समृद्ध इतिहास, लोकसंगीत वैविध्यपूर्णतेचे आणि प्रथांचे प्रतीक आहे. महाराष्ट्र हा लोककलांनी परिपूर्ण असं राज्य आहे.

भारत हा विविधतेने नटलेला देश आहे. इथे नैसर्गिक आणि भौगोलिक विविधतेनुसारच लोकांच्या जिवनशैली, खाद्य संस्कृती पोशाख, भाषा, राहणीमान इत्यादींमध्येही विविधता आढळते. आणि मग या सर्व गोष्टींमध्ये आपला महाराष्ट्र तरी कसा मागे असेल ? महाराष्ट्रातही जिल्ल्या-जिल्ह्यांनुसार लोकांचे राहणीमान भाषा, पोशाख, वादयसंस्कृती यांमध्ये अत्यंत वैविध्य आढळते. आणि त्याचप्रमाणे महाराष्ट्रात लोककला, लोकगीत, संस्कृती, सण यांतही तितकीच विविधता आणि वेगळेपण पाहायला मिळते उ.दा. गौरीगणपतीची गाणी, मंगळागौर, भोंडला / हातगा, महाराष्ट्राची सुप्रसिद्ध लावणी, कोळीगीत, गोफ, लेझीम, पोवाडा, इ. आणि यांसारखे अनेक पारंपरिक लोकगिते आणि लोककलांचे प्रकार महाराष्ट्रात पाहायला मिळतात.

अशाप्रकार, सांस्कृतिक विविधतेने नटलेल्या महाराष्ट्रातील सुप्रसिद्ध आणि ज्यांची ख्याती जगभरात पसरली अशी महाराष्ट्रातील सुप्रसिद्ध 'लावणी' आणि या लोकनृत्यांबद्दल आपण अधिक माहिती घेऊयात.

## लावणी





लावणीचा उगम महाराष्ट्रातील विदर्भ, कोकण आणि मराठवाडा प्रदेशात झाला साधारणतः १९१८व्या शतकाच्या अखेरीस किंवा १९ साव्या शतकाच्या सुरुवातीस जात्रा, शाही दरबारी आणि राजकीय समारंभांमध्ये, ती मराठा साम्राज्याच्या काळात प्रचलित झाली, लावणीच्या गाण्यांमध्ये प्रेम, रौद्र, विरह, भक्ती या भावनाचा समावेश असतो.

लावणीचा प्रसार आणि लोकप्रियता सर्वसामान्यांपर्यंत पोहचवणारे प्रमुख व्यक्तिमत्व म्हणजे शंकर नवरे, हे लावणीचे एक प्रसिद्ध कवी आणि लेखक होते त्यांच्या लेखणीतून लावणीला एक वेगळीच ओळख मिळाली त्यांचे गाणे आणि कविता लावणी लोकप्रिय होण्यास कारणीभूत आहे. तसेच लावणी नर्तक "चं. शिवाजी शं. नवरे, त्यांच्या सादरीकरणामुळे लावणीला अधिक लोकप्रियता मिळाली. लावणीला चित्रपट उद्योगामध्ये प्रमुख स्थान मिळवून दिले ते वसंत पाटील" आणि "गायकवाड कुटुंबाने " चित्रपटातील लावणी, गाणी प्रचंड

लोकप्रिय होऊन ती सर्वसामान्यांच्या रोजच्या जीवनाचा एक भाग बनली.

पूर्वी लावणी ही तमाशा या लोकनृत्यातील एक प्रकार होती, वघ, गवळण तशीच लावणीही तमाशात सादर केली जायची. कालांतराने लावणी इतकी सुप्रसिद्ध झाली की ती एक स्वतंत्र लोकनृत्याचा प्रकार बनली. 'पठे बापुराव' यांच्यासारख्या लोकशाहीरांनी लावणीला साता-समुद्रापार पोहचवलं. आजच्या काळात वेगवेगळ्या कार्यक्रमांमध्ये समारंभांची शोभा वाढवण्यासाठी लावणी नृत्यांगणांना कौतुकाने आमंत्रित केले जाते.

लावणीचे मुख्यतः तीन प्रकार आहेत शाहीरी लावणी, बैठकीची लावणी, फडाची लावणी.

तसेच लावणीचे इतर प्रकारही पडतात :-

जुन्नरी लावणी, हौद्याची लावणी, बालेघाटी लावणी,

छकुड लावणी पंढरपुरीबाजाची लावणी, चढाची लावणी, उताराच्या लावणी, कलगीतुरयाच्या लावणी.

लावणी ही महाराष्ट्रातील लोकप्रिय संगीत आणि नृत्य प्रकार आहे. लावणीच्या सादरीकरणात ढोलकी, हलगी, तुणतुणे, झांज ही वादये वावरली जातात. हे गीत, नृत्य आणि अदाकारी यांचा त्रिवेणी संगम आहे.

जुन्नरी आणि हौद्याची लावणी प्रामुख्याने ढोलकी फडाच्या तमाशात सादर होते. बालेघाटी लावणी ही रागदारी थाटाची विलंबित लयातील लावणी होय. संगीत नाटक अकादमी पुरस्कार विजेत्या 'सत्यभामाबाई चंढरपूरकर' यांनी पंढरपूरी बाजाच्या लावणीला प्रतिष्ठा प्राप्त करून दिली.

कांताबाई सातारकर यांनी तमाशा सादरीकरण करताना छत्रपती शिवाजी महाराज, छत्रपती संभाजी महाराज यांच्या भूमिकाही- रंगमंचावर सादर केल्या आहेत.



"शाहिरी लावणी"मध्ये डफ-तुणतुणयाच्या साथीने गाणी गायली जातात. उच्च स्वराने साथ करणारे झिलकरी संचामध्ये असतात.



बैठकीची लावणी "गायिका नर्तिका बैठकीमध्ये सादर करतात. तबला, पेटी, सारंगी, तंबोरा इत्यादी वाद्यांची साथ असते. नृत्य, गायन आणि दिलखेच अदा हे बैठकीच्या लावणीचे वैशिष्ट्य आहे.

"फडाची लावणी" हा सर्वज्ञात प्रकार आहे. उत्कृष्ट नृत्यांगणा, त्यांची अदा यासोबतीला नाच्या, सोंगाड्या





दोन कलाकरांची साथ हे या लावणीचे वैशिष्ट्य आहे. लावणी सादर करणाऱ्या स्त्रिया या नऊवारी साडी परिधान करतात. पायात चाळ, केसात रंगीत भरपूर गजरा, हातभर बांगड्या, भरपूर दागिने असा त्यांचा एकंदरीत पोशाख असतो.

अंगभर कपड्यांतही केवळ आपल्या आदाकारीने आपल्या समोरच्या प्रत्येक प्रेक्षकाला घायाळ करण्याची आणि खेळवून ठेवण्याची कला ही फक्त लावणी कलाकारांकडेच असते. आपल्या आदांनी घायाळ करण आणि घुंगरांच्या तालावर लहानांपासून म्हातारयांपर्यंत प्रत्येकाचा थिरकायला लावण्याची हीच लावणीची खासीयत आहे.

## लावणी नृत्यांगणा:-



सुरेखा पुणेकर



माधुरी पवार



Avantika Chougule  
BPA Part I



# Arunachal Pradesh

Folk dance is a testament to traditions, and stories, and a celebration of the everyday lives of people across various regions. Folk dances are the reflection of the soul of India's diverse cultural terrain.

Each state or region in India boasts its unique folk-dance traditions which are a testament to the rich history and cultural diversity of the country. These dances are not just artistic expressions but also serve as a living history of the communities that have practiced them for generations.

## FOLK DANCE OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH



Arunachal Pradesh is a state located in the North- east region of India. It is the most remote part of India. It is the land of rising sun. Any celebration or festival is incomplete without the traditional dance of Arunachal Pradesh as dance is the essence of the cultural beliefs.

The folk dances of Arunachal Pradesh are of various formats like religious drama dance, martial art dance, colorful dance.



## **BHUIYA DANCE**

The Buiya dance is a folk dance from Arunachal Pradesh, performed by both men and women of the Bhuiya community. It is a joyful dance that celebrates festivals like Tanuya, Tazampu, and Duiya, and is typically accompanied by gongs and drums. The dance involves rhythmic movements, often with dancers stepping in and out of bamboo sticks

### **PERFORMANCE**

The passage going from the front to the rear end of the house is the Buiya dance stage. The performers form a straight line with one dancer positioned behind the other. This unique formation makes this dance form special.



As the music plays and the gong beats, buiya dancers start moving from the front end of the passage to the rear. The movements are effortless, with the right foot put forward to move ahead by one step. Then the left leg is supported on the left heel with the knee slightly bent. These movements are repeated till the end of the passage is reached.

Another movement involves skipping a step. This is slightly difficult and is usually seen during the performances at festivals. The women make small, graceful jumps to move forward. The men, on the other hand, perform higher jumps, which are much faster as compared to the movements of the women.

Buiya folk dance can be performed by men and women of all ages. The elderly are often the spectators while the young men and women grace the stage.

### **INSTRUMENTS**

Buiya dance is usually performed along with the beats of the drum and gong. Some performers also play the cymbal. First, it commences with slow rhythms and gradually picks up pace. Sometimes the dance is performed without any music also. Songs may be sung solo or in a chorus.

### **ATTIRE**

Buiya dance does not have any dress code. The typical tribal wear is what the performers are seen wearing. The men dress in a jacket with no sleeves on the top and a loincloth on the bottom. The look is completed with a turban on the head and some jewelry around the neck and wrists. The women wear a long wrap skirt and a blouse. Another smaller skirt is wrapped over the long skirt. A side bag is also hung on their shoulders. Many different types of jewelry are seen beautifying the look.



## CHALO DANCE

The Chalo dance is part of Arunachal Pradesh's most awaited festival, called Chalo Loku. This festival is a grand celebration in the state and takes place every year in October and November.

### ABOUT

The Chalo dance is open to people of all ages, and you can be a part of it even without the traditional attire. The performance at the chief's courtyard requires dancers to be dressed traditionally. The men wear a loincloth in the Indian dhoti style on the bottom. The top is usually bare or adorned with silver or bamboo jewelry.



The headgear is an elaborate one with white feathers attached and many other decorative pieces. The women wear a blouse and cotton skirt that goes up to their knees. They also tie a matching piece of cloth on the waist. Both men and women wear metallic rings, armlets, anklets and earpieces.

Cham Katja is what the next day is addressed as. It is an auspicious day for the tribe and is marked by the Chamkat ceremony. All the villagers headed by their chief visit a place called "Chaatam" which is situated on the village outskirts. Everyone prays for a better harvest and overall well-being. The day ends with a nice meal and rice beer. People then visit their relatives and friends and exchange gifts. The chief of the tribe also hosts all villagers at his place, and there the Chalo dance is performed for 2 to 3 hours.

### SONGS AND INSTRUMENTS

The dance is synced with the beats of the drum, and people sing songs. The celebration continues throughout the night, and families who took part in the Chamkat ceremony are invited to perform the Chalo dance.



## WANCHO DANCE

The Wancho dance is a brilliant folk-dance belonging to Arunachal Pradesh. Performed during major festivities, the Wancho dance is a vital part of the celebrations. It is done for recreational purposes and has quite a novel touch to it.

The Wancho dance is a traditional folk dance of the Wancho tribe in Arunachal Pradesh, India. It's a form of cultural expression and entertainment, often performed during festivals and celebrations. Men and women participate, with men dancing in a circle and women in two straight lines, while singing and drumming accompany the dance.



## COSTUMES

The use of traditional attire is a must for performing the Wancho dance. The men are exposed on the top and wrap a loincloth in the bottom. The cloth is usually a light colour with darker borders and beads for detailing. A band made out of cane goes around the waist. Ivory or cane armbands, bead necklaces, coin necklaces and clusters of red thread in the ears are the accessories donned by the men. The sword they carry has a golden handle enhanced with goat hair. On the head, they wear gear formed from bamboo with hornbill feathers in it.

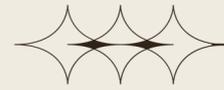
All male dancers hang a basket of cane around their waists. This basket has decorations of wild boar tail hair, animal skulls, shells and colourful beads. There is a bell attached to the bottom of the basket. As they dance these bells jingle, producing the music to which the dance steps are synced

The women wear the traditional blouse and wrap a skirt around their waist. Necklaces made of coins and beads embellish the look. The arms are decorated with metallic jewellery. On the feet, they wear anklets and toe rings. The women have a headdress or headband with colourful adornments on them.

## DANCE PERFORMANCE

Both men and women engage in the dance. They usually take turns performing, accompanied by songs sung by them. The men carry swords on their right hand, which they wield during the dance. The performance begins with the men singing and dancing. They also make a peculiar thrusting movement with the sword, which is unique. Once the men end their song and dance, the women come in and start a song. They match steps to the song and the song is a reply to what the men conveyed through their song. This process is repeated various times.

The men make a round configuration and move around doing the dance moves. The women on the other hand form two straight lines, facing each other.



## PASI KONGKI

Another popular folk dance of Arunachal Pradesh, Pasi Kongki is a celebration of a tribe called Adi. The dance is performed to narrate the social work that the Pasi has done. It is indeed a unique representation of the rich culture that defines the Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh.

Believed to have Chinese origins, the Adi Tribe is one of the oldest tribes that has been residing in the lush green valleys of Arunachal Pradesh since the sixteenth century. The tribe has further sub-divisions with their own set of customs and traditions. Among all the villages, Adi-Pasi is of particular interest due to the Siang River that borders it. This place is important for the tribe.



There are many stories surrounding this village that form a vital part of their celebrations.

The Adi tribe considers dance as an essential part of life that keeps the zest and joy alive in people. The dance performances have a lot of meaning to Adi people. It keeps the whole tribe united.

## DANCE FORMATION

Both men and women can perform the dance. The dancers form a straight line and match their steps to the rhythm of the drum. The men have a much more energetic movement when compared to women.

## COSTUMES

The costumes worn by the dancers make the performance even more picturesque. The men wear a white shirt matched with a white loincloth on the bottom. A long sleeveless jacket is worn on top that goes up to the knees. The headgear is adorned with many black and white feathers. They wear some jewelry around their neck and hands. Some also wear silver rings around the ankles. All the men carry a sword in their hands while dancing.

The women look gorgeous costumed in a blouse and a skirt going up to their ankles. Long gold and silver chains adorn their necks and chests. The head is covered with a conical shaped hat, draped in colorful cloth, and a trail hanging in the back. They also wear spiral-shaped jewelry on their legs that chime as they move around.



## PONUNG DANCE

Ponung folk dance is a popular dance of Arunachal Pradesh. It belongs to the Adi tribe. This tribe is known for many of its traditional folk dances. Ponung dance is an important religious celebration for the Adi tribe.

The Adi tribe is a very religious tribe. The Ponung folk dance is performed to pray to God just before the harvest period. This tribe primarily depends on agriculture for livelihood. The festival takes place in the first week of September.

Two significant events of the festival include the sacrifice of Esos and the Ponung dance. The dance is performed only by women of the tribe. They dance, wishing for a good harvest of the food crops, and the overall well-being of their families and the community.



## MUSIC

The dancing young girls and women form a circle. The Ponung dancers place their hands on each other's shoulders as they perform the steps. In some cases, they hold hands to form the circle. There is only one male who takes part in the show. This man is known as the Miri. He stands in the centre of the circle formed by the women and sings a folk song, which is the only music to which the women dance. The song narrates information about the origin of the crops they harvest, the history of the Adis, and much more.

## COSTUMES

In the Ponung folk dance, the women dress up in traditional attire. On top, they wear a black shirt or blouse. On the bottom, a skirt is wrapped around the waist, and it goes down up to the ankles. The skirts usually have broad horizontal stripes matching the blouse. On the head, these women wear a conical hat cloaked in a cloth that trails behind.

To complete the look, the women adorn themselves with traditional style jewelry. Long chains attached with small circular sequences are worn around the neck. These are paired with other colorful neckpieces of various other metals.



## POPIR DANCE

Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh is known for its popular Popir dance. This tribe celebrates several festivals around the year. The traditions they follow are something that you might not have heard or witnessed before.

Popir dance is done for recreational primarily after the completion of important rituals of the Mopi festival. The dance is a tribute to the Goddess Mopin Ape. She is the Goddess of prosperity and fertility. She is one of the most revered goddesses of the Galo tribe. This makes the Popir dance a crucial part of the celebrations.



## ATTIRE

The way Popir dancers dress is interesting. It is mainly performed by female members of the clan. These dancers wear pure white blouses and wrap skirts, that have red or maroon thread work on them. The use of bamboo is prevalent when it comes to accessories. A band of big coins is tied around the waist. Tufts of bamboo threads are tucked into this waistband.

Long necklaces of multi-color beads are an important part of the attire. The faces are smeared with a white powder of rice flour. The heads are covered using a white cloth that hangs on the back. A special headgear made of bamboo is also used by some dancers. The headgear has bamboo tufts drooping from it. Heavy metal rings are worn in the ears.

## PERFORMANCE

Popir dance comprises simple and elegant moves. The dancers make small movements with their feet. They also form a chain holding each other's waist and then swing their feet in unison. A signature step involves holding a piece of equipment in their right hands and dancing with the body slightly bent forwards. These few steps are done in repetition.



## **BARDO CHHAM**

Arunachal Pradesh is the land of nomads. Many have settled there over the course of time. These tribes come from different cultures and have different beliefs. Therefore, they have different festivities and dances.

Bardo Chham literally translates to 'Dance of the Zodiacs'. The people of the Sherdukpens community believe that there are twelve evils like twelve zodiacs, one for each month of the year. They appear over the course of the entire year in animal forms. Sherdukpens narrate this message through Bardo Chham dance during various regional festivities.



## **COSTUMES**

The masks and headgears worn by the performers are very important to the story being told and to the overall appearance of the dance. The hand and head movements, combined with the bright costumes, make it a sight to behold.

The attire of the performers in this dance is very bright and colorful. The dancers also wear masks of different animal kinds to symbolize the evil spirits. The headgear worn by the dancers is quite elaborate as there is a lot of head movement involved in the act. The beautiful costumes make this dance even more exhilarating to watch.

## **INSTRUMENTS**

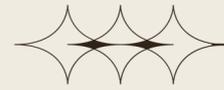
The music for the dance is very crucial. It sets the whole ambiance of the performance and is played on large drums and cymbals.

## **REFERENCE**

Wikipedia, Google, Google Images etc.



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# Types of make-up in KATHAKALI DANCE

**Faculty In-charge: Dr. Megha Mohad**  
**Class: Foundation II**

## **Green (Pacca)**

The “green” (pacca) make-up in Kathakali signifies noble, heroic, and morally upright characters such as Rama, Krishna and Arjuna. Their faces are painted bright green base colour, black eyeliner that prominently outlines the eyes. Red lips often with a defined shape. A white, bow – shaped frame called “cutti” that extends from the ears to the chin, setting off the green. The “kiritam” headdress, a large, layered crown with a prominent circular disc. A “namam”, a stylized sacred mark of Vishnu, on the forehead.



The most characteristic colours of the outer armments are the upper red and lower white shirts, with orange and black stripers. Two side panels accentuate the red motif for the lower body. The entire picture of the ‘green’ type is dignified with elaborate use of decorative upper body accessories. Below the skirt the actor – dancer wears a set of bells strapped to each leg just below the knee. Some of few wears a special vase – shaped crown with a short tuft of peacock feathers on top and have costumes with different colours. Decorated with silver, this special crown (muti) is worn by Krishna, Lakshmana and Rama. Given the traditional association of Krishna with blue colour, Krishna wears a blue upper garment and a skirt of bright mustard – yellow. Several kathakali dancers are renowned for portraying people/characters in pacca (green) are kalamandalam Gopi, Kottal Sivaraman, Kalamandalam Vasu Pisharody and Kalamandalam Krishna Prasad, etc.



### Knife (katti)

'Knife' refers to this type is distinctive stylized mustache. Like the ten – headed demon – king Ravana, and Kirmira in the killing of Kirmira, these characters are arrogant and evil yet have some redeeming qualities – usually a streak of nobility. They wear the same facial – frame as the 'green' characters, as well as the same shape and size crown. The make-up base is green and the costume identical to that of the heroic 'green' type, indicating that they too are high – born, but their arrogance and evil is illustrated through the upturned red mustache framed by white rice – paste. This same motif is carried through by the red pattern above the eyes and eyebrows, again sharply set off by white rice – paste. The final indications of their evil nature are the two white, bulbous protrusions of the nose and forehead.



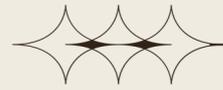
The final indications of their evil nature are the two white, bulbous protrusions of the nose and forehead.



### White Beard (vella tatti)

White beards represent a higher, divine type of being. Hanuman, the wise and valorous chief of the monkeys who appears in the Flowers of Good Fortune, is the main character in this group. His monkey face is suggested by the red, white, and black patterns of the delicate design. The facial mask is extremely expressive since the slightest gesture is accentuated, especially of the cheeks and eyes. The small patch of green on Hanuman's nose illustrates his pious and various nature. His most identifiable features are his white beard, furry white coat, and distinctive wide – brimmed head – dress. Hanuman's lover costume and accessories are similar to those of the 'green' characters, but with the addition of the 'gold' chest plate. Here are some renowned artists who have been celebrated for their powerful and nuanced portrayal of

white beard characters. Kalamandalam Ramankutty Nair, Kalamandalam Gopi, Kalamandalam Vasudevan Nambisan, Kalamandalam Krishna Kutty Poduval, Kalanilayam Balakrishnan are the ones who essayed the role of Hanuman with great acclaim, bringing a unique sensitivity to the Character. Kottakkal Sivanaman famous for his female roles, he was also a versatile actor who portrayed male characters, including those with the white beard makeup, with remarkable skill.



### Red Beard (cuvanna tati)

Red Beards are generally evil, vicious, and vile. Characters included in this type are epic characters like Dussassana of the Mahabharata whose evil is manifest in the act of disrobing. Draupadi at court and demons such as Krodhavasa who appear in the full versions of the Flower of Good Fortune. The eyes are encased in black and framed by a white mustache which extends up to the ears. The black lips set off the ferocious mouth, while the nose and forehead knobs are even larger than those of the 'knife' characters. Perhaps the most



distinctive characteristic of the red beards is their huge crown. Although, the same basic shape and style as the crowns of 'green' and 'knife' types, the red beard crown is much larger and framed with red on its border. While the accessories and color are similar to the 'green' type, the upper garment is a heavier, furrer material, suggesting the gross and unrefined nature of the type. Exceptions to the general type are Bali and Sugriva, the two great Monkey chiefs of the Ramayana. Although costumed as red beards since they are part animal, part human, they are basically good and serve Rama's just cause. Here are some characters who have been particularly recognized for their portrayals of red beard characters are Vellincchi Nanu Nair, Kalamandalam Kesavan, Kalanilayam Balakrishnan, Sadanam Krishnadas Nair, Kottakkal Vasudevan, etc.

### Black Beard (Karutta tati)

Black Beards are as evil as red beards but, like the character Kattalan (Shiva as the hunter is disguised in Kimamara), they are also by nature schemes. Their make-up is very close to that of the red beards except that the lower part of the face is black rather than red, and the face is framed by the black beard. The upper skirt is black, white the lower skirt is dark blue. The head – dress is an unusual bucket shape, and a distinctive stylized 'flower' appears on the nose. As primitive beings, like the hunter Kottalan, they are associated with the forest. Here are few more actors who have been recognized for their contribution to "Kurutta Thali" portrayals are Kalamandalam Krishnan Kutty Poduval, Kalamandalam Sankaran Embranthiri, Kalanilayam Raghavan, Margi Sathi, Kalamandalam Iswaranunni, Kottakkal Narayana, Kalamandalam Unnikrishnan Nair, Sadanam Balakrishnan, etc.





## Black (Kari)

Black (Kari) here are included the demonesses such as Simhika in the Killing of Kirmira. Very close to the black beard, the demonesses are also dressed in black, wear the bucket – shaped head – dress, and also add oversized comic false breasts. Their jet-black faces are offset by patches of red, outlined in white rice - paste, with the addition of dotted patterns of white rice – paste suggesting the make – up of the village goddess Bhagavati, traditionally associated with small – pox. The demonesses are shape – changers capable of transforming themselves into beautiful maidens in order to deceive and trick their prey. They are therefore often considered the most grotesque, of the Kathakali characters, and are a vivid and direct contrast to the idealized females in the ‘radiant’ category. Some notable actors who have brought these “Kari Thati” (black beard) characters to life with their unique skills and interpretations include are Kalamandalam Krishnan Kutty Poduval, Margi Sathi, Kalamandalam Sankaran Embranthiri, Kalanilayam Raghvan, Kalamandalam Iswaranunni, Kalamandalam Unnikrishnan Nair, Sadanam Balakrishnan, Kottakkal Narayanan, etc.



