

# *RABINDRA NRITYA: THE CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC ESSENCE OF TAGORE`S INIMITABLE EFFORTS IN DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY*

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**Abstract:** Art lover Tagore was appreciative of cultural expression in dancing. For him, dance was the way of communication of souls. He put his soul efforts to make his students learn the aspects of all the Indian classical and folk dances and he appointed trained gurus in Shantiniketan. His hunger for cultural diversity in *ashrama* took him to the countries of global ends and he crossed over the boundaries of a ‘nation’ or a ‘religion’. He was open to every idea that was capable to express the soul emotion of his dance dramas. With every staging there were some changes in techniques and presentations that were the harvest of his dazzling creativity. He founded the base of a dance art that is flexible in structure and opens to adaptation and was used to present his dance dramas in and out of Shantiniketan. In sunset years of his life he finalized the staging and presentation of three *natya*-s; *Chitrangda*, *Chandalika* and *Shyama*. They were accepted as *Rabindra Nritya Natya*-s and the dance form is called *Rabindra Nritya*. The present paper is a study of *Rabindra Nritya* in his *Nritya Natya*-s, the viewpoint of Tagore behind it; it’s after developments and its cultural and philosophical value in present time.

**Keywords:** Tagore, dance drama, *Rabindra Nritya*, after developments, cultural and philosophical value

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## **The making of Tagore: An Introduction to His Early Life**

“ . . . did Rabindranath Tagore, the many-splendoured genius, know how to dance as well? (Dancers and Critics: Re-viewing Tagore). If the question is asked in the technical sense of dance then answer can be a ‘no’. But if is asked in the aesthetic sense of dance, then ‘yes’ he knew how to dance well when it comes to express his unsullied happiness just like a child or a singing bird. Tagore says, “I dance and make others dance; I laugh and make others laugh; I sing; I paint. The Abih (supreme soul), restless in his spontaneous joy to bring forth the universe, has me his torch bearer” (*Tagore’s Mystique of Dance* 69). He affirms here that dancing, singing and painting are the eternal expression of love, happiness and spontaneous joy of the universe. His dance art has the essence of many cultures, if not all, from all over the world. It seems he truly followed the philosophy of ‘*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*’ described in *Veda*-s. His journey of becoming a true artist, set up at very tender age of four when he tried to make an innocent rhyme- “The rain patters/ the leaf quivers” (Kripalani 16). Being a literary person when he tried his hand in such a technical field like dance, he faced much criticism also. Without getting affected of any of condemnation he continued his journey till he breathed. During making of *Chandalika*, he said, “. . . As far as fame is concerned this work is going to earn a zilch. First of all, they are export commodities to be sold at the international market. Secondly, I do not expect a single word of applause from the intellectual stalwarts of my own country” (21.1.1938). (Dancers and Critics: Re-viewing Tagore)

Born on 1861, ‘Rabi’ was a lonely, shy kid who always tried to understand the way nature communicates. His every creation whether is it a poem or a play, a novel or an essay, a song or a dance; was an easy expression of

Nature. The period of schooling has started at early age but after going through some painful years in the company of unkind teachers; he left the school but his education was not ignored by family. They arranged well efficient home tutors for him who made him learn Sanskrit, Bengali, English and Physical education as well. His brother Jyotirindranath was well learned musician and singer; he crafted an intense interest for the music singing and song-writing in Tagore that formed the base for the creation of *Rabindra-sangeet*. "He sat at the piano and made Rabi to sing . . . he read him to first drafts of his dramas and gave him confidence by incorporating in them Rabi's suggestions and even compositions; he staged these dramas and made his younger brother to act in them" (Kripalani 27). It explains that how his massive creativity has slowly developed in his persona and that how every event of his life was a direction sign board that led him towards the sanctity of an artist. His first long poem *Abhilash (Desire or Yearning)*, was published in *Tattvabodhini Patrika*. He cherished the goddess nature in *Gitanjali*. Edward Thompson suggests that almost every line of *Gitanjali* is crammed with natural things like rain and cloud, wind and rising river, boatmen, lamps, temples and songs, flutes and *vinas*, birds flying home at dusk, travelers tired or with provisions exhausted, flowers opening and falling (*Rabindranath Tagore Poet and Dramatist* 226). Tagore has written approximately thirty four dramas; fourteen novels; thirty five essays; fifty nine collections of poems, songs and verses; three collections of stories; nine collections of short stories; eleven collections of letters and addresses; one lecture *Manusher Dharma* in 1933; four comedies; three travel diaries; one sermon *Dharma* in 1909 and three Autobiographies in his life time. It is perhaps his love for the poems and songs, and his wish to express them effectively that he turned towards presenting them with ' *Abhinaya* ' further he added dancing, which he always considered the way to express the joy of souls.

