



Resurgence of Odissi Dance Tradition in the 20th Century

Kunjalata Mishra

Research Scholar, Odissi Dance
Faculty of Performing Arts
Mewar University, Gangrar

Under Guidance

Prof. (Dr) Manoj Kumar Behera

Research Guide
Department of Fine Arts
Mewar University Chittaurgarh

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ABSTRACT

Around Odisha, dance became a spiritual activity around the tenth century AD. By the eleventh century AD, Devadasis started working at the Jagannath temple thanks to Chodagangadeva's support. Leading to formation of the mahari dance tradition, named after the temple dancers known as maharis. Over nearly nine centuries, the tradition thrived, marked by dance rituals performed by maharis and Gotipuas (boy dancers impersonating girls), showcasing its enduring vitality. However, by the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this tradition faced decline. It was in the 1950s that a group of dance practitioners and scholars, including Mayadhar Rout, D.N. Patnaik, Debaprasad Das, Kelucharan Mohapatra, Guru Panjaj Charan Das, and Kalicharan Patnaik took proactive steps to reconstruct Odissi dance. Notably, figures like Important roles in this resurrection attempt were played by Kalakshetra-trained Sanjukta Panigrahi, Minati Mishra, and Guru Mayadhar Rout. Indrani Rehman advanced the international recognition of Odissi by becoming the first dancer to showcase it outside India. Today's Odissi dance recitals are a culmination of efforts to reconstruct the tradition, drawing from fragments of the mahari,

Gotipua, and Chhau martial arts traditions.

The 20th century is often described as a period of cultural resurgence, particularly evident in various dance forms across India. Many dance forms, previously obscure or confined to temples and royal courts, experienced a revival during this time. There was a notable societal acceptance of dances and their performers, marking a significant shift.

Artists, academics, and fans of dance and music made a concerted effort to investigate the origins and development of these art forms throughout this time. They did so with a sense of pride and a deep appreciation for the rich cultural heritage they inherited.

Among the classical dance forms in India, Odissi stands out as a prominent example. Originally emerging as a local variation in Odisha, Odissi has now firmly cemented its presence not just in the Indian dance scene but also on the international front. Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, a renowned dance expert, suggests that Odissi may be regarded as the earliest classical Indian dance style based on archaeological evidence. [1]

A historical significance Odissi is undeniable, as evidenced by references even in ancient texts like the Natya Shastra, 'Odra Magadhi' is mentioned as one of the four regional dances. This dance genre skillfully incorporated aspects from both the secular and the religious, functioning as a means of professional entertainment. In the 10th century AD, Odissi dance took on a devotional aspect in Orissa, becoming a means to honor Hindu deities in temple rituals. Known as Mahari Naach, this temple dance tradition faced condemnation from British colonial authorities and local elites due to its association with prostitution, leading to its suppression during the British Raj in the 19th century.[2]

Meanwhile, in the 16th century, another lineage of Odissi dance emerged with The Bharti monument in Eastern India is renowned for its association with the Gotipua custom. As part of this custom, adolescent guys would assume the roles of girls at public dance shows. In contrast to Mahari Naach, Gotipua dance managed to evade colonial scrutiny and continued to exist until the early 20th century, with knowledge being transmitted from teachers to committed young boys.

However, due to a lack of patronage, The Gotipua tradition in Orissa encountered difficulties, and economic constraints compelled young Gotipuas to explore new opportunities, such as joining jatra or traveling theatre groups. As a result, Odissi dancing started moving from the temple to the stage. [3]

Since the early twentieth century, Odissi dance has undergone a remarkable transformation, evolving from a nearly forgotten relic of history into one of the most esteemed classical dance forms—a true testament to cultural revival in art history. Classical Odissi dance, as we know it today, is a structure that emerged about 60 years ago, built upon meager foundations. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, Odissi dance remained primarily an oral tradition, preserved by semi-literate individuals who were unaware. Among the current Sanskrit writings about dancing.[4] As a result, the body motions, stances, and hand gestures were present in a less concentrated and diminished manner, without the precise technical language that usually characterizes a dance style.

In the 1930s, a distinct cultural environment developed in Odisha. With the decline of the Mahari Naach tradition, concert dances developed in native forms started to merge with the principles of Indian nationalism. Odissi dance emerged as a unique form of expression for the stage, drawing inspiration from influential choreographers such as Uday Sankar, a prominent figure in modern Indian dance, and Rukmini Devi, a pioneer of classical Bharatnatyam.

During the early 1940s, the dance originating from Odisha was commonly known as oriental dance. Classical dance performances at that time typically lasted for ten to fifteen minutes, featuring basic movements and music. The restructuring of Odissi dance was spearheaded by both scholars and practitioners. Many of these practitioners hailed from humble backgrounds and were not born into established dance traditions.[5] However, through their talent, keen observation, assimilation, and relentless dedication, they revitalized the art form and evolved into true Gurus.