## Radiant or Shining (Mirukku)

This class includes both idealized female heroines, such as Sita in the Ramayana, Panchali in the Flower of Good Fortune, the Brahman’s wife in The Progeny of Krishna, or Mohini in King Rugmangada’s Law, and the purest and most spiritually perfected males, including brahmans, holy men and sages. The base make – up for this class is a warm – yellow – orange, hence the term ‘radiant’ or ‘shining’. Costumes for this class are close traditional everyday dress. Since men play female roles, they don a long – sleeved upper garment, wear a white lower cloth

around a false top - knot worn slightly to the actor’s head. Holy men wear the typical saffron yellow and a special crown, while brahmans, like the main role in The Progeny of Krishna, wear a simple lower cloth as well as upper cloth tied over the head. When demonesses such as Simhika in the Killing of Kirmira appear in disguise, they appear as idealized beautiful maidens in the female version of ‘radiant’ make – up and costume. Some actors who have been particularly celebrated for their captivating portrayals within this category are Kalamandalam Gopi, Kalamandalam Kesavan Namboodiri, Kalanamdalam Vasudevan Nambisan, Kalamandalam Leelamma, Margi Vijaykumar, Margi Madhu, Vesham Vijayan, etc.



## Special (Teppu)

The final category is a catch – all class which includes approximately eighteen characters from the active repertory of plays that do not fit any of the above types. Included here are the special bird – style make – ups and costumes of such famous characters as Garuda, Jatayu and Hamsa (the goose in Nalacaritam) the Goddess Bhadrakali who appears in Daksa's Sacrifice with a pock – marked face (white rice – paste spots), an ingeniously painted red tongue, and row of upper teeth which makes it appear that her upper lip is missing, the fantastic man - lion incarnation of Lord Vishnu appearing in King Pahlada's Law, and such comic village female

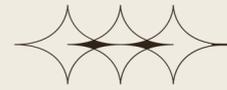


stereotypes as Vriddha, the midwife character in the progeny of Krishna, and Manthara, the comic old women character added to the P.S.V. Natyasangham company's version of the Complete Ramayana. Since each of these characters and their makeups are unique and do not 'fit' the normative categories, they exemplify kathakali's flexibility. Famous dancers who performed these roles for Garuda and Jatayu: Kalamandalam Raman Kutty Nair, Kalamadalam Padmanabham Nair, For Hamsa (in Nalacharitham): Kalamandalam Gopi who has brought a unique beauty to the celestial swan, For Bhadrakali: Kalamandalam Leelamma, Kalamandalam Krishnan Kutty Poduval, For Narasimha: Vellincchi Nanu Nair, etc.

**Project done by:**

**Foundation II Students**

**(Namrata Boda, Aarya Sawant, Amit Munge, Upasana Shingala, Mrunali Pawar,  
Shashikala Rathod, Bhoomi Ahuja, Kajal Thakur)**



# *Reel Reflections: A Critic's Corner*

## Film Reviews

# Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara



### Introduction

Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara (ZNMD) is a film directed by Zoya Akhtar and it was released in the year 2011. It is a film that captures the essence of friendship, self-discovery, and living life to the fullest. The movie stars Hrithik Roshan, Farhan Akhtar, Abhay Deol, Katrina Kaif, and Kalki Koechlin. The narrative follows three friends, Arjun, Kabir, and Imran, as they embark on a life-changing road trip across Spain. This film has earned critical acclaim for its storytelling, picturesque visuals, and relatable characters, making it a staple in modern Indian cinema. ZNMD is more than just a travel movie or a coming-of-age tale. It is a layered exploration of how past experiences, fears, and unresolved issues shape individuals. Through each character's journey, the film provides profound insights into life's complexities and the importance of breaking free from self-imposed limitations. In this review, I will explore why I chose this movie, its strengths and weaknesses, the quality of character development, the dominant rasa, and whether the film effectively employs elements from Natyashastra.



## 2} What's good about this movie?

Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara is a well-crafted film that excels in multiple areas:

1. **NARRATIVE STRUCTURE:** The storyline is coherent and well-paced. The film takes viewers on an emotional and visual journey, seamlessly blending humor, drama, and introspection. Each scene is purposeful and contributes to the overarching theme of self-discovery. The screenplay by Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti ensures that every character's story is given ample attention.
2. **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Carlos Catalan's cinematography captures the stunning landscapes of Spain beautifully, creating a visual feast that complements the narrative. The wide shots of serene beaches, lush countryside, and vibrant festivals enhance the viewing experience, making Spain an integral part of the story.
3. **MUSIC AND SOUNDTRACK:** Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy's music perfectly matches the tone of the film. Songs like "Senorita" and "Der Lagi Lekin" enhance the emotional depth of key scenes. The use of Spanish-inspired rhythms and soulful lyrics further immerses viewers in the film's world.
4. **THEMES:** The movie's exploration of friendship, love, fear, and freedom is both entertaining and meaningful. It encourages viewers to face their fears and live life without regrets. The theme of overcoming one's limitations is portrayed through symbolic activities such as skydiving, scuba diving, and the Running of the Bulls.

## 3} Is the Character Building Good or Bad?

The character development in Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara is commendable. Each protagonist undergoes significant growth throughout the film:

- **Arjun (Hrithik Roshan):** Initially a workaholic obsessed with financial success, Arjun learns to let go of his materialistic mindset and embrace life's simple pleasures. His transformation is gradual and believable, marked by pivotal moments such as scuba diving and his relationship with Laila.
- **Kabir (Abhay Deol):** Though Kabir appears carefree and confident, he struggles with his impending marriage. His journey helps him understand the importance of being honest about his feelings. Kabir's internal conflict adds depth to his character, making his eventual decision to call off the wedding feel justified.
- **Imran (Farhan Akhtar):** Imran is portrayed as a witty, fun-loving poet with unresolved issues regarding his estranged father. His character arc is emotionally satisfying as he reconciles with his past and finds closure. Imran's use of poetry throughout the film adds an introspective layer to his journey.
- Supporting characters like **Laila (Katrina Kaif)** and **Natasha (Kalki Koechlin)** add depth to the narrative. Laila's free-spirited nature catalyzes Arjun's transformation, while Natasha's controlling tendencies highlight Kabir's internal conflict. However, Natasha's character could have been developed further to avoid stereotyping.



#### **4} Which is the Predominant Rasa in the Movie?**

The predominant rasa in *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* is *Adbhuta* (wonder). The film's journey through Spain is filled with awe-inspiring moments, from skydiving and scuba diving to the Tomatina festival and the Running of the Bulls. These experiences evoke a sense of wonder and excitement, both for the characters and the audience. Each activity symbolizes facing and conquering fears, creating a transformative experience for the protagonists. The rasa of wonder is complemented by other emotions, such as love (*Shringara*) and compassion (*Karuna*), ensuring a rich emotional experience. The seamless blending of these rasas reflects the film's nuanced approach to storytelling.

#### **5} Is there any Natyashastrik Element found in the Movie?**

The *Natyashastra*, an ancient Indian treatise on performing arts, emphasizes the use of various rasas to evoke emotions. *ZNMD* incorporates several *Natyashastrik* elements like:

1. *Navarasa* (Nine Emotions) - The film explores multiple emotions, including:
  - a. *Shringara* (romantic love) in Arjun and Laila's blossoming relationship.
  - b. *Karuna* (compassion) in Imran's reconciliation with his father.
  - c. *Veera* (courage) as the friends face their fears through daring adventures.
  - d. *Hasya* (humor) in the light-hearted banter and camaraderie between the friends.
2. *Sutradhar* [Narration] - Imran's poetry acts as a narrative device, providing introspective commentary that ties the film's themes together. The use of poetry as a reflective tool aligns with the *Natyashastrik* tradition of storytelling through verse and emotion.

#### **6} Was the Depiction of Rasa Accurate or Not?**

The depiction of rasa in *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* is largely accurate. The film successfully evokes the intended emotions through its storytelling, performances, and visual aesthetics. The balance between different rasas ensures that the audience experiences a full spectrum of emotions, enhancing the overall impact of the narrative. Zoya Akhtar's direction ensures that each rasa is given due attention without overwhelming the audience.

#### **7} Critique of any Specific Part/Scene of the Movie.**

One aspect that could have been improved is the resolution of Natasha's character arc. While her controlling nature is evident, the film does not delve deeply into her perspective or motivations. Providing more insight into Natasha's insecurities or struggles would have added complexity to her character and made her interactions with Kabir more nuanced. Additionally, the portrayal of her as a somewhat stereotypical "clingy fiancée" felt one-dimensional.



## CONCLUSION:

Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara is a cinematic celebration of friendship, self-discovery, and the transformative power of new experiences. Zoya Akhtar masterfully weaves an engaging narrative that takes the audience on a journey filled with adventure, humor, and introspection. The film's visual grandeur, from the scenic landscapes of Spain to the adrenaline-pumping activities, enhances its emotional depth, making the story feel authentic and relatable.

Each character's evolution—from Arjun's journey from materialism to mindfulness, Imran's reconciliation with his past, and Kabir's quest for self-honesty—demonstrates the film's thoughtful exploration of inner conflicts. The supporting cast, particularly Laila's free-spirited nature, plays a pivotal role in driving these transformations. However, Natasha's character could have been developed more intricately to add nuance to the narrative.

The film's predominant rasa, Adbhuta (wonder), encapsulates the awe and wonder of life's unexpected adventures, while the interplay of other rasas ensures a holistic emotional experience. By seamlessly integrating the principles of Natyashastra through poetry, emotional expression, and narrative reflection, the film remains true to its roots in Indian storytelling traditions.

Ultimately, Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara is a deeply resonant film that speaks to the universal desire for freedom, connection, and authenticity. It invites audiences to reflect on their lives and the limitations they may have imposed upon themselves. In doing so, it delivers a powerful and timeless message: break free from fear, savor the present, and live without regret—because life truly is too precious to be lived any other way.



**Bhoomi Patel,  
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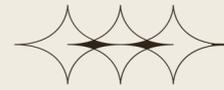
# Kantara



## Introduction

Cinema serves as a powerful storytelling medium, capturing human emotions, traditions, and cultural beliefs. The 2022 Kannada film *Kantara*, directed by Rishab Shetty, stands out as a unique blend of folklore, spirituality, and social conflict. Rooted in the Bhoota Kola tradition of Karnataka, the film explores the sacred connection between humans and nature, making it an excellent choice for aesthetic analysis.

This paper critically examines *Kantara* through the lens of Indian aesthetics and *Natya Shastra*, particularly focusing on *rasa* theory, cinematography, and traditional performance elements. It also evaluates the film's strengths and weaknesses, analyzing its impact from both artistic and critical perspectives.



## Why Choose This Movie?

Kantara is an ideal film for aesthetic analysis due to its:

- **Authentic Representation of Folk Culture:** The movie beautifully showcases the Bhoota Kola tradition, a ritualistic dance drama that is deeply connected to Karnataka's spiritual heritage.
- **Strong Emotional Depth:** The film evokes multiple rasas, engaging audiences with a powerful narrative.
- **Blend of Realism and Supernatural Elements:** The story explores land rights, faith, and human ambition, while also incorporating divine mysticism.
- **Cinematic Brilliance:** The film's visual storytelling, sound design, and performances make it a compelling artistic work.

Kantara goes beyond conventional storytelling by seamlessly merging **Indian aesthetics with contemporary socio-political themes**, making it a rich subject for critical appreciation.

## Summary of the Movie

Set in a **coastal village in Karnataka**, Kantara revolves around the conflict between indigenous villagers and government-backed land developers.

- The protagonist, Shiva (Rishab Shetty), is initially a rebellious youth who disregards the spiritual traditions of his ancestors.
- However, as external forces attempt to seize the villagers' sacred land, he is drawn into a supernatural journey, where he realizes his destiny as the protector of his people.
- The story culminates in a divine intervention, reinforcing the belief that the land is protected by ancestral spirits.

The film's core message emphasizes the **preservation of tradition, the consequences of greed, and the spiritual power of faith.**

## Evaluation of the Movie: Strengths and Weaknesses

**Strengths:** Why Kantara is a Good Movie

1. **Authentic Cultural Representation:** The film portrays Bhoota Kola rituals with precision, offering a rare cinematic exploration of indigenous traditions.
2. **Masterful Cinematography:** The use of natural landscapes, lighting, and dynamic camera movements creates a visually immersive experience.
3. **Powerful Acting:** Rishab Shetty's intense portrayal of Shiva adds depth and emotional weight to the narrative.
4. **Strong Sound Design & Music:** The traditional folk music and rhythmic beats enhance the film's spiritual energy.
5. **Compelling Emotional Impact:** The film effectively conveys heroism, fear, devotion, and anger, drawing the audience into its world.



### **Weaknesses: Criticism of the Film**

Despite its strengths, Kantara has some limitations:

1. **Slow Pacing in the First Half:** The initial portions of the film feel prolonged, which may cause disengagement.
2. **Overdependence on Supernatural Elements:** The climax relies on divine intervention, which reduces the role of human agency in resolving the conflict.
3. **Underdeveloped Female Characters:** The film focuses heavily on male heroism, giving limited narrative depth to female characters.

While these issues are notable, Kantara's cultural richness and emotional depth make it a **standout cinematic experience**.

### **Primary Rasa in Kantara**

Among the Navarasa (nine emotions) described in Natya Shastra, the dominant rasa in Kantara is Veera Rasa (Heroism).

- Shiva's transformation into a warrior-protector embodies the courage, resilience, and righteousness central to Veera Rasa.
- His physical strength, fierce expressions, and dramatic confrontations enhance the heroic essence of the narrative.

Other rasas present in the film include:

- **Bhayanaka (Fear):** The supernatural presence of ancestral spirits creates an atmosphere of mysticism and fear.
- **Raudra (Anger):** The villagers' rage against oppression and injustice manifests in powerful battle sequences.
- **Karuna (Compassion):** The deep bond between Shiva, the villagers, and their sacred land evokes compassion and empathy.
- **Shanta (Peace):** The film concludes with spiritual acceptance and harmony, reinforcing the idea of divine justice.

Kantara's rich emotional landscape aligns well with the principles of Natya Shastra, making it a textbook example of Indian aesthetic theory in cinema.



## Natyashastra Elements in the Film

Yes, Kantara exhibits several elements from Bharata's Natya Shastra, including:

- 1. Use of Mudras (Hand Gestures):** The ritualistic dance movements in Bhoota Kola resemble classical dance forms like Bharatanatyam.
- 2. Bhava (Expression):** Rishab Shetty's intense expressions showcase abhinaya (dramatic expression) at its finest.
- 3. Dramatic Storytelling (Natya):** The film combines realism with stylized storytelling, a key feature of Indian dramaturgy.
- 4. Mythological References:** The sacred connection between man, nature, and deity reflects traditional Indian philosophies.

Kantara successfully bridges the gap between traditional Indian performance arts and contemporary cinema, making it a landmark film in aesthetic storytelling.

## Criticism of a Specific Part of the Movie

One major criticism of Kantara is its resolution through divine intervention.

- While the idea of ancestral spirits protecting the land is powerful, it reduces the role of human responsibility.
- A more grounded resolution, where the villagers actively reclaim their land, could have strengthened the film's social message.

Despite this, the supernatural climax aligns with the mythological tone of the film, reinforcing its spiritual themes.

## Personal Reflection

Personally, Kantara was an eye-opening and thought-provoking film. The emphasis on cultural identity, respect for nature, and the power of tradition resonated deeply. It's a film that calls attention to the underrepresented stories of indigenous communities and their struggles to protect their land from external forces. The film's visual storytelling, emotional weight, and strong performances left a lasting impression on me.

However, while the supernatural elements were captivating, I felt that a more realistic resolution could have amplified the film's message about human responsibility in preserving cultural and environmental heritage. Relying on divine retribution, though thematically fitting, somewhat diminishes the power of human agency in solving real-world issues.



## Conclusion

Kantara is an artistic masterpiece that effectively blends Indian folklore, spirituality, and socio-political themes. Its portrayal of rasa theory, Natya Shastra elements, and traditional performance aesthetics makes it a significant film for academic and cinematic study.

Despite minor pacing issues and reliance on supernatural elements, Kantara excels in evoking deep emotions, showcasing cultural richness, and delivering powerful storytelling. It serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving indigenous traditions and respecting nature, making it a must-watch film with lasting artistic value.

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**Uttara Sharath,  
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# How Old Are You



How old are you is a 2014 Indian Malayalam-language comedy-drama film. It stars Manju Warrier, Kunchacko Boban, Kaniha, Lalu Alex and Amritha Anil. This film marks the return of Manju Warrier after a 15-year sabbatical break from the industry. The film was released on 17 May 2014. The movie was directed by Rosshan Andrews. The story was written by Bobby and Sanjay.

## Detailed Story.

The film revolves around Nirupama Rajeev (played by Manju Warrier), a 36-year-old woman leading an ordinary and unfulfilled life. She works as a government employee and manages her household, but her efforts go largely unnoticed by her family and society. Her husband Rajeev Narayanan (Kunchacko Boban) works in the Middle East and aspires to move to Ireland for better career opportunities. He sees Nirupama as an unambitious woman with little relevance beyond her household duties. Their teenage daughter, Lakshmi, shares the same view and often expresses disappointment in her mother's simplicity. The story takes a turning point when Lakshmi, during a school event, is asked who her role model is. She hesitates, unable to name her mother, as she perceives her as unremarkable. This moment deeply affects Nirupama, making her realize that her daughter does not see her as an inspiring figure. Around the same time, Nirupama applies for an Irish visa but gets rejected due to age restrictions, further shattering her self-confidence. Rajeev and Lakshmi express their disappointment, reinforcing her feeling of worthlessness.



Amidst her struggles, an unexpected incident brings a shift in Nirupama's life. She is invited to meet the President of India as part of a citizen interaction program. Initially hesitant, she attends the meeting, but her nervousness and self-doubt prevent her from making an impression. The event makes headlines, but for the wrong reasons—she becomes the subject of jokes, with people mocking her lack of confidence and relevance in society. This public embarrassment pushes her into self-reflection. During this phase, she reconnects with her old friend Susan (played by Kaniha), who is a successful entrepreneur. Susan encourages Nirupama to rediscover her passions and regain confidence. It is then revealed that Nirupama once had a deep interest in organic farming. She had previously been part of an initiative that promoted sustainable farming within communities. Inspired by her past and Susan's encouragement, she decides to revive her interest and bring a change.

Nirupama starts small, growing vegetables in the limited space available in her home. Her experiments in organic farming prove successful, and soon she expands her initiative to larger communities. Through hard work and persistence, she transforms a barren public space into a thriving organic farm. The news of her initiative spreads, and soon she receives media attention for her efforts. Her work is recognized at the national level, earning her an invitation to speak at a major agricultural summit. This time, when she stands in front of an audience, she is not nervous—she speaks with confidence and conviction, leaving a strong impact. The success of her organic farming movement not only brings her recognition but also transforms the way her family views her. Rajeev, who had previously dismissed her abilities, begins to respect her achievements. Lakshmi, who once felt ashamed of her mother, now sees her as an inspiration. The film ends with Nirupama embracing her newfound identity as a confident, self-sufficient woman, proving that age is never a barrier to achieving dreams.

### **Things I Loved About the Movie:**

1. **Empowering Message for Women:** The movie beautifully portrays a woman's journey from self-doubt to self-empowerment. It challenges the stereotype that women must sacrifice their aspirations for family and highlights that personal growth is possible at any stage in life.
2. **Manju Warriar's Performance:** Manju Warriar's comeback performance was phenomenal. She perfectly captured the emotional depth of Nirupama's struggles, making her transformation realistic and inspiring.
3. **Realistic Family and Social Dynamics:** The film accurately depicts the societal expectations placed on middle-aged women. The way Nirupama's family dismisses her contributions reflects a reality that many women faces, making her journey relatable to many.
4. **Sustainability and Organic Farming Theme:** The film goes beyond personal growth to address important environmental issues. It promotes sustainable farming and food self-sufficiency, making it both socially relevant and educational.
5. **Strong Emotional Connect:** The strained mother-daughter relationship adds emotional weight to the story. Nirupama's desire to be recognized by her daughter as a role model is something that resonates deeply with many parents.



### Things I Didn't Like Much:

1. **Predictability in Some Parts:** While the film's message is strong, some parts of the story, such as Nirupama's rise to success, feel a bit predictable.
2. **Lack of a Strong Antagonist:** The film focuses primarily on internal struggles rather than external conflicts. A more defined antagonist—such as a societal figure actively discouraging Nirupama—could have made the narrative more gripping.
3. **Quick Resolution:** Nirupama's transformation from an ignored housewife to a national figure happens relatively quickly. A more gradual depiction of her struggles and learning process could have made her success feel even more earned.

### Predominant Rasa:

The predominant rasa in *How Old Are You* is Veera Rasa (heroism/courage). Nirupama's journey is one of inner strengths and determination, inspiring viewers to overcome self-doubt and societal limitations. The film also incorporates Karuna Rasa (compassion), as viewers empathize with Nirupama's struggles and find her eventual triumph deeply moving.

### Lessons from the Movie:

1. **Age is Not a Barrier:** Dreams and aspirations do not have an expiry date. Nirupama proves that one can always start fresh, no matter their age.
2. **Self-Worth Comes from Within:** Nirupama's transformation is a reminder that self-worth should not depend on societal validation but on personal belief and effort.
3. **The Power of Knowledge and Initiative:** Nirupama's journey teaches us that knowledge and learning can lead to transformation. She takes control of her life by educating herself about organic farming and using her skills to bring a change.
4. **Breaking Societal Norms:** The film encourages women to break free from societal expectations and pursue their passions without fear of judgment.
5. **Sustainability Matters:** Through its focus on organic farming, the film promotes sustainable living and food security, encouraging viewers to think about their impact on the environment.

### Conclusion:

*How Old Are You* is more than just a movie; it is an inspiring tale of self-discovery and empowerment. With its relatable storyline, strong performances, and meaningful message, it leaves a lasting impact. Nirupama's journey is a call to action for anyone who has ever felt stuck in life, proving that change is possible at any stage. Ultimately, the movie celebrates resilience, personal growth, and the courage to break free from societal norms, making it a must-watch for audiences of all age.



**Laxmi Nair**  
**BPA Part II**



# LUDO



## Introduction

Hindi cinema has seen an evolution in storytelling, where traditional narratives blend with unconventional themes to create unique cinematic experiences. *Ludo* (2020), directed by Anurag Basu, is a film that defies standard categorization, weaving multiple storylines with elements of crime, fate, and dark humor. The film employs an intricate narrative structure, making it a compelling subject for analysis. This essay explores why *Ludo* is a cult classic, its effectiveness in storytelling, and its connection to the principles of *Natyashastra* and *Rasa* theory.

## Why Ludo?

*Ludo* is chosen for this analysis because it is a modern cult film that integrates multiple genres and philosophical undertones. The film's use of non-linear storytelling, humor, and profound existential themes makes it stand out. Additionally, the way *Ludo* intertwines multiple storylines while maintaining coherence is an achievement in cinematic storytelling.



## Summary of Ludo

The film follows four different storylines, each represented by a different color in the game of Ludo:

- **Sattu Bhaiya (Pankaj Tripathi)**: A feared gangster whose actions set off a chain of events. His storyline represents the chaos and unpredictability of life.
- **Akash and Shruti (Aditya Roy Kapur & Sanya Malhotra)**: Their plot revolves around a leaked intimate video, forcing them into a bizarre adventure
- **Alu and Pinky (Rajkumar Rao & Fatima Sana Shaikh)**: Alu, a street-smart man, remains hopelessly in love with Pinky, even when she manipulates him for personal gains.
- **Rahul and Sheeja (Rohit Suresh Saraf & Pearle Maaney)**: Strangers from different worlds, their life takes a turn after they discover stolen money.
- **The Narrator (Anurag Basu)**: A godlike figure who guides the characters, drawing a philosophical connection between fate and the game of Ludo.

These interconnected stories explore the themes of karma, morality, love, and fate, ultimately converging in a climactic, chaotic resolution.

## Rasa Analysis in Ludo

The film Ludo employs a rich blend of rasas (emotions) that contribute to its layered storytelling. The dominant rasa is Hasya Rasa (Humor), which runs throughout the film, often through absurd situations, dark comedy, and witty dialogues. However, humor is not merely used for entertainment but serves as a lens to explore deeper existential themes.

- **Hasya Rasa (Humor)**: The film's comedic elements, such as Sattu Bhaiya's deadpan delivery, Alu's exaggerated devotion, and Rahul's misfortunes, bring lightness to otherwise intense situations. Humor arises from irony, contrast, and the unpredictability of life, making it an integral part of Ludo's emotional landscape.
- **Karuna Rasa (Compassion)**: Beneath the humor, there is a strong undercurrent of empathy for the characters. Alu's unrequited love, Rahul's struggle for dignity, and even Sattu Bhaiya's existential crisis evoke sympathy from the audience. The film humanizes even its morally ambiguous characters, blurring the line between right and wrong.
- **Raudra Rasa (Fury)**: The film also features elements of rage and violence, particularly in Sattu Bhaiya's storyline. His actions trigger a chain reaction that affects all the characters, reinforcing the chaotic nature of fate.
- **Shanta Rasa (Peace/Resignation)**: By the end, characters find resolution in their own ways, embracing the randomness of life. The film subtly suggests that life is beyond human control, aligning with the philosophical concept of surrender to fate. The interplay of these rasas creates a multi-dimensional experience, making Ludo more than just a comedy—it is a reflection on life's unpredictability, where humor and tragedy coexist.