#### **The dance: An Infinite Voyage of Creation:**

Dance was not part of his education but his love for dance developed through the time. His first introduction to dance was *baul*-dancing of Vaishnav poets, called Bauls. He was highly appreciative of their *Vashanavism* concept of love and the 'sufi' style of presentation of their emotions in which ' *manush* ' the human being, adores his god as lover. In one of his songs, he says- "Pagla hawar badur dine, Pagol aamar mon jege othe. . ." means; these clouds are flowing here and there like mad uncontrolled stream of wind, and it takes my heart away with them as I am madly in love with my beloved. In 1924-25, he sent Santidev to Jaidev Fakeer to learn some basic *baul* movements. The first *rabindra-gaan* he choreographed in *Baul* style was, 'where I have been called at this time, to the tune of Falgun's last melody in her tired hours' (Banerjee 76). From starting with *Baul* Tagore explored many folk-styles in order to employ them in his songs. Tagore's visit to Gujarat in 1923 opened the door for folk dance *Garba* and resulted in the form of musical play, *Shesh Varshan* in 1925. In 1930-31 Santidev was sent to the Birbhum to learn the *Jari* and *Raybenshe* forms and staged *Naveen*. He says that it was ". . . an amulghum of Raybenshe and Jari . . . Tagore was very much enthusiastic and for the repeat performance of *Naveen*, increased the dance numbers" (Ibid 76).

Indian classical dances have a long glorious history from Vedic period and a long painful period of defaming as well. India has history of invasions, consequently it has damaged the glorious Indian culture to some extent and left the impressions of other cultures on Indian culture as well, the field of dance is one of them. During Mughal Dynasty; owing to their orthodox beliefs in religion, dancing in front of idols was banned as they considered it as 'immoral'. The only dance that was pampered and patronized by them was 'Kathak' and this sheltering of Kathak actually defamed it and labeled as ' *kotha-dance* ' or ' *bai-ji* ' dance and as ' *sadir kacheri* ' because of performing in Mughal courts. Here in south, respected families turned down their involvement from temple dancing and the system was shifted into the hands of rural community. These temple dancers were called *devdasi*-s. As the dance was shifted to the uncultured people; it started to lose its prestigious glory and female dancers were being used for carnal pleasures by the priests, influential people and patrons, they used to give them livelihood in return. The societal performances of *devdasi*-s were organized by their patrons ". . . who maintained the dancing girls (as concubines) and their bands of musicians" (*The Hindu Temple Dancer: Prostitute or Nun?* 74). This corruption earned bad name for temple dancing and people started to take it as legalized prostitution in the society. During the early phase of the East India company rule in India, the

travelogues by numerous British personnel invariably reported performance carried out by what they called the “nautch girls” (Mukherjee 85).



*Fig 1 nautch girls or Devdasi-s*

*(Image is taken from Google image, titled as Seeing beyond Sadir)*

The efforts for saving the dance art “*nritya*” were being ignited in all over the India in 1911 when anti-nautch bill was passed. Rabindranath Tagore took the first step on the education level when he introduced dance in the syllabus of ‘Shantiniketan’ in 1917. Then poet Narayan Menon Vallathol started, institutions for Kathakali in 1930; and Rukmini Devi for Bharatnatyam in 1936. In 1938, Sadhna Bose started a dance school. Uday Shanker has a school in 1939; Madame Menaka established her school in 1941. It is apparent that Gurudev Tagore has taken first step towards recreating dance-prestige and opened the door for all the types of folk, classical, national and international dance forms in Shantiniketan.

***Manipuri dance:*** It was 1917 when Tagore visited to the King Virendrasingh Manikya and watched Manipuri performance. In 1919 Manipuri dance was in the school syllabus. Tagore found that the dance form and its thematic content have root similarity with Vaishnavism philosophy of Bengal. The soft and flowing movements of Manipuri dance were able to express the Bhakti rasa in performance. Some of his songs and the play *Nateer Puja* were choreographed under the guidance of Srimati in Manipuri form. Fig.1 explains its costumes and poses.



Fig. 2- Manipuri dance.

(Image is taken from website Wikipedia.org titled as Manipuri Dance- Wikipedia)

**Kathkali dance:** Tagore was in the search of some masculine moves for presenting Veer Rasa in his songs and plays. So Tagore sent Santidev to the Malyalam poet Vallathol Narayan Menon to learn the dance form in 1931. Another Kathkali guru Shankaran Nambodari taught them Ekaharya Abhinay. He was not hesitate to remove even the essential part of a particular form if do not met with his expressions. He restricted the eye movements and facial expression of Kathkali as they were not incorporating with the expressions of Rabindra-gaan. Fig.2 explains its costumes and poses.



Fig.3 Kathakali dance

(Image is taken from Google image titled as The Difference Between Kathakali and Kathak)

**Mohiniattam:** During early twentieth century Mohiniattam was performed as street dance. Poet Vallathol took responsibility to restore its previous glory in 1930. And he sent a well learned woman, Kalyani Amma to the Shantiniketan. She taught many folk dances like *Swaram*, *Kaikuttikali* and *Kalamuli* along with Mohiniattam to the Ashrama girls. Her efforts resulted in the form of choreography of Tagore song: “O the beauteous bride, you are the honeysuckle of the bower; Do receive congratulations from the delighted chamapaka flower” (Banerjee 92). Fig.3. explains its costumes and poses.



Fig 4 Mohiniattam dance

(Image is taken from Google images titled as Mohiniattam- History, Repertoire, Costume & Exponents)

**Bharatnatyam:** Bharatnatyam, previously known as Sadir has fought a long social and legal fight to earn its reputation back. In Shantiniketan *Bharatnatyam* made its entry when a male dancer Vasudevan performed in Shantiniketan in 1927. Tagore was highly impressed with the gestural *Abhinaya*. He encouraged his students to learn the form from Balasarawati. Bajrasen (in Parishodh in 1938); Prakriti (in Chandalika in 1939); and Utthio (in Shyama in 1939) were performed in Bharatnatyam style. Fig4 explains its costumes and poses.

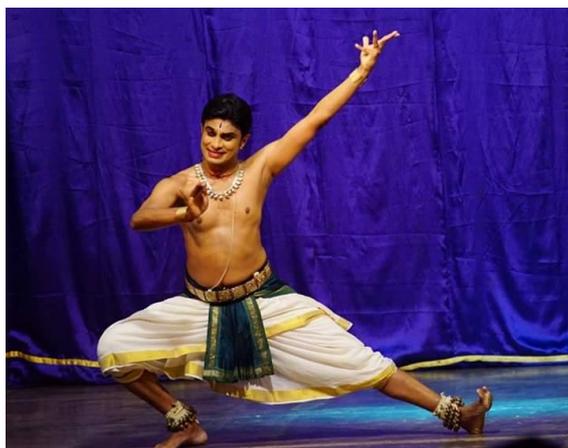


Fig 5 Bharatnatyam dance

**Kathak:** kathak was taught by a Manipuri dance student, Asha Ojha. She has played the role of Utthio with *Kathak* moves, in the Parishodh in 1938. Fig.5. explains its costumes and poses.



Fig 6 Kathak dance.

(Image is taken from a website [danceinspire.com](http://danceinspire.com), titled *Learn all About Kathak Dance*).