## Natyashastra Elements in Ludo

Anurag Basu's *Ludo* subtly incorporates elements of the Natyashastra, making it an example of how ancient Indian storytelling techniques can be adapted into modern cinema.

- **Navarasa Integration:** The film weaves multiple rasas across different storylines, ensuring a dynamic emotional experience. Unlike conventional narratives that focus on one dominant emotion, *Ludo* balances humor, compassion, anger, and resolution seamlessly.
- **The Narrator as Sutradhar:** The character played by Anurag Basu functions as a modern Sutradhar, akin to the classical Indian stage narrator. He does not interfere in the story but acts as an omniscient observer, reinforcing the idea that life is like a game of Ludo—random yet interconnected. His presence mirrors the traditional role of a storyteller who guides the audience while allowing characters to navigate their own destinies.
- **Dramatic Irony and Fate:** In classical Indian drama, fate plays a crucial role, and *Ludo* embodies this through its interconnected yet seemingly accidental events. The characters remain unaware of how their paths will cross, but the audience sees the larger design, creating dramatic irony—a key feature in classical narratives.
- **Metaphor and Symbolism:** The game of Ludo serves as a metaphor for life's unpredictability. Just as players roll the dice and make strategic moves, the characters make choices that lead to unexpected consequences. This reflects the Natyashastra's emphasis on metaphorical storytelling, where narratives transcend literal meanings to convey deeper truths.

## Director's Vision and Filmmaking Aspects

Anurag Basu's directorial vision is what sets *Ludo* apart from conventional Bollywood films. The film's cinematography employs unique camera angles, dynamic tracking shots, and creative framing to emphasize the unpredictability of life. The use of vibrant color grading—each storyline distinguished by a specific hue—helps the audience navigate the multiple narratives with clarity. The background score, composed by Pritam, enhances the film's whimsical yet philosophical tone, blending playful melodies with moments of deep emotional resonance. The combination of visual storytelling, seamless editing, and an immersive soundscape contributes to *Ludo*'s distinct cinematic experience.



## **Criticism of Ludo**

While Ludo is a masterful film in terms of its intricate narrative and thematic depth, it is not without flaws. One notable criticism is the lack of depth in certain character arcs. For instance, the romance between Akash and Shruti, though integral to the plot, feels underdeveloped compared to other storylines. Their motivations and emotional growth are not as compelling as those of Alu or even Sattu Bhaiya, making their subplot slightly weaker. Additionally, the film's ambitious multi-narrative approach sometimes leads to a rushed resolution, where certain threads feel conveniently tied up rather than naturally concluded. This may leave some viewers wanting a more organic and satisfying closure. Despite these minor flaws, Ludo remains an exceptional cinematic experience.

## **Conclusion**

Ludo is a refreshing take on Bollywood storytelling, blending humor, philosophy, and chaos into an engaging cinematic experience. Despite minor flaws, the film succeeds in creating an intricate, emotionally resonant narrative that stays with the audience. Its use of Natyashastra elements and effective rasa depiction make it a worthy subject for academic and cinematic analysis.



**Vvani Jain**  
**BPA Part II**

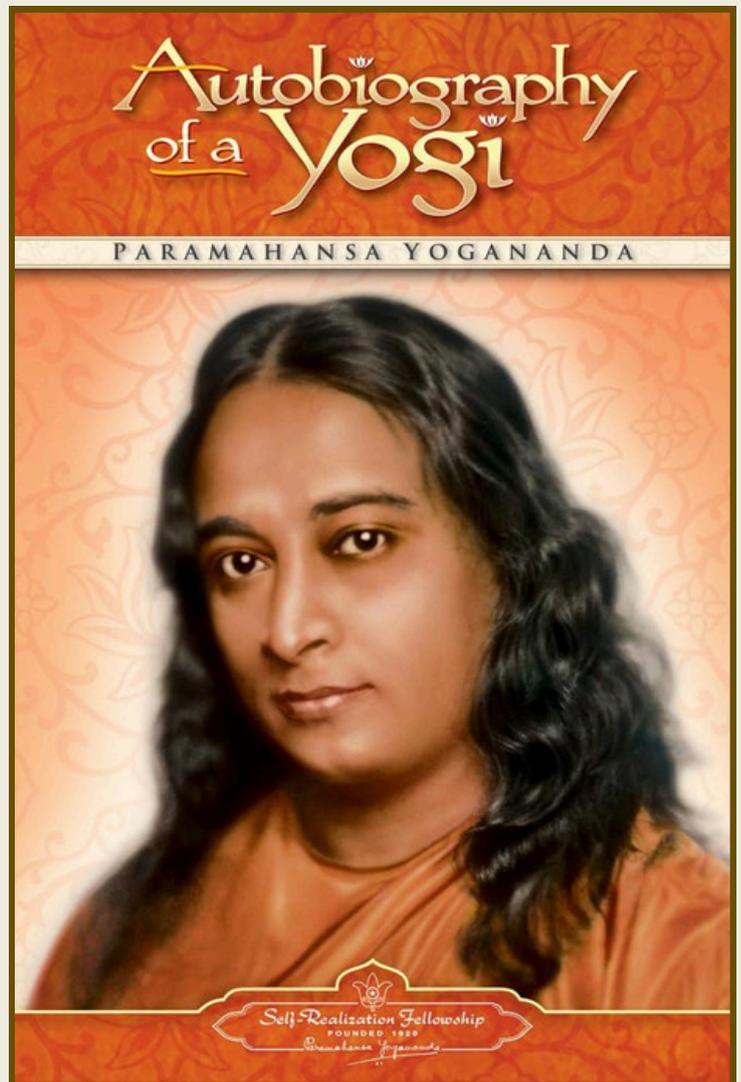


# *Between the Lines: A Deeper Look* Book Reviews

## **AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI -By Paramhansa Yogananda**

Honestly speaking, I am more interested in reading fiction/story related books but to my astonishment, this book caught my interest as I started reading it. *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramhansa Yogananda is a timeless spiritual masterpiece that has captivated readers across the world. This book is not only a detailed account of Yogananda's life, but it's also a profound exposition of spiritual philosophy and the practice of Kriya Yoga. Through this narrative, Yogananda takes the readers on a journey through his early life, his search for a true guru and his encounter with different revered yogis.

Central to the autobiography is the practice of Kriya Yoga, a powerful meditation technique that Yogananda teaches as a means of accelerating spiritual progress and achieving union with the Divine. He highlights the importance of meditation in calming the mind and developing a deeper connection to the divine presence.



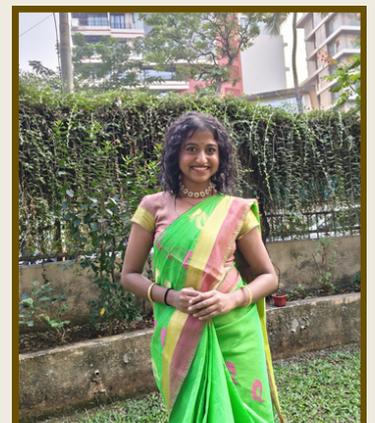


This book also talks about Yogananda's encounters with great spiritual figures and these experiences are often described as miraculous. It gives readers a glimpse into the extraordinary possibilities of spiritual life. Yogananda's humility and awe in recounting these encounters invite readers to embrace the idea that divine experiences are attainable for anyone who earnestly seeks spiritual truth.

In addition to his personal spiritual journey, the autobiography details Yogananda's mission to bring the teachings of India to the West. In 1920, he travelled to the United States to spread the message of unity between science and spirituality, emphasizing the universality of all religions. His teaching on self-realization, meditation and the interconnectedness of all life struck a chord with the Western audience and this book played a key role in introducing Eastern spiritual practices to the West.

Yogananda's writing is clear and engaging, blending personal anecdotes with deep philosophical insights. He explores topics such as the nature of the soul, the purpose of life and the path to spiritual enlightenment, offering wisdom that is both profound and accessible. Whether one is a seeker of spiritual knowledge or simply interested in Eastern philosophy, this book serves as a valuable guide.

In summary, this book tells us about the common man (Paramhansa Yogananda) with supernatural powers. He is surrounded with miracles which we think of just as a figment of our imagination. But this story tells us that human body is capable of experiencing all such miracles, but only by channelizing their energy and mind for it. He was a visionary in true sense. Autobiography of a Yogi is not just the life story of a great spiritual teacher, but also a timeless work of spiritual wisdom. Yogananda's teachings continue to inspire and guide readers towards a deeper understanding of themselves and their connection to the divine. His message is clear: the journey to inner peace and true happiness lies within and through spiritual practice, we all can reach our highest potential. The miracles which are invisible to the naked eye are very much visible to a pure soul.



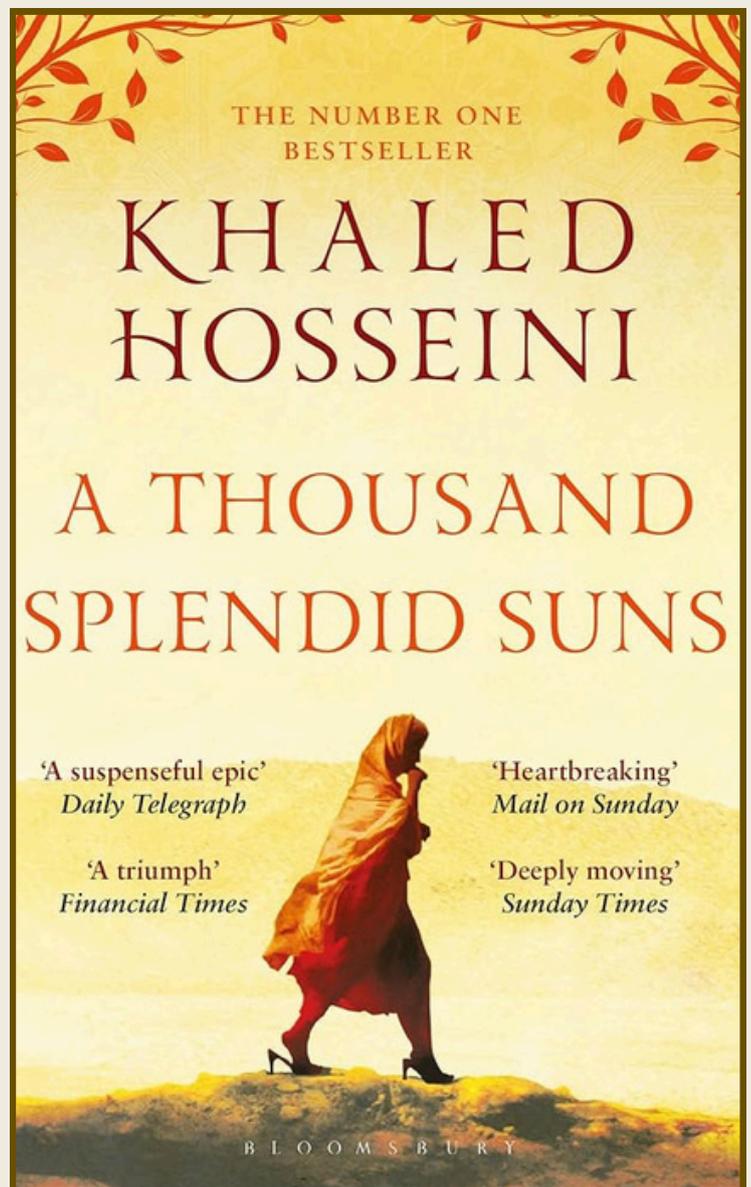
**Bhagyada Chorge**  
**BPA Part I**



# A Thousand Splendid Suns

## -By Khalid Husseini

Khaled Hosseini's 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' is a heart-wrenching tale of resilience, love, and survival set against the tumultuous backdrop of Afghanistan's history. The story revolves around two women, Mariam and Laila, whose lives intertwine in unexpected and profound ways as they navigate the harsh realities of womanhood under patriarchal oppression and Taliban rule. The book takes you through multiple storylines, giving you a detailed perspective of various characters and their unique struggles. It begins with Mariam, an illegitimate child who yearns to be part of her father's family. But when unforeseen circumstances grant her wish, it results in her being married off to a much older man against her will. The narrative then shifts to Laila, whose life is upended by the pain of losing her closest ones as the consequences of war, ultimately leading to her being married to Mariam's husband. Together, these two women create a story of resilience, strength, love, and despair that will stay with you long after you finish the book.





What makes this novel unforgettable is Hosseini's storytelling. He effortlessly blends fiction with historical events, giving readers a glimpse into Afghanistan's political turmoil—from the Soviet invasion to the rise of the Taliban. This fusion of history and narrative not only grips you but also deepens your understanding of the struggles faced by Afghan women during that era. Hosseini's writing is fluid and vividly descriptive, immersing you in the world of Mariam and Laila. His words evoke a whirlwind of emotions—pain, hope, joy, and heartbreak—making this an emotional rollercoaster. Each scene, each word feels deliberate, leaving a lasting impression.

One of my favorite quotes from the book is:

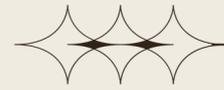
"And the past held only this wisdom: that love is a damaging mistake, and its accomplice, hope, a treacherous illusion. And whenever those twin poisonous flowers began to sprout in the parched land of that field, Mariam uprooted them. She uprooted them and ditched them before they took hold."

The characters of Mariam and Laila are unforgettable. Mariam's story of shame and sacrifice contrasts with Laila's journey of love and loss, but their shared experiences bind them in a bond of solidarity and sisterhood. Their relationship grows from resentment to deep, unwavering support, showcasing the strength and complexity of womanhood. As one reads through the pages, you find yourself overwhelmed by emotions. Tears well up more times than one can count, and it feels like you are right there with Mariam and Laila, enduring their pain and celebrating their small victories. The book leaves you emotionally drained yet deeply fulfilled, with a profound appreciation for the resilience of the human spirit. Hosseini also brings Afghanistan to life in a way that few writers can. He captures the beauty of its land and culture while unflinchingly portraying the devastation caused by war and political unrest. This duality adds depth to the story, reminding us that Afghanistan is more than what we see in the news.

A Thousand Splendid Suns isn't just a book, it's an experience. By the end, you're left with a mix of grief and hope that's hard to shake off. Khaled Hosseini has once again proved that his storytelling has the power to change how you see the world.



**Simran Cherayil**  
**MPA Part II**



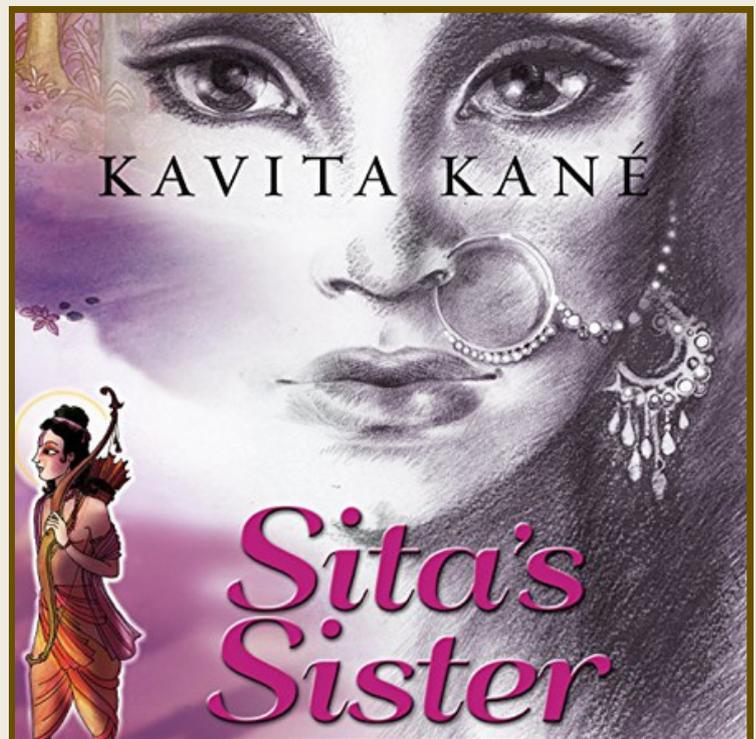
# Sita's Sister

## -By Kavita Kane

The book which I have chosen to review is "Sita's Sister" by Kavita Kane, published by Rupa Publications.

The book isn't just a retelling but a wholesome experience.

Sita's Sister not only explores Ramayana from Urmila's perspective but also talk about the story of other hidden Mythological Characters like Sumitra, Bharata-Mandavi and Shatrughna-Shrutakirti. For once, the struggles of Rama and Sita are not romanticised and the hardships faced by the different personas of the epic are spoken off which brings a breath of fresh air. For once, looking at Lakshmana as a Lover and not as a warrior changes my perspective towards the character. The Author herself introduces Urmila's character as an anti-romantic, practical personality. One of the lines which is also printed behind the book says,



"Marriage did not hold much interest in Urmila but it was a social discipline she would conform to. She would rather seek knowledge instead of a suitor." But the book later on develops to Urmila wearing a traditional red color outfit for her wedding which is supposed to be an auspicious omen for the groom. This itself shows the development of story which turns out to be an amazing experience. There is that myth which says that Urmila slept for 14 years straight so that her husband could be wide awake for 14 years in order to protect his brother and sister-in-law. It is said that Lakshman gave his sleep to Urmila and infact, that's all mentioned in Valmiki Ramayana about this character, "Urmila slept through 14 years of her husband's exile."



That is difficult to digest, isn't it? But that myth is busted and how! The way author restructures this hearsay, you actually understand what it really means. And believe me it's beautiful the way she has given a meaning to this myth. Indian Mythology speaks of many powerful Female Characters and while portraying Urmila in this fiction Mrs. Kane has taken care of this characteristic feature of Indian Mythology.

Generally fictions are not considered to be a knowledgeable choice of reading, for many people it is just a story but how can we forget these stories have taught us so many lessons of our lives, as kids, we learnt our morals through them and so does this book, it teaches us a lot about life in its own ways, if at all I have to suggest a non-reader a book I would recommend fictions like Sita's Sister which is not only written in this understandable English but also would add up to the vocabulary of satisfactory English-speaker. While reading a book one more thing which is important but never paid attention to, is the Author while reading a book the reader should understand the psyche of the author which will make it easier for the reader to understand the patterns of the author's writing.

Truly, Kavita Kane is a Readers Author.



**Vaishnavee Naiksatam**  
**MPA Part I**



# The Immortals of Meluha -By Amish Tripathi

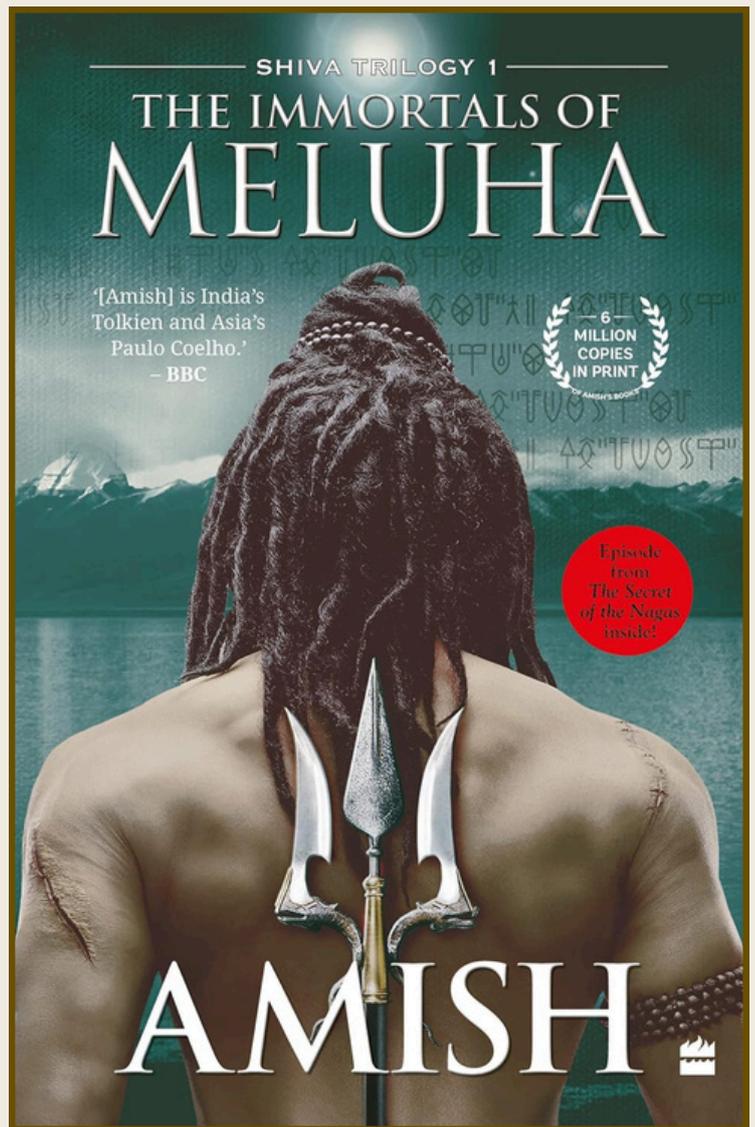
The book which I have chosen to review is “Sita’s Sister” by Kavita Kane, published by Rupa Publications.

The book isn’t just a retelling but a wholesome experience.

The Immortals of Meluha by Amish Tripathi is a remarkable book that left me captivated right from the first page. What truly sets it apart is how it reimagines Shiva—not as a deity, but as an ordinary human whose choices and actions make him extraordinary. This fresh perspective makes Shiva’s journey incredibly relatable and intriguing.

One of the highlights of this book for me was the detailed description of geographical locations. The way Tripathi brings to life the majestic land of Meluha—the near-perfect Suryavanshi kingdom—and other places like Mount Kailash and the river Saraswati is stunning. These settings are so vividly described that they almost transport you to this ancient yet familiar world. It makes the story feel rooted and alive, as if you are walking alongside Shiva and his companions.

What I particularly enjoyed was Amish Tripathi’s writing style. It’s easy to understand, making the book accessible even to those unfamiliar with mythology. His conversational tone makes the dialogue feel natural, which helps the characters come to life. At the same time, his narration is elaborative when required, especially while describing the grandeur of Meluha, the intense battles, and Shiva’s emotional struggles. This balance between simplicity and vivid storytelling is what makes the book such an immersive experience. However, at times, the conversational tone feels overly simplistic, especially during moments where deeper emotions or philosophical themes could have been explored in more detail, slightly undermining the complexity of the narrative.





The humanization of Shiva is what hooked me the most. I loved how Tripathi portrayed him as a warrior, a leader, and above all, a man grappling with doubts and responsibilities. Watching him evolve into the revered Neelkanth is both inspiring and thought-provoking. The chemistry between Shiva and Sati is also beautifully written, adding an emotional depth to the story.

Another aspect I found fascinating was how the book explores the idea of morality. The philosophical question of what defines good and evil, and how these concepts shift with perspective, is a recurring theme that lingers with you long after you've finished reading.

Tripathi's simple yet effective writing style, combined with relatable characters and realistic geography, makes *The Immortals of Meluha* an unforgettable read. This book was the very first non-textbook I read, which makes it quite close to my heart. Even though there are a few factual inaccuracies the writer makes—for instance, in another book by Tripathi, *Sita*, the scene of the Swayamvara is not from the original Valmiki Ramayana but is mixed with the Swayamvara story from Vyasa's Mahābhārata—it does not take away from the brilliance of the immortals of Meluha.

Nevertheless, this book is a perfect start to the Shiva Trilogy, and I can't wait to explore the rest of the series. For anyone interested in mythology, history, or just a good story, I'd highly recommend it. The way the book blends history, philosophy, and fantasy into a cohesive and captivating narrative makes it a must-read for both avid readers and those new to the genre. It's also a fantastic pick for anyone looking to reconnect with Indian culture through a modern lens.

If you enjoy stories that offer a fresh perspective on ancient legends, vividly describe settings that transport you to another era, or present a protagonist whose human flaws make him all the more relatable, *The Immortals of Meluha* will not disappoint. This book has something for everyone—action, romance, philosophy, and adventure, making it a timeless read.