This is how all the forms that were available were tried and learnt in Ashram. The western influence came through the journey of England. Tagore was sent there to learn the English culture and understand the language. Where he watched Operas and took part in Ball room dancing as well. The effect of this journey was well received in *Valmiki Pratibha*. All this played a great role in enhancing his creativity and his hunger for more cultural diversity. In 1927, he made visits to the Java, Bali, Malaysia and Thailand. After returning from there he made sketches of the dance poses and costumes on the memory base. He was impressed with their dancing and finds the whole body was oscillating at once, showing flowers all around. "Pure European style is like the 'Ardha-narishwer'-half dance, half gymnastics. In it there leaps and jumps, merry go round, kicking out into the sky. Here in Japan, it is complete dance. In its decorative costumes there is no trace of nudity. Dance in other countries mix physical beauty with carnal attraction. Not a hint of libido was evident in any body movement here" (Banerjee 13). Here the intense desire of learning and knowing about different cultures clearly seems. His dance-movement was like a multicultural event.

### ***Rabindra-nritya or Tagore-dance:***

Tagore's songs (*Rabindra gaan*), his music (*Rabindra samgit*) and his dance (*Rabindra-nritya*) got the recognition with his name only. The biggest inspiration for this paper is to know the philosophy behind his creation of dance. How did he receive such a technical field and what made him so daring to play with age old established arts? These questions have met through the different answers. His strategy was very simple. Whatever that suits his song's *bhava*-s is 'in' and whatever does not is 'out'. For example he likes the subtle hand and feet movements of Manipuri dance and that dancers do not wear bells and do not strike the ground hard. He found these movements appropriate to present the theme of his baul sufi songs, whereas while picking some dance moves from Kathakali, he left the bold and well defined eyes movements and facial expressions; that are signature style of this dance forms. Utpal Banerjee compares his selection process of dance elements from different dance forms with Darwin's theory of 'Evolution' and names it as 'natural selection'. Banerjee mentions a possibility of applying Dartington Methodology while creating Tagore dance drama. Dartington Hall was a school of dance in UK, its one of authority figure was Elmhirst, with whom he "... set up a rural reconstruction, Sriniketan. In Dartington hall, Kurt Joos had designed nice arrangements to teach the dance choreography, music and stage arrangements for Ballets dance dramas. Banerjee mentioned in his book *Tagore's Mystique of Dance* that Pratimadevi, his daughter in law once attended the work-shop of planning a new dance drama in 1930 and she directed *Shishu Tirth* or *The Child* in 1931. Tagore himself attended operas in his early life and tried to apply it in some way to the staging of his initial plays; like *Valmiki Pratibha* and even acted. Researcher does not seem the possibility of following any one style or method completely as Tagore tried to learn from as much as possible mediums but did not truly and totally follow any of them and tried to create his own style.

Tagore dance journey can be divided in three phases and the margins of these phases are blurred and overlapped. The first phase was a 'curious' phase; this period was dedicated to his efforts of understanding and learning of as much dance forms as possible. His efforts to bring the dance arts in Ashram, is considered as a great support in sheltering and nurturing the forms at the time of renaissance in India. The second phase was the time when he was trying to create some of his own 'dance-moves', and they were much capable in conveying the '*bhava*-s' or emotions of his songs. This dance is called a '*Bhava-nritya*' by him, means 'a dance full of emotions'.



Fig 7 Tagore`s Bhav-nritya in Chitrangda.

(Image is taken from the book Tagore`s Mystique of Dance published by Niyogi Books).

Starting with the choreography of songs, Tagore slowly expanded his area of creation and he started to put dance on the songs in between the plays. Some of his early plays like *Pryaschitta* (1909), *Raja* (1910), and *Palguni* (1916) were danced with ‘spontaneous stylized movements, like “body swayed to the music”’ (Chakraverty 104). The third phase of his dance adventure that is highly creative part and resulted in the form of well choreographed and successfully presented five dance dramas or *Nritya-natya-s*; *Chitrangda*, *Chandalika*, *Shyama*, *Tasher Desh* and *Shaapmochan*. *Shaapmochan* was left half done by the poet. *Tasher Desh* was a sarcastic play on the socio-political system. The other three dance dramas *Chitrangda*, *Chandalika* and *Shyama*, are considered as his master-pieces works with a unique story line that trip through the human weaknesses, ego, pride, crimes, justice and repentance; and having the messages of religion, social well fare, emancipation of women and end in the search of salvation through the understanding of humanly love. These works were appreciated every time they were performed and give the actors complete ease to show their full competence of acting and dancing. Even today they are welcome choice for presenting as Tagore`s works.



Fig 8. A scene from Chitrangda, staged in Tagore`s life time.