**Kimaya More**  
**MPA Part II**

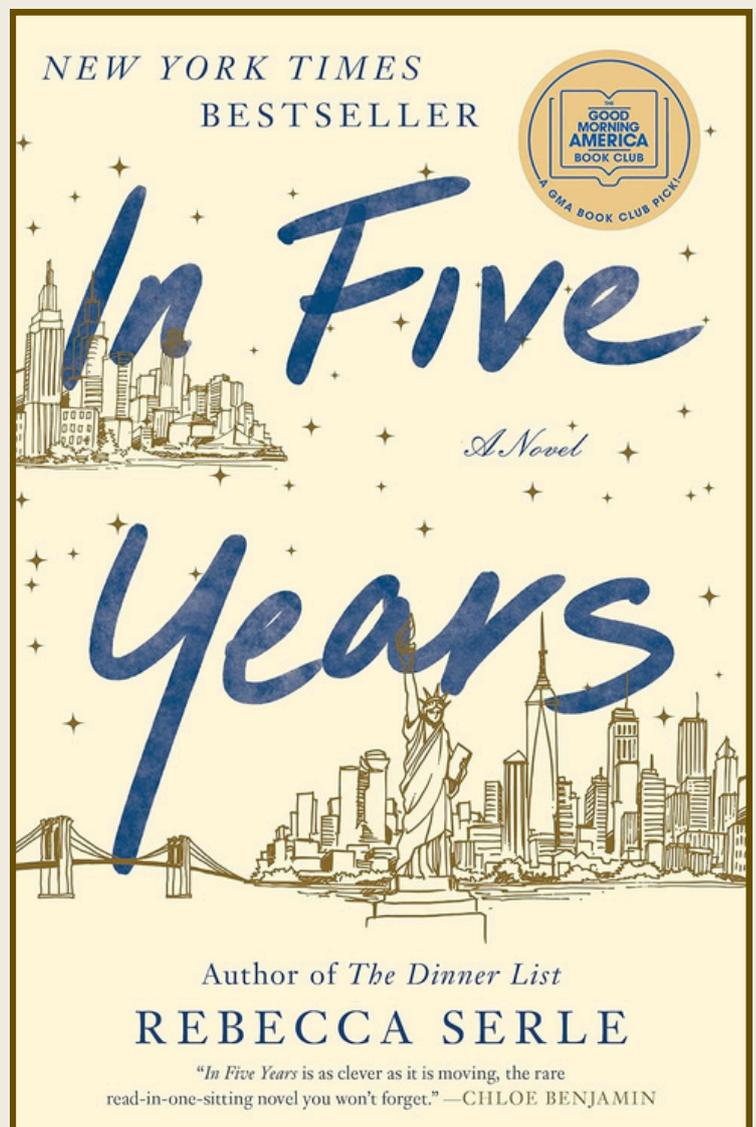


# In Five Years -By Rebecca Serle

A book by Rebecca Serle, first published in the United States by Quercus Editions in 2020 is a fiction love story. 'This is a love story...but not the love story you are expecting' is the tag line offered by the author on the front cover and yes, this does reflect in the story line.

This book of forty-one chapters has been described as Stunning, Compelling, Emotional and heart-breaking by many. The focus of the book, however, does not only lie in the love of two individuals but also the bond and love of friendship. The key highlights of the book are the twists and turns that the story has uplifting the story of unbreakable bonds. The author has a free style of writing which I believe flows naturally, making this book a very comfortable read. The heroine Dannie, a 28-year-old is a unique character, very relatable and has her own way of dealing with life.

The setting of the book is in The United States of America; New York and many other destinations have been mentioned pertaining to the scene giving a nice change of setting for the reader. The story mainly revolves around four individuals, which are two couples and





their story which eventually leads to a good end but with a roller coaster of events and emotions. The book starts with a great start, getting right into the main twist and plot. Even though there is a good flow to the overall story, I did feel that there could have been less details in certain situations which I felt distracting only at certain points.

The key message or take-away of the book would be as mentioned, the future always finds you. Standstill, and it will find you, the way the land just has to run to the sea.' The author has tried to beautifully weave in multiple truths and realities of life which get thrown at us unexpectedly challenging all our morals, values and beliefs. Yet, a person mustn't run away but embrace the future with whatever it holds without being rigid.

I really enjoyed the uniqueness of the characters and the fact that the story did not have any unnecessary antagonist, or plot. It is a book that will keep you on your toes, guessing for what will come next. At certain times, it may remind us of what really matters in life and has a great message to give. I would recommend it to anyone who likes a comfy fiction read alongside a really captivating plot.



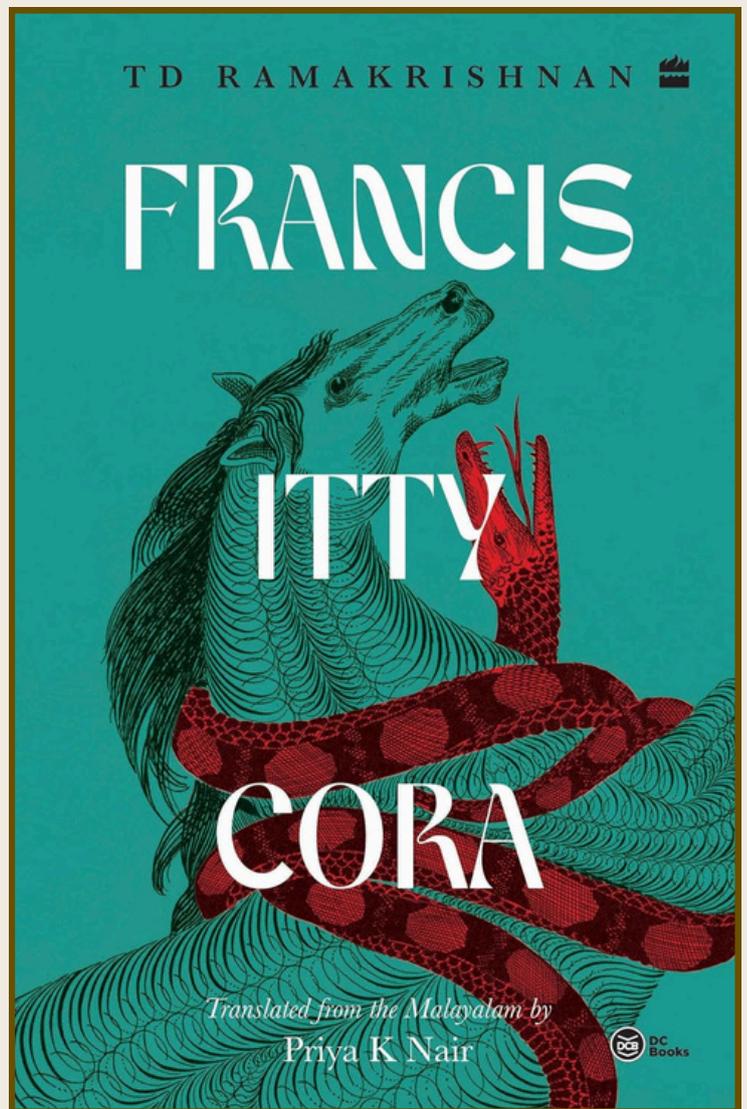
**Meera Wagh**  
**BPA Degree**



# Francis Itty Cora -By T.D. Ramakrishnan

T.D. Ramakrishnan's *Francis Itty Cora* is not just a novel it is an audacious literary voyage that fuses history, mythology, philosophy, and suspense into a single, electrifying narrative. Published in Malayalam in 2009, this genre-defying work has since captured the imagination of readers and critics alike, making it a cornerstone of modern Malayalam literature.

At the heart of the novel is the titular character, Francis Itty Cora, a 15th-century spice trader from Kerala whose life story unfolds posthumously through a trail of cryptic documents and secrets left behind. What begins as a local mystery soon spirals into a globe-spanning conspiracy involving secret societies, ancient texts, erotic philosophies, and buried histories that question the very foundations of global power and knowledge.





Ramakrishnan masterfully blends real historical figures like Vasco da Gama, Hypatia, and Jesus Christ with fictional and speculative elements, challenging conventional notions of time, religion, and colonial history. The narrative is densely layered, often requiring the reader to pause, reflect, and revisit previous chapters. Yet, the book never becomes inaccessible. Instead, its intellectual richness is balanced by sharp storytelling, dark humor, and a fast-paced thriller structure.

One of the novel's most striking achievements is how it reclaims historical agency for Kerala and the Indian subcontinent. In Ramakrishnan's hands, Francis Itty Cora becomes a symbol of a suppressed, alternative modernity one that could have arisen from the East rather than the West. The novel's philosophical provocations on gender, sexuality, and cultural hegemony are bold and often controversial, but always thought-provoking.

The language of the original Malayalam version is lyrical yet razor-sharp, blending classical and contemporary idioms seamlessly. Even in translation, the essence of Ramakrishnan's voice remains potent, though some nuances may understandably be lost.

What makes Francis Itty Cora truly unforgettable is its ambition. It is a book that dares to ask uncomfortable questions, to reinterpret history through radical lenses, and to push the boundaries of what Indian literature can be. It does not spoon-feed the reader, but rather demands engagement, curiosity, and courage.

**Verdict:**

Francis Itty Cora is a daring, cerebral, and genre-bending masterpiece that challenges and rewards its readers in equal measure. It's a must-read for anyone interested in alternative history, postcolonial narratives, and the untapped possibilities of Indian storytelling.



**Gauri Ajith**  
**BPA Degree**



# *Nalanda Educational Expedition*

## Study-Tour: Sculpture, painting, iconography & temple architecture...

Project submitted by:  
BPA Degree students

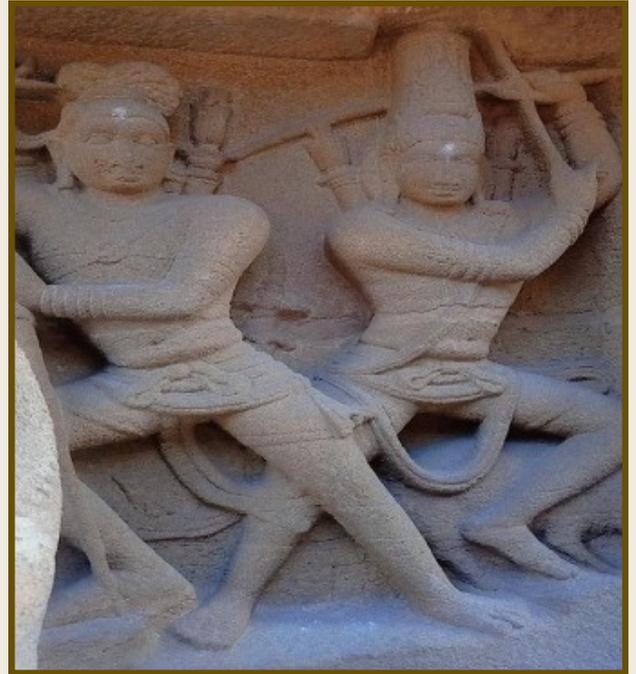
A study tour that combines experience, joy, aesthetics, and knowledge is truly something special. We, the students of Nalanda Dance Research Centre, embarked on such an extraordinary journey—not to a modern destination, but to the golden age of Indian history. Our adventure took us to Chennai, not as it stands today, but back to the eras of the Pallavas and the Cholas, where we explored their rich legacy in sculpture, painting, and iconography.

## Day 1

Our journey began with the Pallavas at the magnificent Shiva Kanchi temple in Kumbakonam. As we entered, we were welcomed by an impressive array of sculptural panels, each statue radiating the characteristic smile that defines Pallava art. We paused to examine intricate panels depicting the goddess Durga with her eighteen arms, Parashurama engaged in battle, and the tale of Shiva's third eye awakening. The sculptures conveyed so much movement and detail—the flow of wind is unmistakable, visible in the folds of the dhoti, indicating its direction with remarkable precision. We also marveled at the Amrita Manthan episode sculpted into the stone, a testament to the narrative artistry of that time.



One fascinating discovery was the presence of faint traces of color between the stonework. Though faded, these remnants reveal the advanced techniques in painting and aesthetics employed by ancient artists. The pillars, carved with lion faces, instantly marked the Pallava style, while the ceiling, featuring a sculpted fish, hinted at the nearby water bodies—a geographical marker that blended art with local natural features. In a small stone-cut cave, we witnessed the spectacular Sandhya Tandava of Lord Shiva, which, illuminated by the evening sun, cast a glowing orange hue behind Shiva's form, creating an almost mystical sight.



Another highlight was the sculpture of Bikshadanamurthy, an aspect of Shiva we would explore in greater depth at the Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple. Above us, the entire ceiling was adorned with Shiva's companions, the Ganas, as if attending a celestial assembly.

Our exploration then led us to Vishnu Kanchi, where vast panels narrated the story of the Pallava dynasty. This temple houses the deity Vishnu in three distinct forms—reclining (Shayana Murthy), seated, and standing. These rare postures are displayed together only once every five years, making it a privilege to behold them.

We also noticed blank spaces within the panels, symbolizing the dark periods of the Pallava era—a thoughtful use of silence in stone to convey historical gaps. Intriguingly, we observed a panel where a queen's husband was depicted with Asian features, hinting at the extensive sea trade networks of the time.



Thus concluded our first day, immersed in the legacy of the Pallavas, as we left with awe and anticipation for what lay ahead in our journey through time.



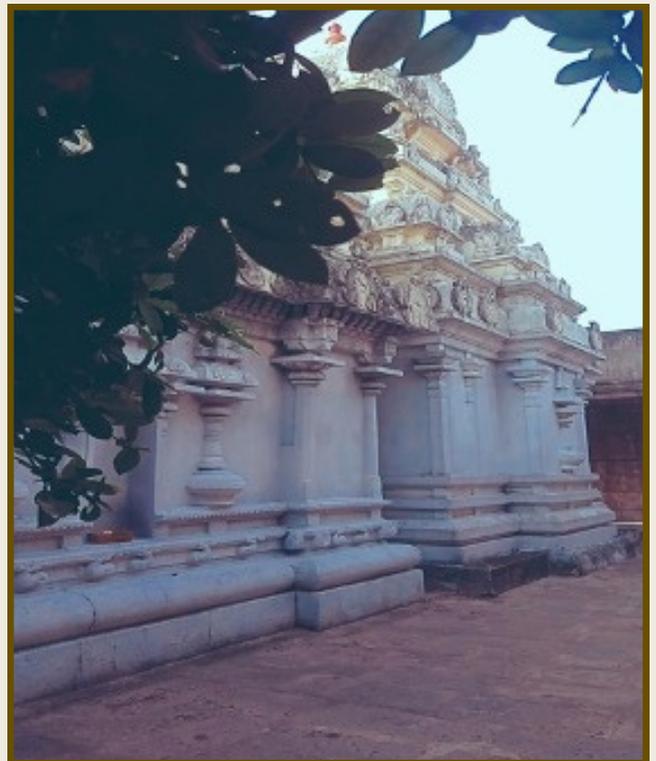
## Day 2

This was indeed a remarkable day, filled with new insights and discoveries. Our morning began with a visit to the Jaina Kanchi temple, a site that revealed the rich presence of Jain culture in Tamil Nadu. Despite historical rivalries between religious traditions, Jainism has left a lasting mark here, and its influence is preserved with great respect and beauty.

The temple's ceiling captivated us immediately, adorned with paintings depicting aspects of Jain culture. The Digambaras, known for their renunciation and ascetic life spent unclothed, were portrayed with profound reverence, embodying their devotion and values. We were fortunate to be guided by Neeraj, an 18-year-old whose knowledge and understanding seemed to belong to someone far older. With the wisdom of an elder, he shared insights into the architectural symbolism of the temple. He explained that the temple structure reflects the anatomy of the human body itself. Beginning at the foundation, symbolizing the feet or the base of a body, the structure then rises to the "kanta" or neck, with a small space for artistic adornments. Above this, the pillars represent strength and depending on the importance of the deity within, vary in size and style, embodying the sacred power held in that part of the structure. Finally, the temple reaches its peak with the "Vimana," intricately sculpted and designed to reflect the unique significance of the deity within.

Because this was a smaller temple, the distinct elements were easy for us to discern. Neeraj explained that as dynasties evolved, so too did temple architecture, art, and even the deities enshrined within. Each artistic shift captures a piece of the cultural and spiritual transformation of that time. We left the temple deeply moved, seeing not only the influence of Jainism but also understanding more about how art, architecture, and spirituality harmonize within these sacred spaces.

The sculptures of Chidambaram Temple are nothing short of breathtaking, embodying both divine grace and the refined skill of artisans from an era when art and devotion were inseparable. As you walk through this ancient site, the stonework seems to come alive, capturing scenes from mythology, dance, and nature with an intricacy that speaks volumes about the mastery of the Chola craftsmen.





The temple is dedicated to Nataraja, the cosmic dancer and an embodiment of Shiva in his most mesmerizing form. The gopurams (gateway towers) are the first to greet visitors, soaring high with layers of sculptures that narrate countless tales from Hindu mythology. Each tier is a gallery of gods, goddesses, sages, and celestial beings, with the figures posed in such a way that they seem to be frozen in the middle of a dance or gesture, enhancing the temple's dynamic, almost musical quality.



One of the most revered images here is the statue of Nataraja himself, portrayed with one leg lifted in the rhythmic stance of ananda tandava, the dance of bliss. His left arm is elegantly extended, pointing towards his raised foot, while his right arm holds a damaru, symbolizing creation through sound, and his left-hand holds a flame, representing destruction. The figure is surrounded by a halo of fire, symbolizing the cycle of creation and destruction, and his serene expression suggests a calm beyond time, capturing the viewer in a trance.

The pillars within the temple complex are adorned with finely detailed depictions of dancers, sages, and warriors, each one showcasing movement, gesture, and emotion in perfect proportion. Every muscle, every fold in their garments, and each flowing lock of hair is carved with careful attention to bring out the life in stone. These sculptures reflect a blend of vigor and poise, demonstrating the reverence for both the body and spirit within the spiritual and artistic philosophy of the Cholas.

Adding to the enchantment are the mandapams (pillared halls), where sculptures of Ganesha, Subrahmanya, and other deities reside, surrounded by intricate floral patterns, animals, and mythical creatures. There is a certain storytelling in the layout itself—the closer you approach the sanctum, the more elaborate the carvings become, as though guiding the devotee deeper into a sacred experience. On some pillars, you'll find the legendary bhuta ganas, Shiva's celestial attendants, depicted in playful and joyous poses, reflecting the joyous nature of devotion.

One of the most mystical features of the Chidambaram Temple sculptures is the way light interacts with the stone. During different times of day, sunlight filters through openings to create shifting shadows, illuminating different features on Nataraja's face or casting a soft glow on carvings that suddenly appear lifelike. This play of light and shadow adds an ethereal dimension to the temple as if the gods themselves are moving through the stone.



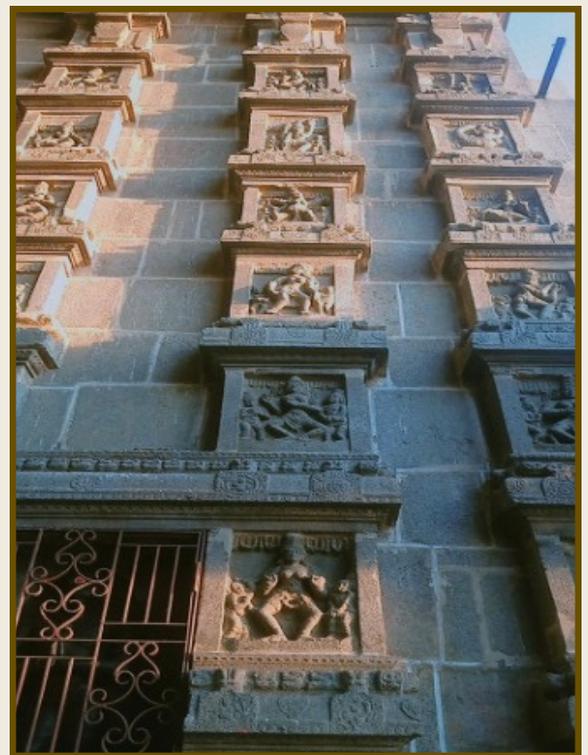
In essence, the sculptures of Chidambaram Temple are a testament to the transcendence of art—where stone becoming spirit, and form becomes a journey into the divine.

The *dvara palakas* (gatekeepers) of Chidambaram Temple stand as formidable sentinels at the threshold of the divine, guarding the sacred realm within. These imposing figures, carved with exquisite detail and astonishing realism, embody both power and grace. Each *\*dvara palaka\** holds a gaze that is both welcoming and warning, an expression that communicates their dual role as guardians and guides. Their muscular forms are adorned with intricate jewelry and armor that seem to almost shimmer as if the stone were imbued with life itself. One of their hands is often posed in a *mudra* of protection or blessing, signaling that only those who approach with pure intent may pass into the holy space. Every detail in these sculptures—from the strands of hair to the subtle tension in their stance—suggests a readiness to defend the sanctum and a deep devotion to the deity they protect.

Beyond these powerful guardians, the *karana* walls of Chidambaram are a celebration of movement and rhythm, a dance carved into stone. The walls depict the 108 *karanas*, the foundational dance postures of Bharatanatyam, each one frozen mid-motion yet alive with energy. This series of sculptures is not merely decorative; it's an instructional masterpiece, a visual text illustrating the art form's rich vocabulary. Each figure is captured with an astonishing attention to balance and poise, showing the dancer's body in fluid twists, graceful arcs, and powerful stances.

The *karanas* seem to float along the walls, as though in an eternal dance. Hands are poised in *mudras*, feet lifted or firmly grounded, and eyes focused, all with an expression of divine grace. Some figures are accompanied by musicians or celestial beings, who seem to revel in the cosmic performance. These walls serve not only as a tribute to the art of dance but also as a reminder that the essence of movement itself is divine. As the sunlight changes, the shadows cast on these carvings create a magical effect, enhancing the sense of motion in the stone figures.

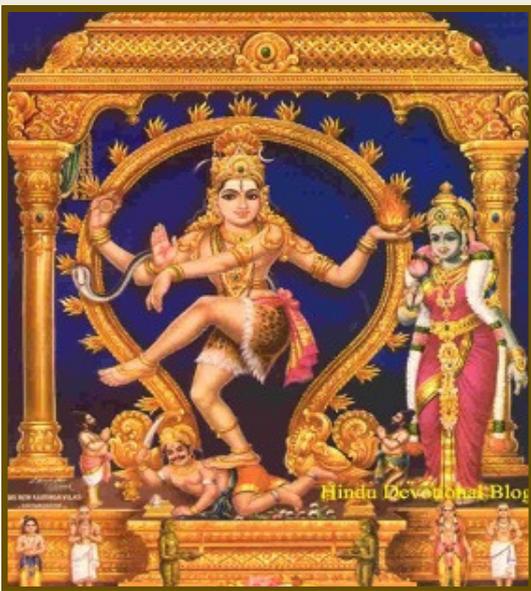
Together, the *dvara palakas* and the *karana* walls create a journey of transformation—from the earthly realm of duty and protection to the celestial realm of dance and liberation. They encapsulate the heart of Chidambaram, where art, devotion, and spirituality merge into a harmonious rhythm that reverberates through time.





The Shivakami Temple in Chidambaram is a sanctuary of divine grace and an eternal testament to the art and devotion of Tamil Nadu. Dedicated to Shivakami Amman, the consort of Lord Nataraja, this temple honors the feminine power that balances Shiva's cosmic dance. She is the embodiment of grace, rhythm, and beauty, and the temple radiates with the aura of her presence.

As you approach, the temple's towering gopurams stand like ancient mountains, carved with thousands of stories that lead the devotee toward Shivakami's sanctum. These intricate carvings show deities, dancers, and mythical beings, each one reflecting the spirit of devotion as if capturing fragments of her beauty in stone. The air is thick with the scent of jasmine, often placed in offering to Shivakami, symbolizing purity and devotion.



The interior of the Shivakami Temple is a space that echoes with tranquility and strength. Here, every pillar, every arch, is adorned with finely detailed sculptures that tell tales from the lives of Shivakami and Nataraja. The carvings depict their divine relationship, the love and energy they share as they move together in the cosmic dance of creation and dissolution. Shivakami's form, carved in graceful poses, seems to float on the temple walls, her expression serene yet powerful, a goddess who embodies the elegance of movement and the stillness of inner peace.

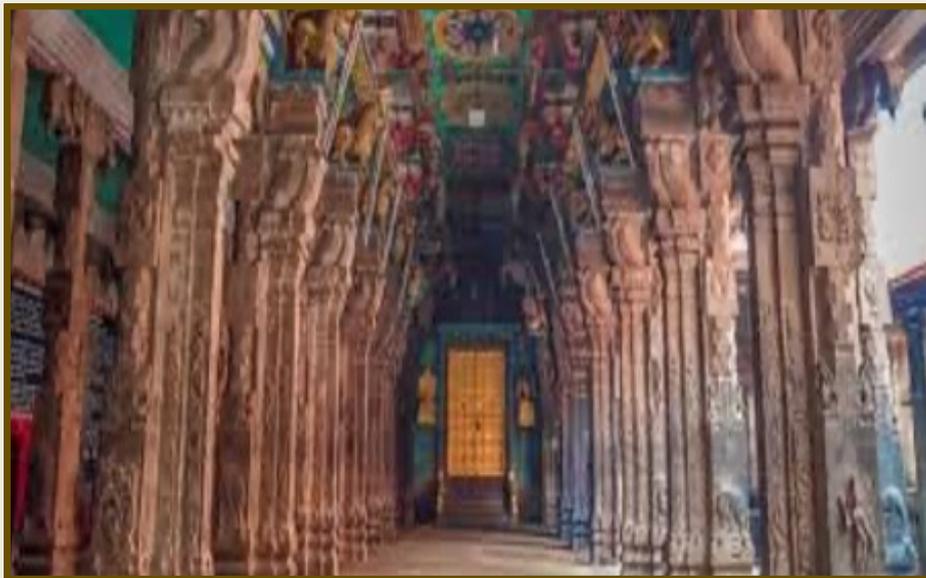
At the heart of the temple lies the sanctum, where Shivakami is enshrined in an aura of light and reverence. Draped in silks and adorned with fragrant garlands, her idol is a vision of beauty and compassion. Devotees gather here, drawn to her energy, seeking her blessings for strength, love, and prosperity. It is said that Shivakami joins Nataraja in his dance each night in the temple, bringing balance to his fiery movements with her gentle grace, an eternal partnership that sustains the universe.