(Image is taken from the book Tagore`s Mystique of Dance published by Niyogi Books).

Still the hybrid way of constructing put the question that in which category it should be performed? Tagore's dance speaks the language of 'universalism'. Some call it a 'modern dance', some 'oriental dance', some like to call it 'new-dance', Tagore lovers call it, 'Tagorean dance'/ 'Rabindra Natiya' or 'Rabindrik Nritya' or 'Shantiniketan atyle'. When Tagore was busy in thinking/re-thinking; creating/re-creating and improving his style; there was a dancer, Uday Shanker who also was working on creative dancing. His style called 'Contemporary style'.



Fig 9 Uday Shanker's Contemporary style

(Image is taken from google images, titled as Uday Shanker Indian Dancer).

Some critics put Rabindranath Tagore in the category of 'contemporary style', but there were countable differences in Uday Shanker's way of working and Tagore's methodology. Uday Shanker truly followed 'no limits' in adapting the new ways and ideas; he also worked through many cultural and continental dance art and used multiple animate inanimate props and stories. He even acted on Tagore's dance dramas. Tagore designed the form to present his songs and plays and even designed the backdrop of the stage. Tagore's 'limitless' creations follow the limitations for he did not want to disturb the '*Bhava*' and philosophy of his songs and plays. The expressionist Tagore wanted the rights of equality and freedom of expression for everyone. Dependent India was struggling with the age old bad rituals like child marriage, Sati custom, cast discrimination and no education for women. He raised the voice against these inhuman practices through the medium of literature and art. His plays like, *Malini* and *Chandalika* put up with the problem of cast discrimination whereas *Chitrangda* talks about equality for women. Other than dance dramas he wrote many stories, and novels that deal with these problems and their consequences.

If his dance art is examined on the scale of a 'pure dance' or '*nritya*', then one has to find the answers for some of obvious questions. As did he ever read '*Natya-shastra*' which is universally accepted legend on dramatics? Did he know the theory of *Rasa*-s, *Bhava*-s and *Abhinay*? There is no such evidence that he has read *Natya-shastra* but in his childhood he was taught Sanskrit by some of very efficient scholars. During his journey of Java in one of his letter "he talks about the *abhinaya* dimensions of dance but also devotes a long section to what he calls *visuddha* or pure dance with no meaning attached to it" (Roy 104). It affirms that he has knowledge about *abhinaya* in his terms as '*Bhava*' and '*Visuddha nritya*'. So he knows the very basic structural elements a dance should have. Ghose says, "The primary appeal of dance is through beautiful movements of the body and not through the representation. It finds joy in following the rhythm" (Roy 105). It even clarifies the definition of dance of Tagore. However his efforts resulted a great deal of discussion of arts and its revivalism

and dance came to him, as Aishika Chakraborty says, “as a corollary to his myriad artistic-kinesthetic adventures” (Dance and Critics: Reviewing Tagore 3). Tagore’s creations of dance drama

### ***Tagore Dance and Its After Developments***

It has been discussed before that how he took inspirations from Indian dances; folk or classics, to present his songs or plays. Pratima Devi mentions in her article “The Dance in India”, that ‘From our studies a new art is evolving; a synthesis of all the forms handed down by tradition’ (227). She calls it ‘a new art’, she meant to say ‘a new dance form’ like many others; further she says it ‘a synthesis of all the forms’ (?).

Dance is considered as ‘*nritya-sadhna*’ in India. It is an art that demands six to seven years of intense learning and lifelong dedication for commanding through hard practice. Though they are considered as ‘soul’s expressions’ still they need to be studied as they have a proper history and a methodology to learn and the rules to follow. If Tagore-dance must be taken as ‘a form’, it must have a proper structure or ‘a shape’. Unfortunately there is no any particular lessons and methodology to learn or study Rabindra Nritya; recommended by, written by or published by Tagore in his life time. Critics vary on his dance art. And after him his dance art was tried, tested and applied in the different ways by the different people. People want to learn his form, and one may ask, ‘which form’? How it can be learnt without a proper step by step teachings or grammar? In traditional dance education a student learns all the ‘fixed’ basics for every emotions, expressions and possible situation. Accordingly they put their creativity in choreography and try to create new aesthetic. Pratima proclaims that its a ‘new art’ that is meant to be ‘handed down the tradition’, but the history of Tagore’s continual efforts and changes in the choreography do indicate that the process of ‘improvisation’, as Santidev Ghose calls it, was not finished till the end of his life. So the indefinite assumptions leave the ‘art’ free to ‘be scrutinized’ or to ‘be adored’, to ‘be explored’ or to ‘be experimented’ by the dancers, critics and scholars after him. This flaw became the blessings in disguise for the new learners and they find profound freedom to express themselves on the name of Tagore Dance.