The Shivakami Temple is more than a structure; it is a poem in stone, a dance captured in silence, where devotion, art, and divine femininity come together in perfect harmony. It leaves every visitor with a sense of awe, a feeling of having witnessed something sacred and eternal. The paintings in Chidambaram Temple are like pages from an illuminated manuscript of ancient India, each brushstroke imbued with the wisdom, myths, and dreams of past eras. As you step into the temple's inner spaces, the walls tell stories through colors and forms, a fusion of the Pallava, Chola, and Nayak dynasties that once ruled these lands. This blend of dynastic styles is a unique hallmark of Chidambaram, where each period added a layer of its own artistic flair and spiritual symbolism, creating an ever-evolving masterpiece that speaks to the legacy of devotion over centuries.



The Pallavas, among the earliest patrons, brought their love for intricate lines and delicate detail, creating foundational depictions of deities with gentle features and a refined elegance. The Cholas, however, took these beginnings and transformed them into something bolder and grander, adding vibrant color and fluid movement. Under their patronage, the images of gods and goddesses are painted in rich hues, their forms dynamic and alive with the energy of dance and divine life. The Nayaks, arriving later, added flourishes of their own with frescos depicting celestial beings, floral motifs, and episodes from Hindu epics in brighter, more detailed styles that mirrored their own era's opulence.

One painting that draws every eye is the ananda tandava of Nataraja, surrounded by his bhuta ganas (divine attendants) and a swirling halo of flames. His foot is lifted in the pose of the cosmic dance, his face calm, one arm stretched out in a graceful mudra. The colors—deep indigos, fiery oranges, and golden yellows—lend an ethereal glow to his form, making it seem as if he is truly dancing before your eyes. Each detail captures the essence of the divine in motion, embodying the cycle of creation and destruction in a visual form that transcends words.



Chidambaram Temple holds another kind of magic within its heart—a sacred mystery known as the Chidambara Rahasyam or “Secret of Chidambaram.” Hidden within the inner sanctum, behind a veil, is an empty space. This space, believed to represent ether or akash, the fifth element, is said to be the formless, ultimate reality. The temple invites devotees to see beyond the physical form of the deities to recognize the formless, boundless spirit that pervades the universe. This concept, though ancient, feels as fresh as the breeze in the temple courtyard, and its subtle presence draws countless pilgrims and seekers who long to glimpse the divine in the void.

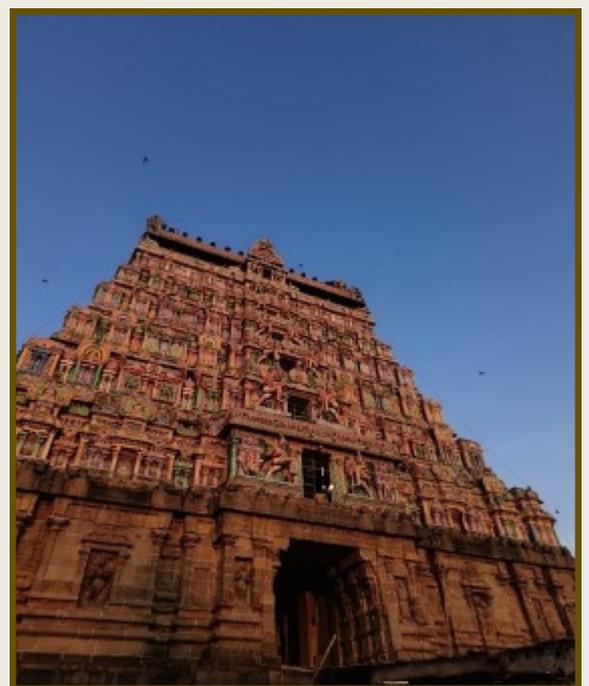


In Chidambaram Temple, art and architecture merge with spirituality in a way that is rare and profound. This is not just a place of worship, but a cosmic theater where gods dance, colors sing, and space whispers secrets. The temple becomes a journey for each twined, an ancient site that still pulses with life, beauty, and wonder. The Dikshitaras of Chidambaram Temple are not merely priests—they are the keepers of a timeless dance, custodians of a legacy that goes beyond ritual into the very rhythm of the universe. These priests are said to be direct descendants of the sages who were originally invited by Shiva himself to serve in his cosmic theater. Clad in pristine white robes, they move through the temple with an air of quiet dignity, carrying ancient wisdom and reverence for the deity they serve, Lord Nataraja, the cosmic dancer. Every gesture, every word they utter, feels like part of a larger choreography, as if they themselves are woven into the fabric of Nataraja’s dance.

The architecture of Chidambaram Temple is a masterpiece that reflects the cosmic vision of creation, a dance in stone that harmonizes art, science, and spirituality. Entering the temple is like stepping into a grand mandala, where each structure holds a unique significance. The towering gopurams (gateway towers) rise like mountains at each cardinal point, etched with sculptures that narrate ancient tales of gods, goddesses, and celestial beings. The towers represent the human body’s spine, with each tier symbolizing the chakras or energy centers, guiding the soul upward on its journey to liberation. As you wander through the temple’s expansive corridors, the eye is drawn to the massive pillars and arches that hold the structure aloft. Each stone surface is a canvas where mythical creatures, sages, and musicians come alive, frozen in mid-motion yet pulsing with life. The mandapams (pillared halls) offer a space for contemplation and prayer, designed with acoustics that amplify the faintest sound, creating an otherworldly echo that seems to resonate from deep within the stone.

The sanctum sanctorum, where Lord Nataraja performs his eternal ananda tandava (dance of bliss), is the heart of this architectural wonder. The roof above the sanctum is gilded, adorned with golden tiles that glint in the light, symbolizing the connection between heaven and earth. This roof is supported by four pillars representing the four Vedas, the foundational texts of Hinduism, embodying the idea that the temple is upheld by sacred knowledge itself.

And yet, perhaps the most mystical element of the temple is the Chidambara Rahasyam or “Secret of Chidambaram.” Behind the statue of Nataraja lies a seemingly empty space veiled by a curtain—a powerful symbol of the unseen, of the ether or \*akash\* element,





representing the boundless, formless essence of divinity. The Dikshitar reveal this space during special rituals, inviting devotees to witness the presence of the divine in absence, to see God in the invisible.



In Chidambaram Temple, the architecture and the Dikshitar together weave a living, breathing narrative of the cosmos, where each stone, each ritual, and each whispered mantra contribute to an eternal dance. The temple is not merely a place of worship; it is a sanctuary where the earthly and the divine waltz in perpetual harmony, a testament to humanity's quest to understand the infinite through art, devotion, and sacred space. We ended our day in the most magical way imaginable—by performing Shiva's dance ourselves, within the very walls of Chidambaram Temple, where countless dancers before us had given life to this sacred art. As dusk settled over the temple, a golden glow filled the space, casting long shadows that danced along with us, merging the

ancient stone with our living forms. Each movement felt as if it were guided by the spirit of Nataraja himself, our every step connecting with the rhythm of the cosmic dance that the temple holds in its heart.

When we finally returned to our hotel rooms, an almost otherworldly calm washed over us. The walls of the temple, the flickering oil lamps, the air thick with incense—it all lingered in our minds, creating a feeling as exquisite as the dance itself. We carried the temple's energy back with us, feeling a quiet joy and aesthetic bliss that seemed to settle into our very souls, like the gentle hum of a drumbeat that continues long after the music has stopped.

## Day 3

Imagine a time when the sun rose over the vast expanses of South India, casting its golden rays on a city that pulsated with life and ambition—this was Gangaikonda Cholapuram, a jewel of the Chola dynasty, birthed by the visionary Rajendra Chola I. This city wasn't just a place; it was a grand narrative woven from threads of conquest, culture, and devotion.



## The City of Triumph

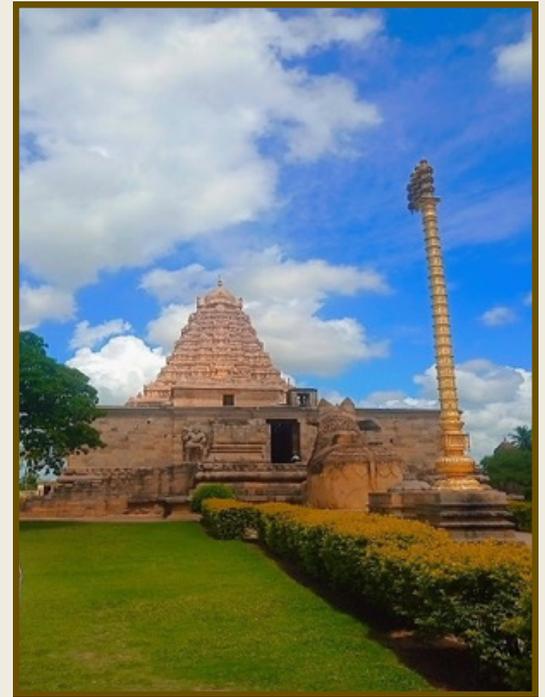
In the early 11th century, Rajendra Chola, fueled by a spirit of adventure and an insatiable thirst for glory, set forth on a legendary campaign to the distant banks of the Ganges. Victorious, he returned not just as a conqueror but as a harbinger of culture, establishing Gangaikonda Cholapuram as a testament to his exploits. The name itself—"The City of the Chola who Conquered the Ganges"—echoed his triumph and ambition, proclaiming to the world that the Cholas had stretched their reign to the very heart of India.

## A Capital of Magnificence

As you walk through the ancient streets of Gangaikonda Cholapuram, the air thick with history, you can almost hear the echoes of bustling markets and lively debates among scholars. The city served as an administrative marvel, orchestrating the governance of an expansive empire with precision and grace. Here, merchants traded spices and textiles, diplomats exchanged ideas, and artisans crafted masterpieces that would stand the test of time.

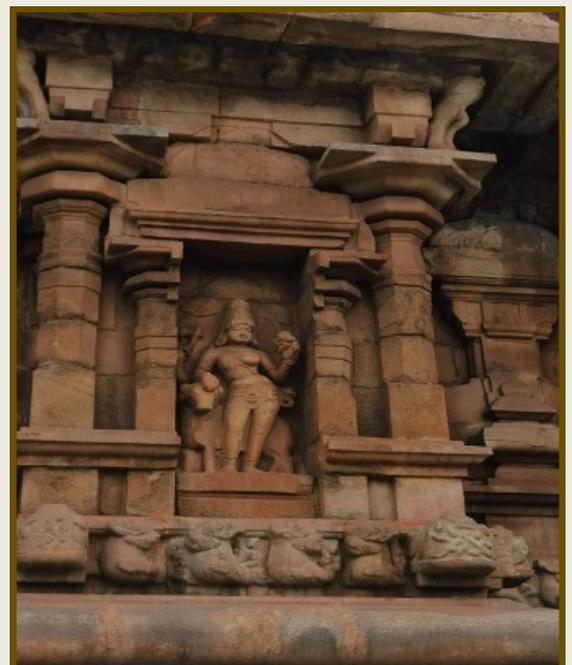
That's wonderful—you're on a journey through one of the most fascinating sites in Chola history! Gangaikonda Cholapuram, once a grand capital, was founded by the mighty Rajendra Chola I to commemorate his victorious expedition to the Ganges. After his father's legendary rule, Rajendra's shift of the capital here symbolized the expansion and cultural power of the Cholas.

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## 1. The Ardhanarishvara Sculpture

Within the temple, you'll find the magnificent sculpture of Ardhanarishvara, a unique and powerful representation of Shiva and Parvati as two halves of a single entity, blending both masculine and feminine forms. This duality is an exquisite symbol of the universe's balance—creation and destruction, strength and compassion. The right-side displays Shiva's form, with muscular arms and matted hair, while the left side is Parvati, embodying grace and gentleness. The Chola artists meticulously carved this sculpture, capturing the harmony of duality, and emphasizing how the masculine and feminine energies are intertwined, balanced, and inseparable in cosmic unity.





## 2. The Nataraja Sculpture

Moving deeper into the temple complex, the sight of Nataraja—the cosmic dancer, Shiva—is striking. Rajendra Chola's craftsmen captured the vigor and grace of Shiva's cosmic dance, the Tandava. This dance is more than movement; it represents the cycle of creation, preservation, and destruction. With one foot raised and his locks of hair spread outward, Shiva dances surrounded by a ring of flames, embodying the relentless energy of the universe. Each detail, from the positioning of his hands to the flame arch around him, symbolizes different elements of the cosmos. Shiva's third eye, shown prominently, signifies his ability to perceive beyond the ordinary, while his expression conveys serene awareness amidst the chaos of creation.

## 3. The Bhikshatanamurthy Sculpture

One of the temple's most intriguing sculptures is Bhikshatanamurthy, Shiva's form as the cosmic mendicant. Here, Shiva is depicted as a wandering ascetic, a beggar who humbly roams with an alms bowl. This representation carries deep symbolism: Shiva as Bhikshatanamurthy demonstrates his renunciation of worldly attachments and the humility that even a supreme deity can embody. The body has divbanga which means body bended twice at the head and at the hip. His form here is lithe and gentle, and he wears a haunting smile, exuding compassion for the souls he encounters. Intricate carvings around him depict celestial beings, forest creatures, and sages—an ode to the idea that the divine moves among all beings, high and low, bridging the sacred and the ordinary.





#### 4. The Enormous Lingam at the Sanctum

Finally, at the heart of this temple, you'll encounter the towering \*Shivalinga\* in the inner sanctum. At over 13 feet high, this Lingam is one of the largest in India, truly reflecting the scale of Rajendra Chola's devotion and ambition. It embodies Shiva's formless and infinite aspect, rising from the yoni, symbolizing creation and the union of masculine and feminine energies. The sheer scale and grandeur of the Lingam invoke a sense of awe, as it stands not just as a symbol of worship, but as a testament to the Chola dynasty's legacy and their reverence for Shiva.

The temple itself, with its beautiful Vimana (tower), rises majestically, representing Mount Kailasa, Shiva's abode. The artistry here is a testament to the craftsmanship of the Chola artisans, who captured the depth of these deities' significance with an eye for symmetry, beauty, and storytelling. Rajendra Chola ensured that this place would not only be a political capital but also a spiritual beacon, where the grandeur of his rule would live on, not in stones alone.

As I stepped out of the temple, a wave of inspiration washed over me, filled with reflections and insights from the sacred space. Our journey led us next to the Pallipadai, a solemn memorial dedicated to the brave soldiers who fought in the historic wars between the Chola and Pandya dynasties.

This place, steeped in history, is shrouded in mystique. The inscriptions that adorn the site narrate tales of valor and sacrifice, marking it as a significant war zone from centuries past. Over time, however, local lore has misconstrued this hallowed ground as a Kuladeva temple, obscuring its true identity as the burial site of valiant soldiers who laid down their lives in battle.

Under the guidance of Anand Sir, we engaged in a captivating lecture on iconography that deepened our understanding of the intricate symbols and stories embedded in the art of this region. Each sculpture and relief carried a narrative, and it was fascinating to explore the meanings behind them.

However, the highlight of the day came during our visit to the Kailasanathar Temple on Day Four. Here, we explored the Pallipadai of the great king Arunmozhi Varman, also known as Raja Raja Chola I. His reign marked a golden era in Tamil history, characterized by remarkable achievements in art, architecture, and governance. The very ground we stood upon resonated with the legacy of his vision, showcasing the brilliance of Chola architecture and the cultural renaissance he inspired. This profound connection to the past—both in the echo of battles fought and in the architectural marvels that remain—left me with a deeper appreciation for the intertwining of history, culture, and spirituality. Each step we took in these sacred spaces whispered stories of glory and remembrance, forever etched in the fabric of our heritage.



# Day 4

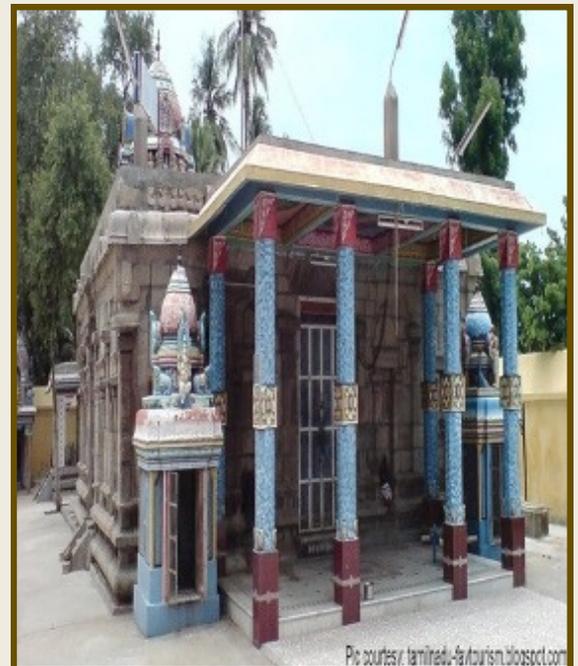
Here's a creative and detailed version of your experience, with historical and architectural nuances brought to life.

Our next destination was a site of profound significance, the Pallipadai of the illustrious Raja Raja Chola I, also known as Arunmozhi Varman, whose burial site is marked by the Kailasanathar Temple at Udaiyalur. While revered by the local people as a temple, many are unaware of its true historical importance: this sacred structure was built to honor one of the greatest Chola emperors. Raja Raja Chola's reign is celebrated not only for the vastness of his empire but for his role as a patron of the arts, a devout ruler, and a visionary in Tamil history.

The temple is safeguarded by the locals, who pay their respects in ways they know best. Yet, it is often misunderstood as a conventional temple when it holds a much deeper purpose—as the **\*\*pallipadai\*\*** (memorial shrine) of a king whose legacy shaped an era. Anand Sir guided us through a thought-provoking discussion, bringing to light details and symbols in the temple's sculpture and architecture that reveal layers of hidden history.

One such fascinating element was the sculpture of Bogar, the revered teacher of Raja Raja Chola. This sculpture is frequently misinterpreted as Agastya Muni, a common figure in Tamil iconography. However, upon closer inspection, a small but significant detail in the bottom corner of the sculpture changes the narrative. Here, hidden within the stone, sits a miniature figure of Raja Raja Chola himself, quietly affirming the identity of his guru, Bogar. It is these subtle, intentional markers that help historians and enthusiasts like us differentiate the figures and legends from the common myths.

Our discoveries extended further into the temple's symbolism with the depiction of Raja Raja's three queens. Each queen is represented in the form of Shiva Lingams—but with a distinctive twist. Unlike typical





Shiva Lingams, only the cylindrical section is present here, each bearing a unique mark at the front. This subtle alteration is a powerful indication: these lingams symbolize the queen consorts, marking them as feminine forms within the masculine architectural symbolism of the temple.

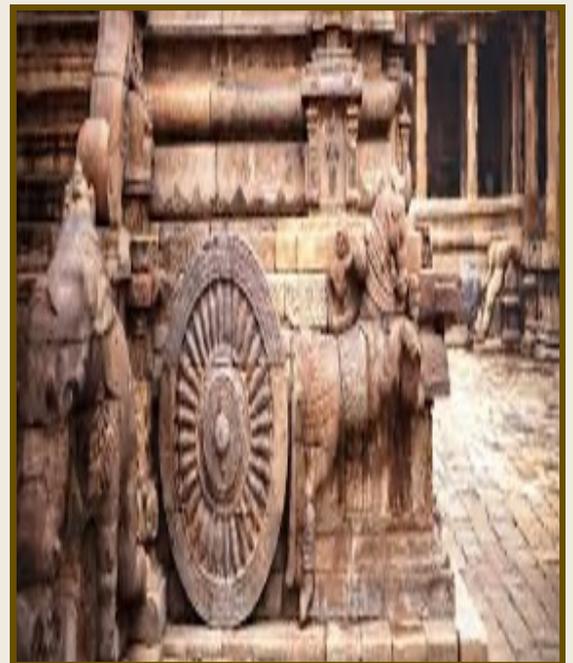
Wandering through these spaces, I felt a mixture of reverence, curiosity, and wonder. Here lay the pallipadai of a king who sculpted the course of South Indian history, and yet, the local narrative surrounding the site had transformed it into an ordinary temple.

We then turned our attention to the architectural nuances of the temple. Our exploration brought us to the pillars, where we discussed the stylistic evolution brought on by various dynasties. The Nayaka pillars, distinct in their plantain-shaped structures, offer a soft, organic aesthetic that contrasts with the Chola pillars, which are characterized by their strong, rectangular forms. The convergence of these styles within the temple serves as a timeline in stone, showcasing how different dynasties layered their architectural preferences onto the same sacred ground. This blending of styles, resulting from the Chola and later Nayaka influences, gives the temple a unique character—an architectural collage representing the flow of time and shifting reigns.

As I walked away from this extraordinary place, my mind teemed with questions, awe, and reflections. Why is this monumental site, the resting place of a king who changed the face of South India, known only as a temple to so many? How much more of our history is hidden in plain sight, waiting to be rediscovered through a careful eye and an open mind? This journey into the past left me inspired to delve even deeper, realizing that each carved stone and each detail is an unspoken chapter of our heritage.

Our journey then took us to another testament to the grandeur of the Chola dynasty, the UNESCO World Heritage site known as the Airavatesvara Temple in Darasuram. This “Great Living Chola Temple,” built under the patronage of Raja Raja Chola II in the 12th century, is a symphony in stone. Unlike any other, the Airavatesvara Temple brings forth the Chola artistry and architectural prowess with a level of precision and intricacy that is almost unimaginable.

As we entered the temple grounds, it felt as though each stone, each carving, whispered tales of an era devoted to divine beauty, craftsmanship, and deep spirituality. Named after **Airavata**, the celestial white elephant of Indra who is said to have worshipped Shiva here, this temple is a revered space where mythology meets extraordinary craftsmanship.





The temple complex showcases the Dravidian architectural style with its towering vimana (temple tower), graceful mandapa (hall), and delicately carved sculptures. The Airavatesvara Temple is unique in its richness of miniature sculptures and intricate iconography, covering nearly every surface of its walls, pillars, and ceilings. Walking through these hallowed spaces is like turning the pages of a divine manuscript—each carving adds a verse to a timeless epic

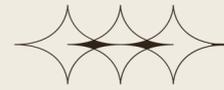
### The Sculpture of Amruta Varshini

One of the temple's most mesmerizing artworks is the sculpture of Amruta Varshini, a masterpiece that embodies Chola's understanding of divine music, grace, and spirituality. Amruta Varshini, which translates to "The Shower of Nectar," is both a raga (a musical scale in Indian classical music) and a concept that symbolizes the outpouring of divine bliss. The sculpture captures this essence: a celestial damsel, poised in the act of pouring an eternal stream of amrita, the elixir of life, from a sacred vessel.



The detailing of her posture and expression is astounding. She stands gracefully, her body arched in a way that evokes the flowing movements of the raga itself. The sculptor has masterfully captured her beauty and devotion, with her gentle smile and serene gaze embodying an otherworldly peace. At her feet, musicians and celestial beings play instruments, symbolizing how divine music rains blessings upon the devotee. Her hand gesture, a mudra of giving, emphasizes the boundless compassion and grace associated with Shiva, to whom she offers the nectar.



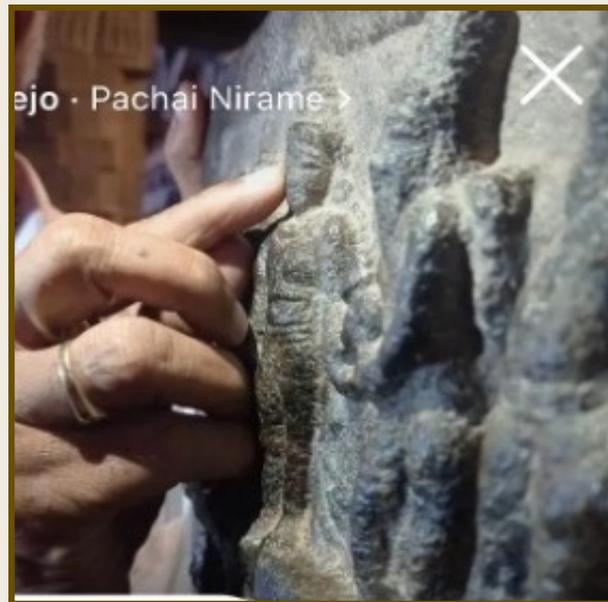


The genius of this sculpture lies in its multi-layered symbolism. It's not merely a depiction of beauty but a visual ode to the divine nature of sound, devotion, and the giving of life. This single figure captures the rapture of music and the idea that devotion is an eternal offering, constantly flowing like the nectar of immortality.

### The Miniature Sculptures on the Temple Walls

Every inch of the Airavatesvara Temple tells a story. The walls are decorated with intricate miniature carvings, each no more than a few inches tall, yet filled with incredible detail. These miniature sculptures depict mythological narratives, scenes from daily life, and divine events that connect the viewer to ancient Tamil culture and spirituality.

One section of the wall illustrates Tripurantaka a form of Shiva as the destroyer of the three demonic cities. This fierce depiction of Shiva captures his stance of calm ferocity as he readies to annihilate evil forces. In contrast, nearby carvings depict Ananda Tandava,



the joyous dance of Shiva as Nataraja, surrounded by an assembly of sages, gods, and celestial beings who watch in awe. The contrast of these two forms—Shiva as the fierce destroyer and Shiva as the blissful dancer—reveals the dynamic, multifaceted nature of the divine.