After Tagore his philosophy is deeply studied by some group of scholars to understand his idea behind his dance creation. The famous dance Guru Gopinath finds that his *Bhava-nritya* has the elements of a complete dance and has the potential to be called a ‘classical dance’. His assumption was supported by the *Ashram* girls who were the very first disciples of Tagore and were taught the *bhava nritya* by Tagore himself and were the members of Tagore’s family. They were Amita Sen, Sukruti Chakraworthy, Rama Chakraworthy, Nandita Kripalani and Srimati Thakur. Guru Gopinath discussed this theory further with Guru Jaydeva Chaterjee and his disciple Guru Valmiki Banerjee. Guru Valmiki Banerjee has been researching the elements of *bhava-nritya* and arranging them since last sixty years of his age. He tried to give it a proper shape like a classical dance with a salutation to the nature and rearranged hand, foot and body movements in a sequential order to be learnt. The team of well reputed Guru-s baptized this dance art as ‘Rabindranatyam’. Rabindranatyam can be a classical dance, it is yet to be decided but the efforts made by the team and the work that is done with so much dedication; is worth to be recognized.



Fig 10. Rabindranatyam by Valmiki Banerjee

(Image is taken from Rabindranatyam published by Raasvrunda ®)

Another name should be of a mother-daughter duo, Manjusri chiki sirkar and his daughter Ranjabati Sirkar who studied his philosophy behind his creation deeply and the efforts came in the form of 'Nava-nritya'. They performed in India and out of India as well and got much appreciation for their experimental techniques. They, like Guru Valmiki, also have designed a proper structure for the form. And there are many more people who have been trying to understand the form. Here it is necessary to know how these works have been receiving in Tagore's home land. Manjusri's work, as many other's; did not get the appreciation in Shantiniketan. "Her early experimental dash with Tagorean eclecticism met with disapproval. In 1954, Manjusri was cautioned by Nandita Kripalani, the granddaughter of Tagore and the chairperson of Sangeet Natak Academy, not to innovate further upon his dance. 'after the death of *dadamoshai* (grandfather)', Kripalani said, 'it was an end itself'" (Dance Matters `94). Still the highly creative Tagore's genre has always been magnetizing people to explore for more.



Fig 11. Navnritya by Manjusri, Ranjabati Sirkar.

(Image is taken from the book *A Dancer and Her World* by Thema publication)

As many minds, so there are as many views and as many confusions as well. Sometimes these different schools of thoughts present foggy views for his philosophy that do not make any good for the art. A dancer and a critic Mandakranta Bose, calls Tagore dance a "hybrid performance genre" and defends it saying, "As an example of creative rethinking Tagore's work on dance is particularly remarkable, for, by departing in style and content

from established practice, it liberated dance from the formulate choreography and narratives of Classical Indian Dance and thereby opened public consciousness to a new aesthetics” (Indian Modernity and Tagore’s Dance). Apart from all the differences and confusions in philosophy of Tagore dance, it is a field of choice for the dancers to perform.