Another sequence of miniature sculptures shows Gajalakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, seated upon a lotus while elephants flank her on either side, symbolizing abundance and grace. The lotus upon which she sits appears to bloom from the ground, with its petals carved to evoke a sense of life emerging from stone.

In addition to mythological figures, these miniatures also depict scenes of daily life, such as dancers, musicians, and warriors. These subtle carvings reveal how art, dance, music, and devotion were woven into the fabric of everyday life in the Chola period. Here, a mother nurses her child; there, a young musician tunes her instrument, absorbed in her own world. Such details are not merely ornamental—they offer glimpses into the lives of the people who lived under the Cholas' rule, merging the sacred with the secular.



## **An Architectural Wonder**

Another marvel of the Airavatesvara Temple is the **\*\*stone chariot\*\*** at the entrance, with elaborately carved wheels and horse sculptures that seem ready to spring to life. This chariot, dedicated to Shiva's mount, Nandi, is symbolic of the cosmic vehicle that bridges the divine and earthly realms. The mandapa itself is adorned with pillars that produce musical tones when struck, a testament to the Chola architects' understanding of acoustics and their desire to merge sound with spiritual experience.

## **Reflections**

As we stood in the shadow of this architectural masterpiece, we were left in awe of the Chola artisans who, centuries ago, sculpted divinity into every corner of the temple. This is not merely a temple—it is a living testament to the ideals, beliefs, and artistry of an era that saw the divine in every form and facet of life.

Leaving Darasuram, I couldn't shake the feeling that I had walked through a portal to another world, where devotion and artistry are intertwined so tightly that they become indistinguishable. This great living Chola temple, the Airavatesvara, is not just a place of worship but a timeless archive of art, culture, and philosophy, eternally resonating with the divine raga of Amruta Varshini.

Our journey then took us to a place where threads weave more than just cloth—they tell stories of tradition, patience, and artistry. We arrived at an ancient weaving center, where generations of artisans practiced the age-old craft of handloom saree-making, a skill passed down like a treasured heirloom.

The rhythmic clatter of the looms and the quiet concentration of the weavers welcomed us into their world, where each saree is more than fabric—it's a masterpiece. Here, the artisans blend traditional handloom techniques with the precision of computerized designs, a beautiful marriage of old and new. Yet, even with modern technology guiding the designs, each saree is painstakingly crafted by hand, with every thread meticulously placed. In a world where speed is prized, these artisans choose to create with intention, often spending an entire month on a single saree.

Watching their hands move with practiced grace, it was easy to see why each saree is unique. The patterns unfold slowly—intricate motifs inspired by temple sculptures, nature, and mythology—emerging row by row, a vivid tapestry brought to life. Colors shift and blend, telling silent stories of culture, devotion, and heritage. Each piece is woven with both pride and humility, carrying the soul of the artisan within its delicate threads.



# Day 5

Our next stop was none other than the iconic anjavur Periya Kovil—the Brihadeeswara Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Often called the “Big Temple,” this architectural marvel stands as a testament to the vision and ambition of Raja Raja Chola I. Built over a thousand years ago, it remains an unparalleled gem of the Chola dynasty and Dravidian architecture, embodying both grandeur and spiritual depth in every stone.



## The Majestic Architecture

The sheer scale of Brihadeeswara Temple is awe-inspiring. Rising nearly 66 meters (216 feet) into the sky, the vimana (temple tower) is one of the tallest of its kind. What makes it even more fascinating is the engineering behind it—crafted entirely from granite, a stone not native to the region, indicating that tons of granite were transported from far-off locations. How this massive structure was built in the 11th century without modern technology remains a subject of wonder and admiration.

The temple walls are adorned with intricate sculptures, each of which contributes to a symphony of art, devotion, and storytelling. As we approached the first floor, we noticed the row of carvings known as Karnas

—figures in dance postures that embody the rich cultural heritage of the Cholas, who were ardent patrons of Bharatanatyam. Each Karnas figure is sculpted with such precision that you can almost hear the rhythm of the dance through the stone. The placement and design of these sculptures were said to enhance acoustics, carrying the echoes of chants and music upward, creating a resonance that fills the temple with a sense of divine presence.



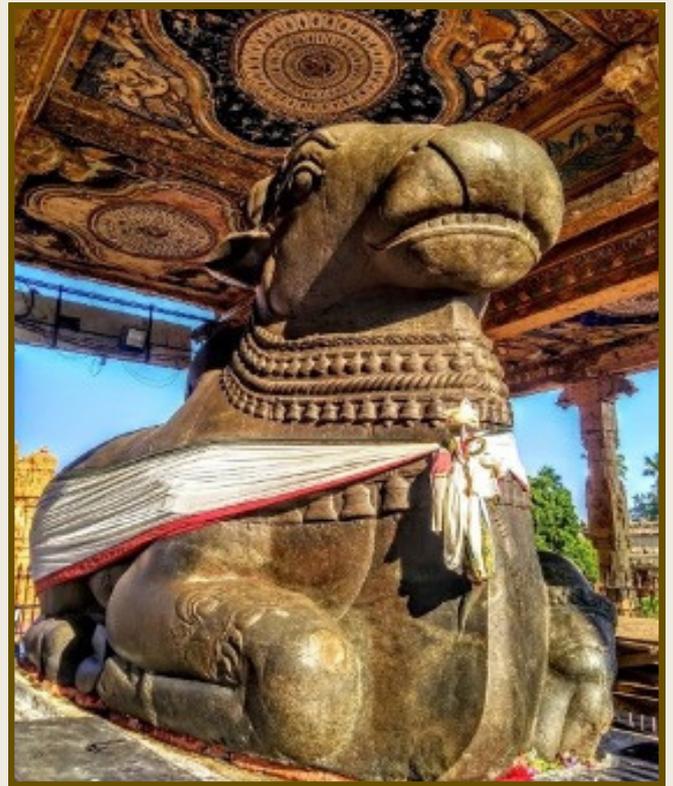
## The Mysterious Acoustics

One of the most intriguing features of the temple lies in the echo phenomenon of the main sanctum. If you stand in specific spots within the temple, sounds reverberate upwards, almost as if carried by invisible hands to the skies above. This design is not accidental; it's a deliberate architectural choice that reinforces the sense of connection between the earthly and the divine. As chants and prayers resonate up through the stone layers, it feels as though the temple itself breathes, pulsating with spiritual energy that transcends time.

## The Great Nandi

At the entrance of the Brihadeeswara Temple sits the colossal Nandi the sacred bull and devoted mount of Lord Shiva. Carved from a single massive block of black granite, this Nandi is one of the largest in India, measuring over 13 feet in height and 16 feet in length. Its size alone makes it awe-inspiring, but it's the sheer detail and polish that take one's breath away. Despite being exposed to the elements for centuries, Nandi's surface gleams with a smoothness that almost makes it seem alive.

In Hindu mythology, Nandi is seen as the constant companion of Shiva, and his placement at the entrance is a symbolic gesture of devotion and protection. As you stand before this massive



figure, you can almost sense Nandi's silent, steadfast guardianship over the temple, reminding visitors to approach the divine with humility and reverence.

## The Massive Shiva Lingam

At the heart of Brihadeeswara Temple lies the Shiva Lingam, one of the largest in India. Rising to an impressive height within the sanctum, this Shiva Lingam is an embodiment of cosmic energy and divine presence. The scale and positioning of the Lingam evoke a sense of immense power and serenity, creating a sacred focal point that draws worshippers from far and wide.

In Chola architecture, scale is often used to represent divinity and power, and the Brihadeeswara Temple's Lingam achieves just that—a profound sense of connection with the infinite. The Lingam, like the temple itself, serves as a bridge between the temporal and the eternal, inviting worshippers to meditate upon the vastness of the universe.



## The Magic of the Sculptures

The sculptures at Brihadeeswara Temple are masterpieces of Dravidian stonework, primarily crafted from granite. Incredibly, many of these figures were sculpted directly into the granite walls of the temple, with each figure portraying remarkable detail and life-like expressions. The Chola sculptors captured moments frozen in time, from the elegant dancers in mid-step to fierce warriors and divine beings. The richness of these sculptures is not merely decorative; each one holds symbolic meaning, connecting mythology, devotion, and art in a seamless tapestry.

One of the marvels of Chola artistry lies in the interplay between light and shadow across these stone figures. As the sun moves across the sky,

the sculptures seem to shift and transform, each figure revealing different facets of its expression in different light. This dynamic interaction gives the temple a sense of movement and life, as if the stone itself were engaged in a perpetual dance with time.

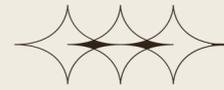


## Reflections

Visiting the Tanjavur Periya Kovil is a humbling experience. The Brihadeeswara Temple is more than an architectural wonder; it is a cosmic vision set in stone, a space where art, faith, and history converge. It embodies the essence of the Chola empire—its grandeur, its devotion, and its undying quest to bridge the earthly and divine. Standing within its ancient walls, I felt a deep connection to history, as though I were part of a continuum stretching back over a thousand years, united with countless generations in awe of this sacred, timeless gem.

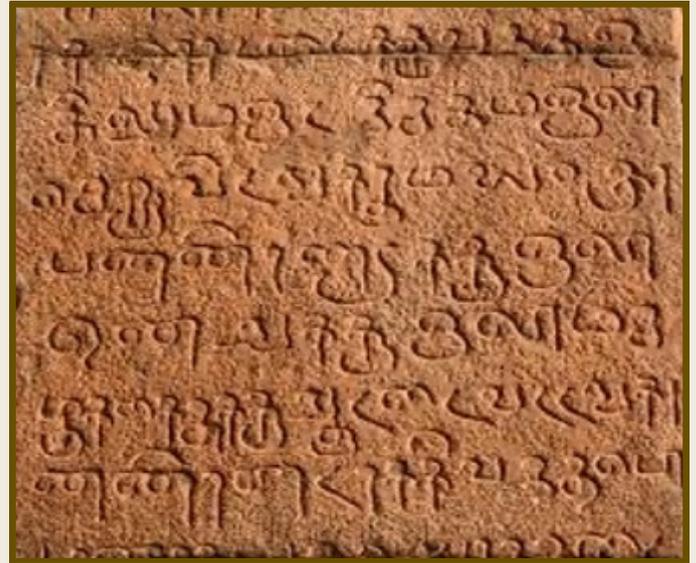
Devanayagam Sir is a highly respected figure whose dedication and expertise played a pivotal role in the recognition of the Chola temples as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, now celebrated under the title of "The Great Living Chola Temples." His relentless efforts brought global attention to the architectural, cultural, and spiritual significance of these ancient temples, including Brihadeeswara Temple in Tanjavur, the Gangaikonda Cholapuram Temple, and the Airavatesvara Temple in Darasuram.

Dr. G. Devanayagam Sir's work was instrumental in highlighting the Chola dynasty's exceptional contributions to art, architecture, and Hindu temple design. He meticulously documented the unique features of these temples, emphasizing their status as "living" temples—sites where rituals and worship practices continue to this day, preserving a vibrant cultural heritage. Thanks to his dedication, the legacy of the Chola temples is now globally recognized, ensuring their preservation and reverence for generations to come.



The inscriptions carved into the granite walls of the Brihadeeswara Temple—the "Big Temple"—are like pages of an ancient manuscript, echoing the voices of the past. As you trace their chiseled Tamil script with your fingers, you feel a connection to a thousand-year-old legacy. These inscriptions are more than mere records; they are narratives of a glorious era, detailing the life, beliefs, and values of a time when the Chola dynasty ruled with vision and grandeur.

One of the most striking aspects of these inscriptions is their sheer detail. They chronicle the reign of Raja Raja Chola I, the visionary emperor who commissioned the temple around 1010 AD. The inscriptions praise him as a warrior-king, a devout patron of Shiva, and a leader who expanded the Chola Empire across land and sea. His accomplishments are recounted with pride, detailing his military campaigns, his dedication to the arts, and his relentless drive to make his empire a center of culture and spirituality.



But the inscriptions do more than glorify a king. They serve as a meticulous record of the temple's construction and functioning.

Each carved line lists the vast resources dedicated to building the temple—the donations of gold, jewels, land, and livestock by various patrons and the management of these resources. They name the sculptors, architects, priests, and artisans involved in its creation, honoring the hands that brought this magnificent structure to life.

Beyond practical records, the inscriptions also reveal a tapestry of social and spiritual values. They describe the grants given to Brahmin scholars, the endowments made for temple festivals, the allocation of land for the upkeep of the temple, and the establishment of learning centers where sacred texts and traditional arts were taught. They document the roles of dancers, musicians, and priests, reflecting a society where art and spirituality were woven into everyday life.

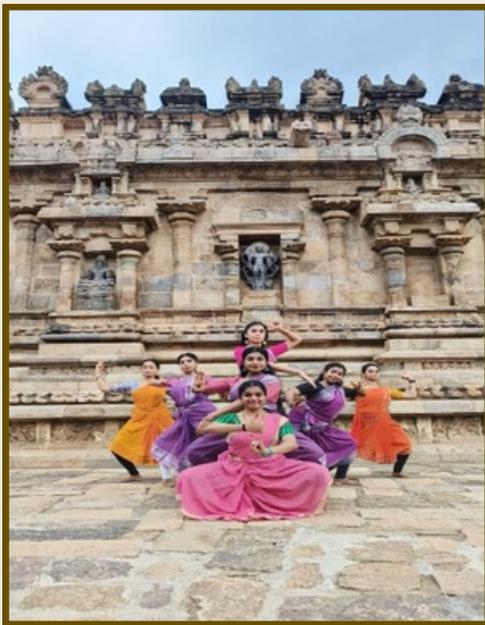
One of the most beautiful sections speaks of the temple rituals and offerings, listing everything from the food and flowers to the exact timing of daily prayers. These rituals, set in stone, were not only acts of devotion but also a way to keep the community connected to the divine, binding their daily lives to the rhythms of the temple.

In essence, the inscriptions of the Brihadeeswara Temple are a bridge to the past. They carry the weight of history and culture, preserving the lives and hopes of a civilization that revered knowledge, art, and spirituality. Each inscription tells us of a world where devotion was not confined to prayer alone—it was infused in art, etched in stone, and passed down for future generations to admire, to remember, and to feel pride in a heritage as enduring as the temple itself.



Our journey came to a close on a profound and inspiring note, a reflection on the importance of sculpture in our culture and the sheer artistry woven into our traditions. Standing amidst the magnificent carvings and intricate structures we had encountered; it was impossible not to feel a deep reverence for the ancient artisans whose work has endured for centuries. They were storytellers, bringing to life tales of gods, mortals, and mythical creatures, capturing emotion, devotion, and beauty in stone.

Sculpture, I realized, is far more than a physical art form—it is a language, a silent poetry etched into the walls and pillars of temples. Each curve, each figure, each line crafted with intention tells a story, speaks of beliefs, of daily life, of devotion, and of transcendence. This journey taught me that sculpture is as much about the space it creates as it is about the space it fills. It is an art form that invites viewers into a dialogue, engaging them not just visually, but spiritually, evoking thought and emotion.



As I absorbed these ideas, I found myself comparing sculpture to Bharatanatyam, the classical dance form that also brings myth and history to life. Like sculpture, Bharatanatyam uses form, expression, and movement to tell stories; each mudra (hand gesture), each step, and each expression is as carefully crafted as a carved figure. Both arts demand the artist's dedication, creativity, and discipline, and both seek to elevate the observer's mind from the mundane to the divine. Just as a dancer interprets stories through gestures and rhythm, the sculptors carved their tales in stone—every curve and detail akin to a dancer's movements, narrating stories of devotion and transcendence.

This trip left me with a newfound appreciation for our heritage and for the artists, both past and present, who sustained it. I learned that to truly understand our culture, we must look beyond what is visible. The sculptures I had seen were not just works of art; they were timeless reflections of people deeply connected to their spirituality and their world. And in that understanding, I felt a renewed connection to our traditions—a reminder of the profound artistic legacy we carry, one that flows from the chisel of a sculptor to the dance of a performer, all deeply rooted in our identity and heritage.



**Gauri Ajith**  
**BPA Degree**



# *Expressions on Paper:*

## **Nrityotsava 2024-25**

“REACH HIGH, FOR STARS LIE HIDDEN IN YOU. DREAM DEEP, FOR EVERY DREAM PRECEDES THE GOAL.”  
– RABINDRANATH TAGORE

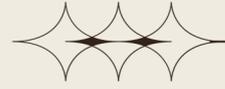
*I could dream, I could do! Stay Inspired.*

Nrityotsava holds a special place in my heart. Ever since I joined Nalanda and witnessed the first ‘Nrityotsava – the Inspiring Dance Festival’, my dream began... It meant so much to me that time and again, I envisioned myself dancing ecstatically on that stage in ‘Kanaka Sabha’ in all my glory. Since then for 7 years, with immense dedication, passion and hard work, I was blessed to nurture it.

It was an honour beyond words to be chosen among many national and international talented and seasoned dancers with whom I shared the stage and at the end to be bestowed with the ‘Nalanda Nritya Nipuna’ award. It was a blessing from the Lord himself who reached me through the discerning eyes of Dr. Smt. Uma Rele to whom I remain deeply grateful for placing her faith in me and encouraging me to strive for the best. What made this journey even more meaningful were the invaluable lessons and profound experiences shared during my practice sessions with my Guru Dr. Meenaskshi Iyer Gangopadhyay.



**Anushkaa Ramanatan**  
**MPA PART - II**



Every single day, I eagerly looked forward to learning, analysing and exploring the choreography with her. Even though these practices were meant for an upcoming performance, the lessons I learned were etched in me for a lifetime. One cannot quantify the values, teachings and knowledge, a Guru shares with their student. With her proficient teaching and a love for choreography, she taught me three distinct dance pieces, which will remain with me lifelong.

A true performer is one who knows the practical as well as the theoretical aspects of the art. I consider myself to be such a performer only because my institution has provided me with all that there is to know about dance whether it is practical or theory, thus making me a 'total dancer'. I owe a special debt of gratitude to my revered Gurus at Nalanda for nurturing me in these areas.

In a flash of time, the performance day had arrived. I had a final rehearsal with my teacher and at the end of it, we both felt a gush of energy and enthusiasm, ready to take on the stage. As I walked up to the stage for my performance, I remembered all my well-wishers and loved ones, who would help me to deliver a great performance.

As I began to dance, everything around me faded and I felt myself transcend into a realm beyond thought and form. All I knew in that moment was a deep urge to dance endlessly until my final exit. It was a sheer joy, dancing in front of an august audience and being accompanied by senior artists. It was everything I had envisioned and wished for.

My heartfelt gratitude to my parents for embracing my dreams as their own, and for standing by me every step of the way, Smt. Radhika Nair ma'am for giving her valuable insights during rehearsals, Shri Rahul Rele Sir for his silent support. Shri Dakshinamurthy Pillai Sir and Smt. Sandhya Pisharody ma'am for their constant motivation, Shri Raghavendra Baliga Sir, Shri Balusubramaniam Sarma Sir for their musical support.

**Anushkaa Ramanatan**  
**MPA PART - II**



Nrityotsava has held a special place in my heart ever since I joined college. It was always a dream to one day perform on the prestigious stage of Kanaka Sabha, representing my own institution. Watching seniors perform with such grace inspired me deeply, and being selected to perform this year truly felt like that long-held dream coming to life. The moment was surreal, filled with emotion and immense gratitude.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Smt. Uma Rele Ma'am for considering me worthy of this stage and for placing her faith in me. Her belief gave me confidence and motivated me to give my best.

The journey to this stage was filled with dedication, growth, and constant learning. I had the privilege of learning and rehearsing under the guidance of my Guru, Dr. Smt. Meenakshi Iyer Gangopadhyay, whose thoughtful corrections and artistic insight helped me refine every aspect of my performance. Her discipline, patience, and sharp eye for detail truly shaped my approach and deepened my understanding of each piece.

Having Smt. Sandhya Pisharody Ma'am and Shri Dakshinamurthy Pillai Sir present during most of the rehearsals made a huge difference. Practising with live singing and mridangam gave me a clear sense of the overall feel and rhythm of the performance. Their constant presence, encouragement, and warmth throughout the process made me feel supported and confident. They helped create a space where I could focus, grow, and truly enjoy preparing for the stage.

I still remember the day when all the gurus, Smt. Radhika Nair Ma'am, Dr. Madhuri Deshmukh Ma'am, and Dr. Megha Mohad Ma'am, they all came together to watch my rehearsal. Their observations and detailed corrections gave me a fresh perspective and helped me improve in so many ways. That session truly pushed me to polish my performance further and gave me the motivation to give it my absolute best.

On the final day, as I was getting ready, my heart was racing. I was overwhelmed with emotions that involved everyone's best wishes, the anticipation, and the pressure all sinking in at once. But the moment I stepped onto the stage, everything else faded away. I gave it my all, and I've never felt so alive while dancing. It was a feeling I'll never forget.

**Nalanda Nrityotsava wasn't just a Performance; it was an Experience**



## **Kavya Pujara** **MPA Part – II**



## **Nrityotsava – A journey of discovering myself!**

Nrityotsava dance festival was something I had known about long before I joined Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya. It was back in 2019 when I was browsing through the Nalanda website and came across a mention of Nrityotsava. That day, a silent wish sparked in my heart—to one day perform in that festival. A year later, when I joined Nalanda for my Bachelor's program, I came to realize just how significant Nrityotsava truly is. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the festival that year was held online, and I vividly remember watching every performance with utmost sincerity, marvelling at the beauty, grace, and precision each artist brought to the stage. Performing at Nrityotsava is a dream of many Nalandites, and I was no different. That quiet wish only grew stronger with each passing year.

When the moment finally arrived—when our Principal, Dr. Smt. Uma Rele ma'am, announced that I had been selected for the January 2025 edition of Nrityotsava—I was overwhelmed with joy and a tinge of anxiety. With her years of experience, she immediately sensed the nervousness I felt and reassured me, saying there was nothing to worry about—one should simply enjoy the journey and give their best. That statement coming from the principal of the very institution I was about to represent, meant a great deal to me, an overthinker by nature. They calmed my restless mind to some extent. However, a wave of insecurity still swirled within me—questioning whether I truly deserved this honour and whether I could ever live up to the legacy of those who had graced the stage before me. What followed was a journey of slowly answering those questions—and, in the process, discovering myself as an artist.



**Simran Cherayil**

### **MPA Part – II**

My training for Nrityotsava 2025 was under the guidance of Smt. Radhika Premanand Nair ma'am. I still remember our very first meeting to discuss the dance items I would be performing. I expressed to her my wish to perform something that would not only be enjoyable for me but also fun and engaging for the audience. Ma'am earnestly listened—and responded with two of the most wonderful compositions, which I consider myself incredibly lucky to have performed. The pieces she selected not only fulfilled my wish but also pushed me far beyond my comfort zone. They challenged me to explore movement in ways I had never attempted before, both physically and emotionally.



Throughout the practice sessions, bouts of self-doubt would often creep in—some days more intensely than others. This was especially true for the Nritta Padam on Lord Nataraja. I constantly asked Radhika ma'am if she genuinely believed I could do justice to her brilliant choreography, and time and again, she reassured me. Her belief in me was stronger than my own—and, in those moments, it was her faith that became my driving force.

Every step of the journey—from conceptualizing to choreography—I witnessed true artistry of my teachers in action, particularly in the second piece of my performance, Sirripu. Each session was filled with long hours of discussion, ideation, and artistic exchange—not only with Radhika ma'am but also with Smt. Sandhya Pisharody ma'am, our music teacher and a brilliant vocalist, as well as Shri Dakshinamurthy Pillai sir, our percussionist and tala vidwan. Our rehearsals were filled with ideas, discussions, and—true to the theme—plenty of Sirripu, making the process as joyful as it was intense.

It was during the Grand Rehearsal that the full beauty of the choreographies unfolded before me. That day, we were joined by violinist Shri Balasubramanian Sarma sir and flautist Shri Raghavendra Baliga sir, who both effortlessly adapted to the choreography. When everything came together—dance, music, rhythm—I realized just how lucky I was to be part of a masterpiece shaped by the collective genius of all my teachers. And when it was met with a thunderous round of applause by our Head of Department, Dr. Smt. Meenakshi Iyer Gangopadhyay—herself a brilliant choreographer, training two of my fellow classmates for the festival—we knew that all our team effort was headed in the right direction.

Every dancer has a source of motivation that pushes them toward brilliance. For some, it's the urge to prove themselves, for others, the desire to transcend their own limitations. For me, it was the unwavering faith of my institution, my teachers, and my family. I practiced relentlessly, absorbed every correction, and rehearsed again and again—until the moment I stepped on stage. What culminated on stage then, was a blend of divine blessings, the trust of my institution and gurus, the brilliance of my choreographer and the vadhya vrinda, and my own persistent effort. To receive such heartfelt appreciation and positive feedback from everyone present that day—especially from esteemed gurus like Guru Shri Deepak Mazumdar Sir and the entire Nalanda teaching faculty—was truly humbling. Their valuable inputs during rehearsals and the genuine admiration they expressed for the performance were a profound affirmation of our hard work. Later being awarded the Nritya Nipuna title felt like the natural outcome of a deeply sincere journey.

That was my Nrityotsava 2025 journey—a journey that taught me what faith and hard work can achieve. I discovered the artist within me, and for that, I will always remain grateful.

**Simran Cherayil**  
**MPA Part – II**



# *Reaching for the Stars:*

## **Achievers Corner**

Receiving the academic excellence award in my first year (foundation 1) of pursuing a bachelor of performing arts in Bharata Natyam is an honor that fills me with immense gratitude and motivation. I remember the first day of stepping into Nalanda, with all the doubts that I will be able to cope up with the competition of the dance world, fit in this new city as an outstation student, if I'll be able to be dedicated to the art form. But coming to Nalanda has been a transformative journey. The rigor of practice, the depth of theory and the spiritual essence of the dance have all shaped my growth - both as a student and as an artist. I am more than thankful to Nalanda for all the opportunities it gave to me and my ever-inspiring gurus, faculty and supportive and friendly peers for creating a space where learning is both challenging and inspiring.

This award encourages me to continue striving for excellence, to stay curious, and to embrace every moment, rhythm and story with sincerity. I look forward to deepening my understanding of Bharata Natyam and Indian Classical Dance in the years to come, and to giving back to the art and to Nalanda that gives me so much.



**Bhoomi Ahuja**  
**Foundation I**

When one speaks of Nalanda, the word that instinctively comes to mind is golden—not solely for its esteemed legacy, but for the quiet, transformative magic it bestows upon every soul that crosses its sacred threshold. There is an inexplicable aura here, a gentle whisper that stirs the heart and beckons you forward. The first time I entered this divine space, something deep within me stirred—an inner voice urging me to take another step, and then another. I am eternally grateful that I listened to that voice, for it led me to a more profound journey than I could have imagined.



In this sanctum of art and learning, my gurus have been unwavering beacons—torchbearers illuminating my path with their wisdom, compassion, and grace. The honor of receiving the Academic Excellence Award was never a goal etched in ambition; rather, it blossomed organically, born from a pure love for the art I was immersing myself in. Each class, each movement, each lesson was a revelation, drawing me deeper into the vast, intricate tapestry of this ancient tradition

Receiving the Academic Excellence Award was never something I set out to achieve as a goal in itself. My focus was never on recognition or accolades, but rather on the process of learning and growing within this beautiful art form. I found joy in the daily routine—observing, absorbing, and understanding the intricacies that make this tradition so profound. It was in those quiet moments of learning, the questions I asked, the corrections I received, and the clarity that slowly emerged, that I began to realize how much I was evolving—not just as a student, but as an individual. I immersed myself in the experience wholeheartedly, not for the sake of achievement, but out of a genuine curiosity and love for art. And in doing so, I found myself arriving at this recognition — a reflection of the journey rather than the destination.

To my parents, who first opened the door to this passion and stood beside me even in moments when I faltered—I owe everything. Your faith has been my foundation. And to my friends, the companions of this vibrant journey, thank you for filling my Nalanda days with laughter, joy, and memories that shimmer with meaning.

This is not the end — only the beginning of a lifelong devotion. And my heart, full of gratitude, continues to dance forward.

I feel truly honored and humbled to have received the Academic Award for BPA I at Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya. This journey has been a deeply enriching experience, where each day brought new lessons, challenges, and moments of growth.

The knowledge shared by our respected teachers, the support of my classmates, and the values instilled at Nalanda played a huge role in this achievement. I believe this award is not just a reflection of personal effort, but a testament to the nurturing environment and collective spirit of learning we share.

I am sincerely grateful to my gurus for their patient guidance, to my family for their endless encouragement, and to the institution that has shaped my journey so far. This recognition motivates me to continue learning with humility, to work harder, and to honour the art form with sincerity and dedication.



**Bhagyada Chorge**  
**Foundation II**



**Uthara Sharath**  
**BPA Part I**



The second year at Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyala was nothing less than a roller coaster ride. All the subjects that were introduced to us such as the 2 journals, karanas, various theoretical topics as well as the practical dance items, were not only exciting but also left us students with a lot to study, understand and delve into. The additional dance form of Mohiniyattam which we took up as our elective was equally challenging to understand. On one hand we were learning our adavus of Mohiniyattam and on the other, studying its theory of body kinetics. Looking back, it was an experience which challenged me to become the best version of myself. Practical lectures followed by folk dancing was extremely fun, but at times turned out to test our stamina! Overall, it was all possible due to the immense support that we received from our teachers, seniors and most importantly classmates.

Going through the 2nd year course at Nalanda, preparing for exams between performances not only in Mumbai but also in Ahmedabad were experiences which have taught us to become strong and resilient. The memories, emotions and teachings are ones that I along with my classmates will cherish for a lifetime. The encouragement and healthy competition that we shared as classmates has always been the key to us trying our best for anything that we will try to achieve, both in the outside world, and in Nalanda!



**Meera Wagh**  
**BPA Part II**

Through this magazine, I would first like to take the opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to this institution, which has shaped me into who I am today — both as a dancer and as a human being. I will be forever indebted to all the Gurus at Nalanda, because it is through their guidance that I have been able to achieve this milestone.

Since the day I stepped into Nalanda, every single day and every single moment has been an opportunity to learn something new and challenge myself as a dancer. When I look back, I am both surprised and grateful for how far I have come — something that would not have been possible without the guiding light of my Gurus and the unwavering support of my friends. Most importantly, the invaluable teachings I have received here have not only enhanced my skills and knowledge but have also humbled me as an artist, inspiring me to strive to become a better dancer every day. I am truly delighted and honored to have received this award. For me, it serves as an assurance that I am walking the right path, and I hope to continue doing so in the journey that lies ahead.



**Riddhi Potnis**  
**BPA Degree**



## A Milestone of Gratitude and Growth

*"Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice, and most of all, love of what you are doing." – Pelé*

What does a journey towards academic excellence look like? If you ask me, I wouldn't really have an answer — because my time at Nalanda never felt like a deliberate journey towards academic excellence. For me, it was always about the love for art and the vast realms of knowledge that each subject and chapter opened up for me.

I believe the true beauty of studying a subject lies in how it humbles you — making you feel like a tiny speck in this magnificent, infinite universe. Every lecture, every text we explored would leave me mind blown and leave me wondering how I hadn't thought of those ideas before. It changed me, little by little, and that, I believe, is the true essence of learning.

When I joined Nalanda, I was a bright student — no doubt — but I was bright only within the small world I knew and had created. Nalanda, however, threw me off that comfort seat and made me realize that I hadn't even reached the starting line in truly understanding this art form. And with every passing year, like a flower slowly unfolding its petals, the training at Nalanda unfolded the artist in me. I fell in love — not just with art, but with a whole new version of myself. I fell in love with the subjects I studied, with the questions they raised, and with the endless curiosity they sparked within me. I studied because I enjoyed it, not merely to ace exams — although I always carried a spirit of healthy competition.

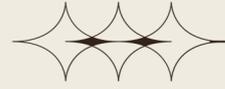
And so, when I was awarded the Academic Excellence Award for topping the Master's Part I examinations at Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya, I was thrilled and slightly proud of where I had reached in this journey. This moment was even more special because it marked the third consecutive time that I had received this honor during my academic journey here. Looking back now, it feels like a beautiful blend of hard work, passion, and the blessings of all those who guided and supported me. Studying at Nalanda has not only shaped me as a dancer but also deepened my respect for discipline, tradition, and the lifelong pursuit of knowledge.

I am truly grateful to my gurus, mentors, and peers for being an integral part of this journey. Every step at Nalanda has been a learning experience — both on stage and beyond — and this award serves as a gentle reminder of the commitment I owe to my art. This award is not a seat of arrival, nor is it a moment for complacency. Rather, it reminds me of the possibilities that lie ahead if I continue with the same hard work and sincerity. It instills confidence in me, yes, but more importantly, it humbles me.

As I move forward, I carry this recognition as a source of encouragement, a reminder to stay rooted, and an inspiration to aim even higher — always in service of dance, and always in service of learning.



**Simran Cherayil**  
**MPA Part I**



From the beginning as far as I can remember, dance is something which was and has been an inseparable part of my identity and life itself. This love was nurtured under the able guidance and teachings of my guru Dr. Smt. Gauri Ponkshe and it is through her that I stepped into the vibrant vāstu of Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyala. Scared of what lies ahead, I was skeptical of how a direct master's entry student would be accepted by this institution. But the worry was short lived and soon transformed into acceptance and openness from teachers and friends alike.

The master's course included interesting aspects of choreography, nattuvangam theory performances and more, but the highlight of the Masters course apart from the was the opportunity to present a complete production in itself from end to end. Under the guidance of our Principal Dr. Smt Uma Rele ma'am and the experienced faculty we were presented with an opportunity to craft a piece from scratch which included not only the actual choreography but also the music that would be made, costumes, lighting, theoretical sanctity/backing of the story you depict, submission of a detailed synopsis for all the above and so much more! It gave us an opportunity to improve our time management, resource planning and so much more in addition to the actual skill development.

In the far end of the course, I was fortunate enough to represent our Nalanda in the prestigious Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyala 2024-25. It felt like a weight of responsibility, but Dr Meenakshi Iyer Gangopadhyay made the process both possible and memorable guiding through every step. That coupled with the love and support of all the teachers, friends and family made it worth every second.

Little did I imagine that my beautiful and happy journey would come to an end with receiving the academic excellence award 2024-25. This process made me truly believe in the joy of the process itself and not just the end result. It gave me something intangible that made me fall in love the Art itself a little more every single day. At the end these two years feel like a roller coaster ride which feels like an unreal dream which truly left me content with my being!



**Gayatri Sathe**  
**MPA Part II**



### **My Journey Through a master's in Human Movement**

Embarking on my master's in human Movement was an eye-opening experience. As a dancer, movement felt natural, but this course challenged me to relearn the fundamentals—posture, technique, and body mechanics. It was surreal to see how much more there was to explore within the body I thought I already knew so well. I found immense joy in every moment, especially during the functional training sessions. Though exhausting, they were fulfilling, leaving me with a deeper appreciation for what the human body can achieve.

Learning about body kinesiology offered a fresh perspective on life itself. Understanding how each muscle works and contributes to movement not only enhanced my physical performance but also instilled a deeper connection with myself. I am certain these lessons will benefit my career and personal growth for years to come.

I'm deeply grateful to my incredible teachers, whose passion and guidance made complex concepts accessible and inspiring. Their ability to simplify, encourage, and challenge us truly transformed my learning journey. I'm also thankful to Nalanda University for providing such a nurturing and insightful environment. This course has opened many doors, and I believe the knowledge of kinesiology can empower countless others to live more consciously and move more meaningfully.