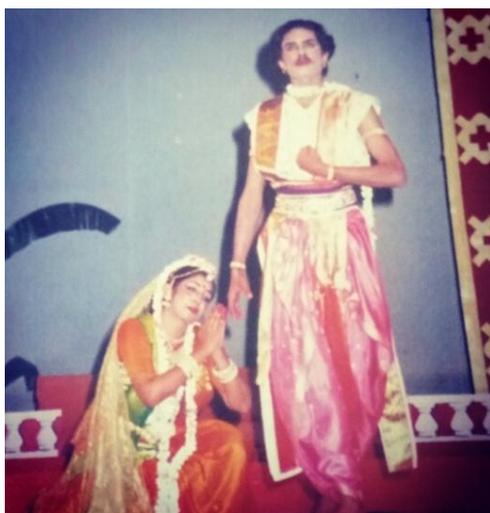
The dancers from different classical fields adopt the story of his plays and put the *rabindra-gaan* in between but they dance with their own style and follow the dress style of their own. For example there is a Kuchipudi dancer Amrita Lahiri who performed Tagore’s Chitra; followed a particular method to adopt his play. She emphasized on “interanalized charcter development-satvika abhinaya- rather than costume-aharya-abhinaya. Amrita also uses the technique of vachika abhinaya-or spoken dialogues which is the trademark of Kuchipudi style”. She has used dialogues in English and Bengali.



*Fig 12. Amrita in a pose of Chitra in Kuchipudi style.*

*(Image is taken from a PDF published on the website amritalahiri.com)*

There is another Kuchipudi dancer Srimayi Vempati, who is a teacher at Kuchipudi art academy Chennai; also performed one of his dance dramas, *Chandalika* in Kuchipudi Style. In another example, Bharatnatyam dancer Dr. Rohitha Eswer performed Tagore’s dance drama *Shyama*, in 2012 with the techniques of Rabindranatyam under the banner of Raasvrunda.



*Fig 13 Shyama; staged by Dr. Rohitha in rabindranatyam.*

*(Image is taken from Rabindranatyam published by Raasvrunda ®)*

Here one more example deserves to be quoted; a Bharatnatyam dancer Madhubani Chatterjee created a dance drama on Tagore's Bengali play, *Rakhtakerobi* or *Red Oleanders* under the organization, Jahnvi Center of Performing Arts, in 2012. She kept dialogues in English, songs in Bengali and has mingled different dances for character painting according to the *bhava*-s. According to a news report, published in *The Hindu*; she used Bharatnatyam moves to define the character of heroine, Kalaripayattu and some acrobatic moves for fighting scene and Kathakali costume to present the mysterious character of the King in the play.



Fig 14. *Red Oleanders* by Madhubani Chatterjee.

(Image is taken from the article published in *The Hindu*)

These are a very few examples of creating Tagore's dance dramas by new dance scholars and the art is well explored by contemporary dancers as well.

### Methodology/Purpose

The purpose of the research is to learn about Tagore's artistic talents and the soul efforts that has pushed the boundaries of a nation in order to shaping a medium of expression that is easy to understand for everyone and to study his efforts for rejuvenating and establishing Indian dance arts. The study explores *Rabindra Nritya* on the base of expressions, body movements and above all the precious messages he interweaved for the wellness of humanity.

To study a dance form is challenging when it does not have a particular 'form'. The basic notion for this paper came through a reading that is still continue, for my doctoral research; which is based on Rabindranath Tagore's dance dramas. For this study researcher went through online survey, personal interactions, data collections and the process of in-depth readings and comparative analysis. Primary information was received through the reading, discussions, and interactions with renowned dancers and expert academicians on the subject. Secondary information is gathered through analysis and reviewing of information available in journals, news reports, research papers, articles and online publications. Ancient literature on dance manuals like *Natya Shastra* and related comparative and critical works of other authors, were studied in depth to understand the dance basics.

### Conclusion

Rabindranath Tagore is a widely read noble winner international poet and his dance style is a territory, full of possibility and provides many aspects for the researchers to be explored. *Rabindra Nritya* is very creative field which is full of possibilities and still is less studied. Present paper suggests a specific line of thoughts that has the glimpse of many probable assumptions could be taken for exploration in the research works by upcoming scholars.

Tagore-dance is a product of scrupulous study; of different cultures and expressions across the world and came into the existence through multiple trials and revisions. Expressionist Tagore concentrated on the *bhava* part of dance; as he used to think that it was easy to convey and grasp as well for the common people. In my opinion, 'The dance that Tagore has created in his life time, is loosely weaved or assembled a flexible structure which has the essence of different cultures and yet complete in itself. It has its own texture to feel and give a dancer freedom to express, explore and experiment'. This work of shaping a medium of expression under his humanly values was left unfinished due to unfortunate incident of his death but it is worth to work on.

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