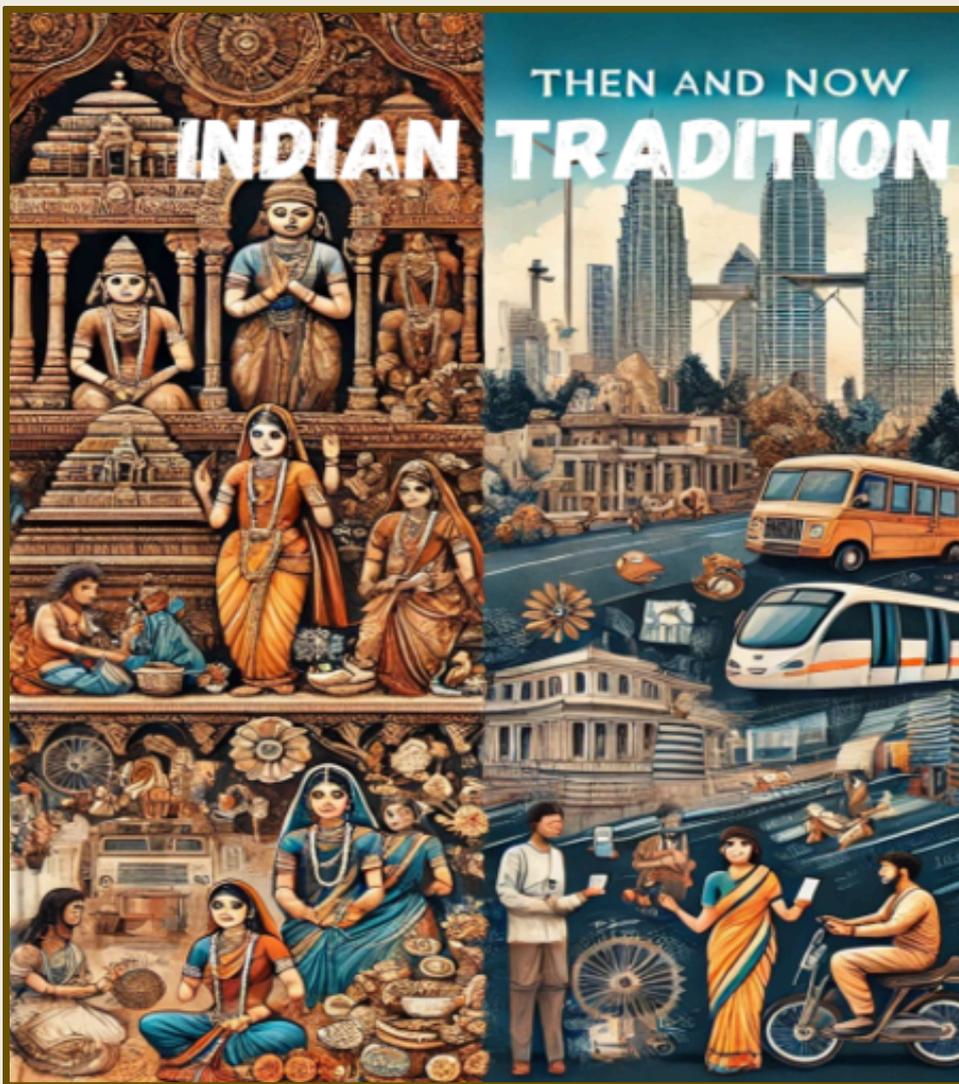


**Khushali Hirani**  
**MPA Human Movements**

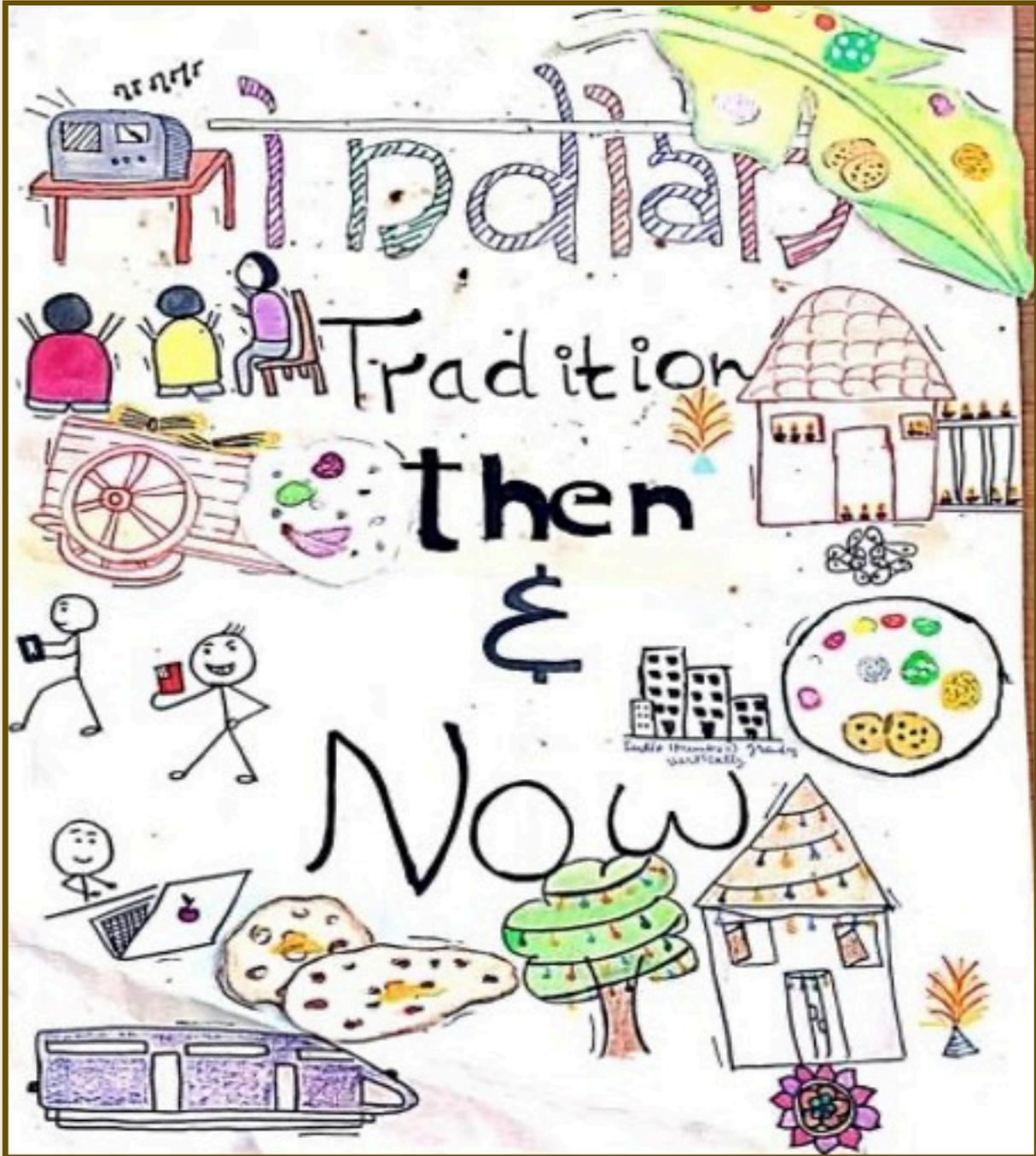


*Soul Imprints:  
Voices of Creative Minds*

**Traditions Reimagined: Poster Edition**  
**Topic: Tradition Then and Now!**



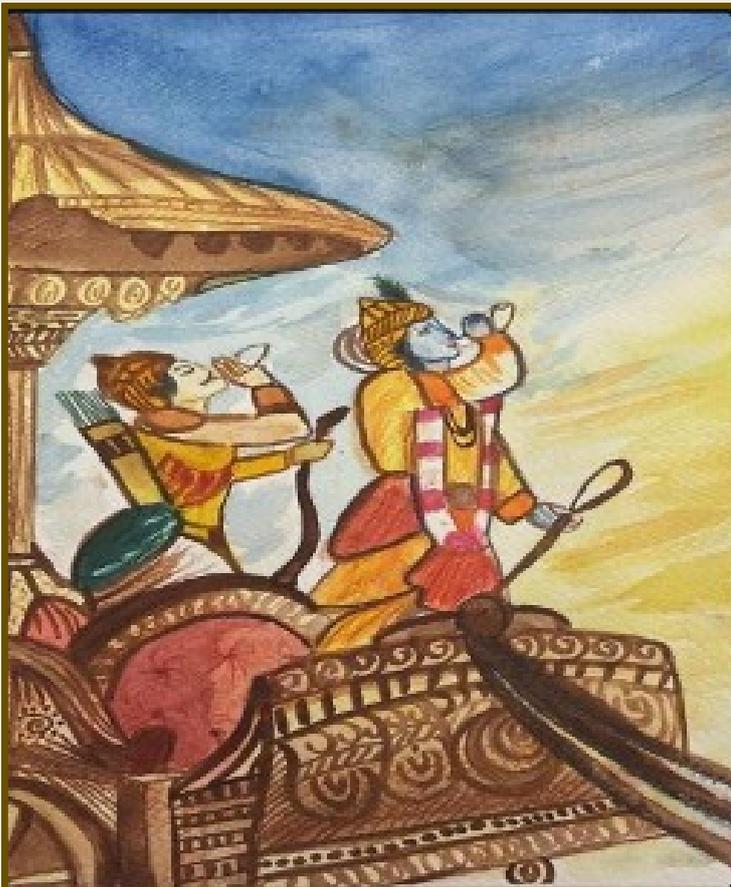
**Bhoomi Patel**  
**BPA Part II**



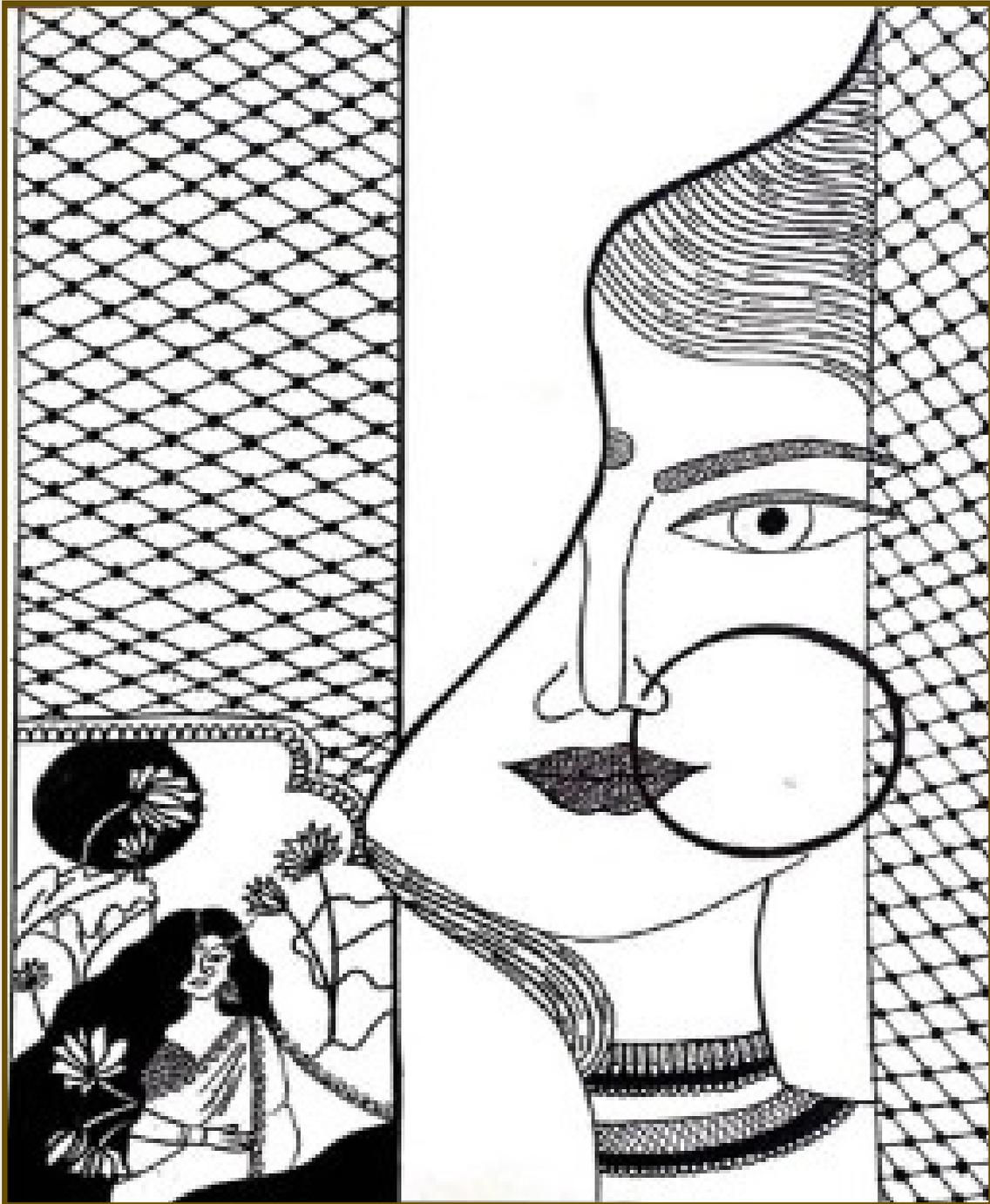
**Gauri Jathe**  
**MPA Part I**



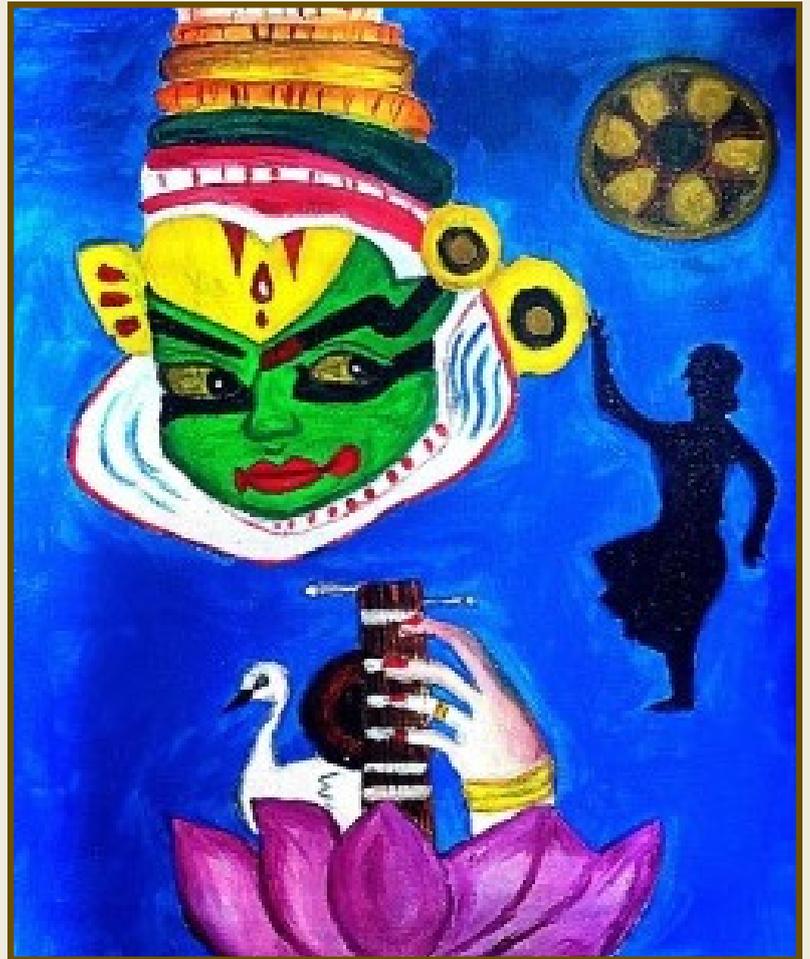
# Timeless Echoes on Canvas: Paintings



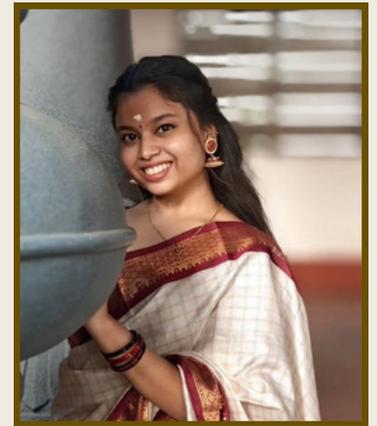
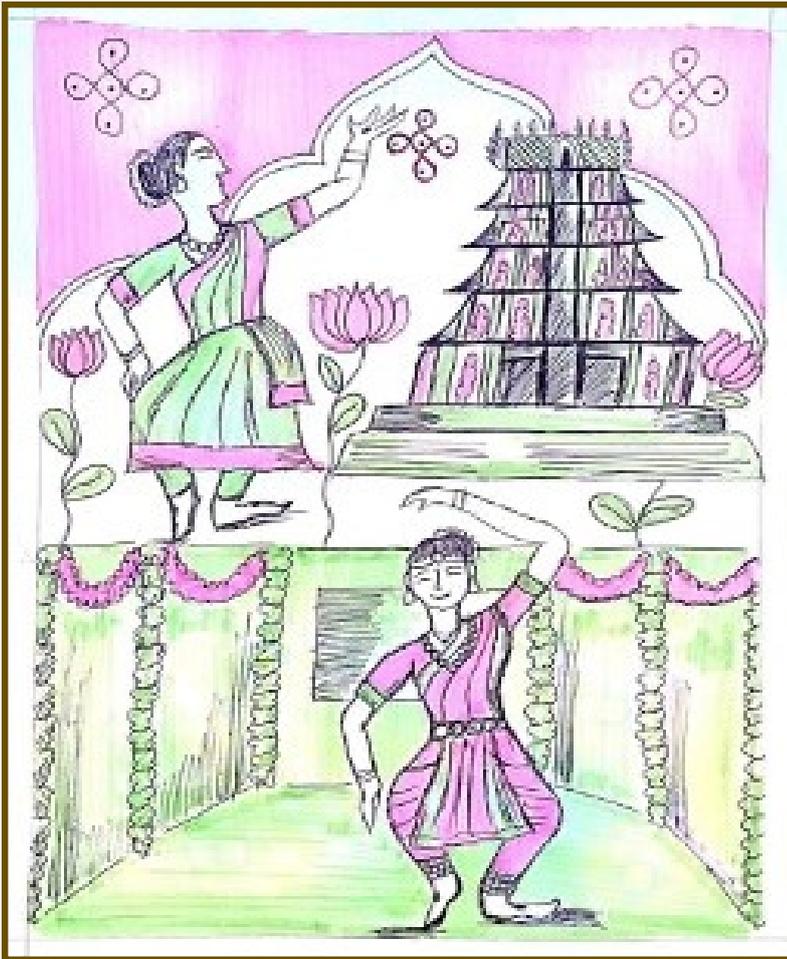
**Hiya Ambekar**  
**BPA Part I**



**Karthika Murugan**  
**BPA Part II**



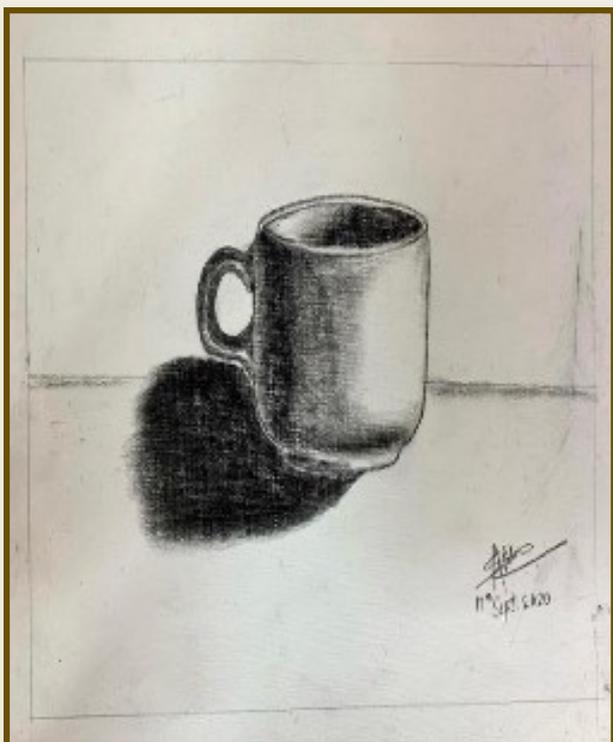
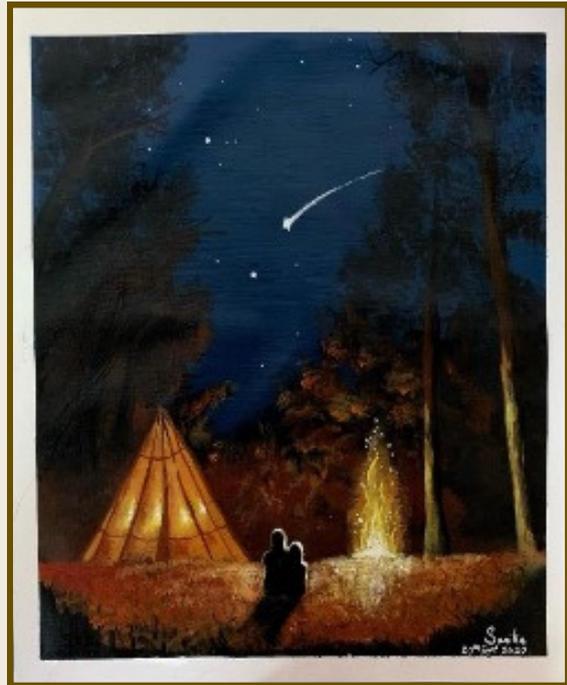
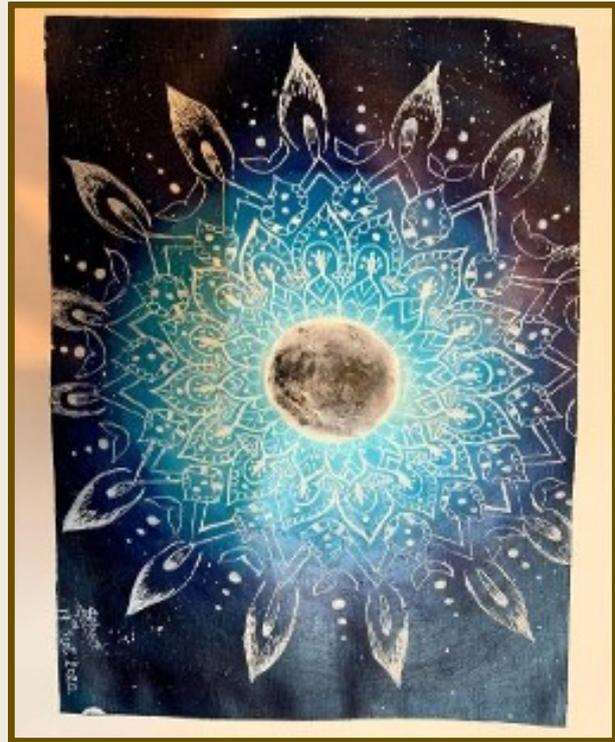
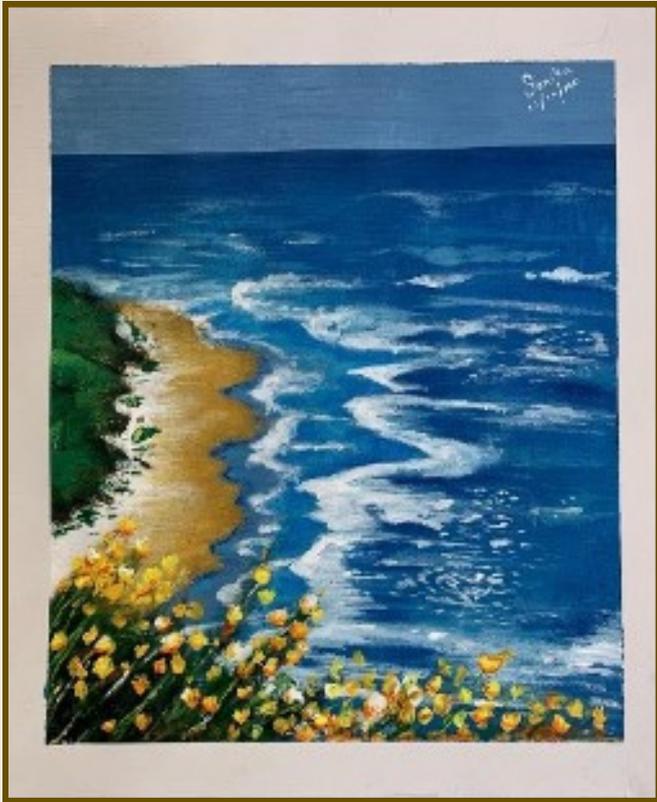
**Vaishnavi Gondhalekar**  
BPA Part I



**Richa Ranjeevan**  
MPA Part I



**Krutika Sontake**  
BPA Degree

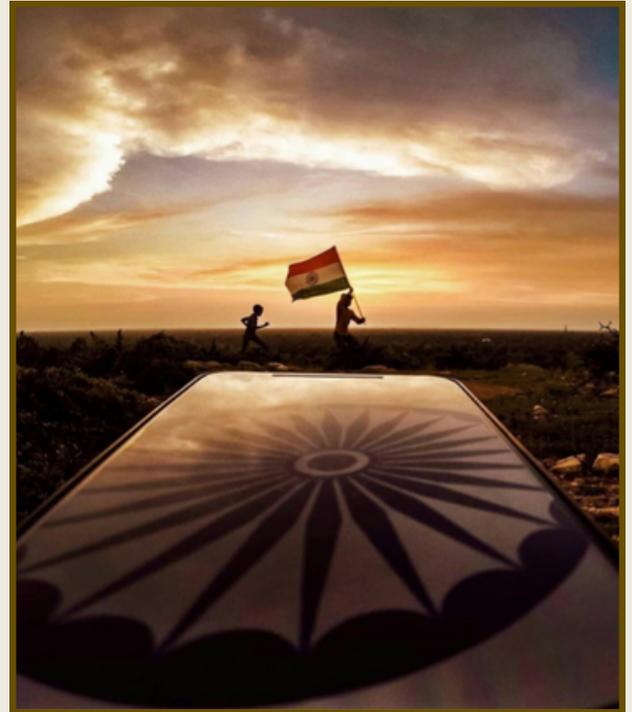


**Sanika More**  
**BPA Part I**

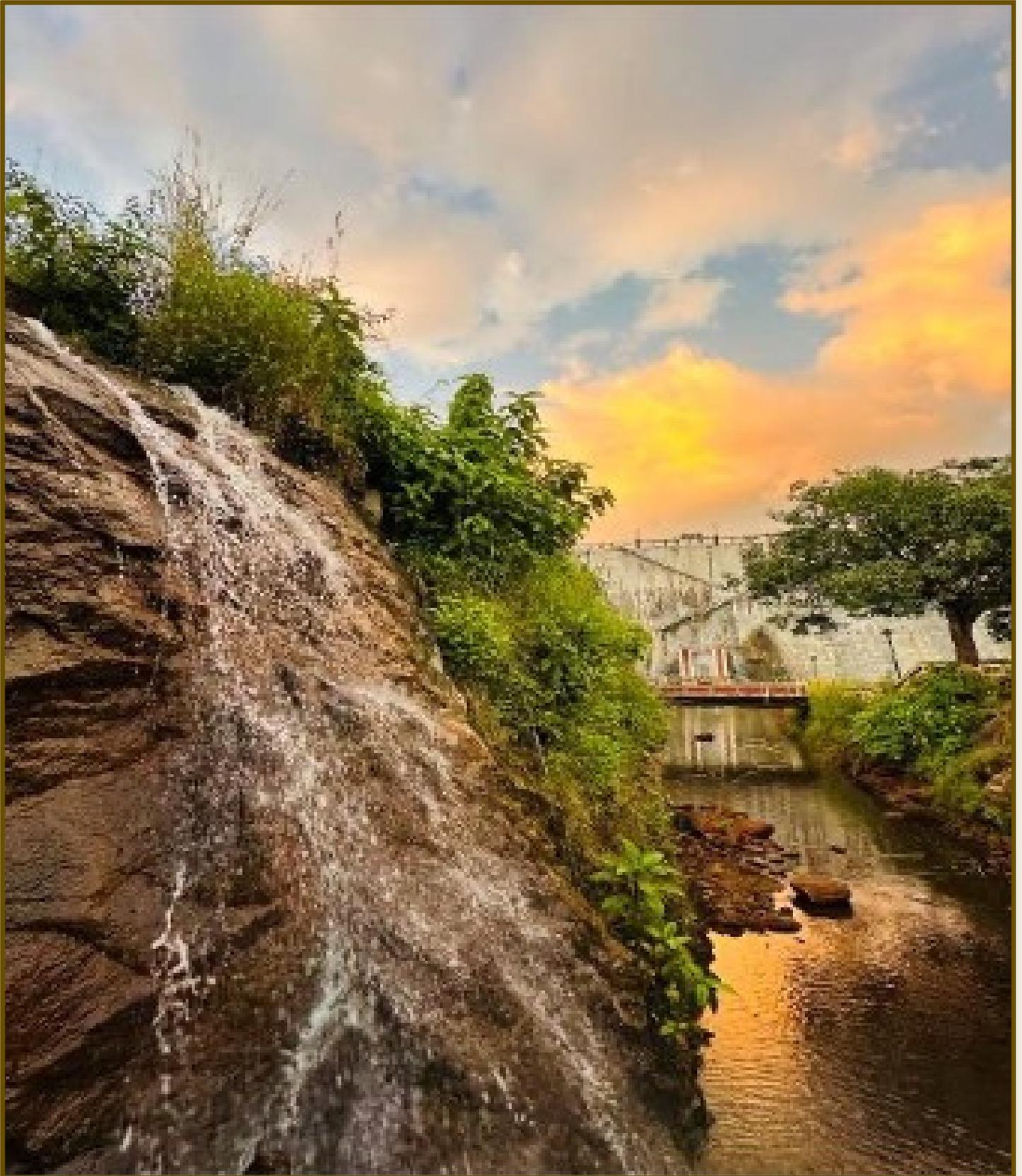


# Lenscape: Behind the lenses

Amanda Chetty from BPA I showcased her exceptional photography skills on Republic Day, capturing the essence of the nation's spirit through her lens. Her photographs vividly depicted the patriotic fervor, cultural diversity, and national pride that define India's celebrations. With a keen eye for detail and composition, Amanda's photographs brought the Republic Day festivities to life, highlighting the significance of this momentous occasion.



**Amanda Chetty**  
**BPA Part I**



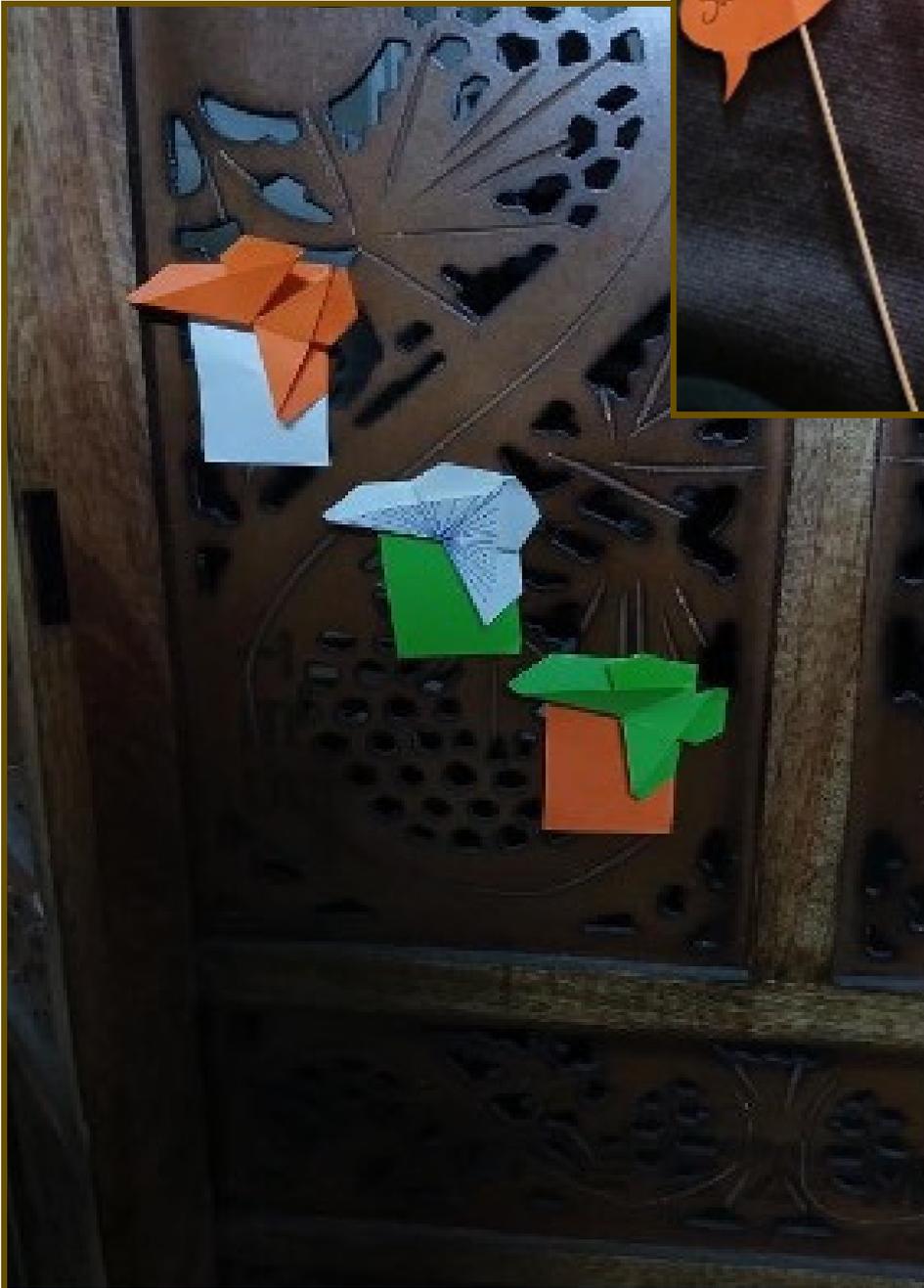
**Kimaya More  
MPA Part II**



# Patriotism in Every Fold



**Laxmi Nair**  
**BPA Part II**



**Vvani Jain**  
**BPA Part II**



# Traditions in Tune: Compositions

சிவபஞ்ச சபப பபோற்றி  
Sivapañca sabai pōrri

தில்லையிலை நடராஜர் திகழும் பபான்னம்பைலே லபாற்றி லபாற்றி!  
ஆனந்தம் பரவிய ஆனந்த தாண்டவலே லபாற்றி!  
Tillaiyilē Naṭarājar tigazhum Poṅṅampalamē pōrri pōrri!  
Ānandam paraviya ānanda tāṇḍavamē pōrri!

ஓ

துலரச் சுந்தலரசர் அருள்பசய் பவள்ளி சலபலய லபாற்றி லபாற்றி!  
ஓலைப்பபாமுது ேகிழும் சந்தியா தாண்டவலே லபாற்றி!  
Maturais Sutarēsar aruḷcey veḷḷi sabaiyē pōrri pōrri!  
Mālaip poludu maḷiḷum Sandhyā tāṇḍavamē pōrri!

ஓங்காட்டில் வடாரணியார் இரத்தின சலபலய லபாற்றி லபாற்றி!  
காளிலய பவன்ற காளி தாண்டவலே லபாற்றி!  
Ālaṅkāṭṭil Vaḍāraṇiyār irattina sabaiyē pōrri pōrri!  
Kāḷiyai veṅṅra Kāḷi tāṇḍavamē pōrri!

பநல்லை வாழ் பநல்லையப்பர் தேரிர சலபலய லபாற்றி லபாற்றி!  
முனிவர்க்கு அருள் புரியும் முனி தாண்டவலே லபாற்றி!  
Nellai vāḷ Nellaiyappar tāmira sabaiyē pōrri pōrri!  
Muṇivarkku aruḷ puriyum muṇi tāṇḍavamē pōrri!

குற்றைாம் லேவிய கூத்தநாதர் சித்திர சலபலய லபாற்றி லபாற்றி!  
திரிபுராசலர அழித்துப் புரிந்த திரிபுர தாண்டவலே லபாற்றி!

Kurrālam mēviya Kūttanādar cittira sabaiyē pōrri pōrri!  
Tiripurāsurai alittup purinta Tiripura tāṇḍavamē pōrri!

சிவபஞ்ச சலப லேவிய சிவபபரோன் லபாற்றி லபாற்றி!  
அருள் பபாழியும் ஆதிநாதலர லபாற்றி!  
Sivapañca sabai mēviya Sivaperumāṅ pōrri pōrri!  
Aruḷ poliyum Ātinātarē pōrri!

Sung by Smt. Sandhya Pisharody ma'am  
Conceptualized by Smt. Radhika Nair ma'am



Written by Karthika Murugan,  
BPA Part II



# A Lifetime Achievement Tribute to Padmabhushan Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele Ma'am



## **GURUVE SHARANAM**

I'm overwhelmed with gratitude as I reflect on realizing my long-held dream of creating a tribute to our revered Padmabhushan Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele Ma'am. As a disciple of Nalanda, I'm humbled to acknowledge her profound impact on our lives. Her ideology and legacy, rooted in the teachings of Sage Bharata, inspire us daily. The Tillana Sahityam embodies her philosophy, and we're grateful for her guidance.



Our heartfelt thanks to our beloved Principal, Dr. Uma Rele Ma'am, for her unwavering support and encouragement. We're indebted to our teachers for nurturing our talents and helping us grow. Special appreciation goes to Isai Nayaki Sandhya Pisharody Ma'am for composing the Tillana and Tarana, and Tala Laya Vithagar Dakshinamurthy Pillai Sir for his meticulous calculations and setting the Tillana to music. We're grateful to Parama Shishya Kum. Mohanraj Acharya for crafting the lyrics.

I'm thankful to everyone who helped bring this dream to life, especially my classmates, who've been pillars of support and encouragement. With immense gratitude, I present 'Kanaka Tillana' in Ragam Kaapi and Talam Aadi, a heartfelt tribute to our revered guru.

**Kanaka Tillana:** A Tribute

**Ragam:** Kaapi

**Talam:** Aadi

**Lyrics:** Parama Shishya Kum. Mohanraj Acharya

**Composition:** Isai Nayaki Sandhya Pisharody Ma'am

**Tala Laya Vitthagar:** Dakshinamurthy Pillai Sir

This creation is a testament to the legacy of Padmabhushan Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele Ma'am and the Nalanda tradition. We're honored to pay tribute to her and continue her legacy through our art.

**Lyrics..**

Pallavi

tīm.. tīm.. nar̥ru tīmta tīm ta

tīranā.... tīranā tīranā

**Anupallavi**

ta na na tīm tīrana tīm..ta tillānā

utana tīm tanana tōm ta tillānā

nar̥ru tīm tanana januta tīm tanana takum

tari kukum tari janutari januta timita tanata

(ta-tīm-kinatōm) ×3

**Caraṇam**

Śrī Bharatakkaḷaiyiṅ marapai koṅṭu

naṭam makiṅtāṭi tuvōm

Dēva mōkini kanaka sabai vaḷara

perum pukaḷai dinam pāṭi vaḷarntiṭa



**Lyrics: Mohanraj Acharya,  
BPA Degree**



नालंदा

विना तु नृत्य शास्त्रेण चित्रसूत्रम् सुदुर्विदम्

**nalanda dance research centre's**

**nalanda nritya kala mahavidyalaya**

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