For many dancers, the journey from temples and royal courts to the proscenium stage symbolized the transition of Odissi dance from a declining tradition to a thriving art form finding a new home in theaters. The transformation of Odissi, incorporating elements from both the Mahari and Gotipua traditions, began in the theaters of Orissa in the crucial decade of the forties.

The influential open-air drama groups, known for their performances of Jatra or enactments of Ram/Rasa/Krishna leela, played a pivotal role in shaping Odissi's history.[6] Accounts of prominent figures like Pankaj Charan Das, Mayadhar Rout, Kelucharan Mohapatra, and Debaprasad Das frequently emphasize their early affinity with these theatrical troupes or local akhadas. Figures like Mohan Sundar Goswami and Kalicharan Patnaik managed Ras Leela troupes, where renowned artists such as Kelucharan Mohapatra and Mayadhar Rout refined their talents. In 1939/40, Kalicharan founded Orissa Theaters, leading a transformative movement in contemporary Odishan culture. theater Featuring

immovable proscenium stages, advanced lighting and decorations, and enhanced levels of acting proficiency. Subsequently, Annapurna Theatres and New Theatres also adopted this practice, successfully drawing highly skilled individuals in the fields of music and dance. Annapurna Theatre notably featured young girls from theater communities in dance performances, marking a significant step in the evolution of Odissi on stage.[6]

In the late 1930s and late 1940s, Guru Pankaj Charan Das, nurtured and trained by Mahari Harapriya, immersed himself in the world of dance and music. Drifting from one jatra (folk theatre) to another, he eventually found his place with the Annapurna Theatre Company. In 1944, Kelucharan Mohapatra and Mayadhar Rout, the second and third dancers respectively, were part of Kavichandra Kalicharan Patnaik's Orissa Theatre. During this period, Mayadhar Rout was studying Dakkhini Dance under The individual's name is Yudhistira Mahapatra. Mayadhar became a member of the Annapurna Theatre in Cuttack in 1947. At that point, the word "Odissi Dance" had become widely recognized and well-liked. The user's text is "[7]". The term "Orissi" was introduced by Kavichandra Kalicharan Patnaik in 1948, derived from "Odra Magadhi". Since then, it has been employed to denote both the dance and music of the region. In 1949, Kelucharan Mahapatra became a member of the Annapurna Theatre. Around the same time, a young Brahmin girl called Sanjukta Mishra received permission from her parents to start her dancing instruction. Deba Prasad Das became a member of the Annapurna Theatre in 1950, serving as the fourth and last principal guru. [8]

Guru Mahadev Rout, a prominent figure in the field of Odissi, was trained by the acclaimed Chandrasekhara Patnaik. He later traveled to Cuttack, where he provided guidance and support to aspiring dancers. Collaborating with the renowned actor-director-scholar of Jatras, Sri Dhiren Dash, he embarked on choreographing Odissi for stage performances, laying the groundwork for its revival.[9]

In the midst of burgeoning public interest, Annapurna Theatre emerged as a pivotal venue for the modernization of Odissi dance. A pivotal moment in Odissi's evolution transpired Pankaj Charan Das performed the Mohini-Bhasmasura dance, taking on the part of Bhasmasura, while Kelucharan Mahapatra played Mahadev and Laxmipriya, the wife of Kelucharan Mahapatra, portrayed Mohini. Mayadhar Rout depicted Vishnu Narayan. Kelucharan Mahapatra's rendition of Mohini is characterized by a straightforward and engaging ten-beat rhythm. The etched its name in history, catapulting the Kelucharan-Laxmipriya duo to prominence. This acclaim propelled Kelucharan Mahapatra onto an international stage, garnering him widespread recognition.[10]

Pankaj Charan Das, driven by his creative vision, persevered in reconstructing a refined dance form state, Utilizing the conventional techniques of Maharis. He named it Orissi (or Odissi), separating both the dance style and himself from the negative connotations connected with the Maharis.

Guru Deba Prasad Das, despite being schooled in the Gotipua style, strongly pushed for the conservation of "tradition," which he linked to the "Tantric" nature of the style and the heritage of the Maharis.[11] He explicitly stated a predilection for Odia lyrics over Sanskrit ones in abhinaya performances. Currently, Guru Kelucharan's dancing style has gained the highest level of popularity and recognition in the present day.

In the late 1940s, adolescent females belonging to high social classes initiated a departure from conventional norms. Enthralled and motivated by dance sequences, particularly the elegant movements of Laxmipriya, an increasing number of girls from privileged families began to adopt the dance style, disregarding the traditional unfavorable perceptions associated with it. Included in the group were notable individuals in the field of Odissi dance, including Sanjukta Mishra (later Panigrahi), who was the first to dedicate her entire career to Odissi, Minati Das (after Mishra), Jayanti Ghosh, Priyambada Mohanty (later Hizmadi), and Kukum Das (later Mohanty).[12]

Consequently, the inception of a novel dancing style in Odisha was initiated. During this time frame, Guru Dayal Sharma, a follower of Uday Shankar, traveled to Odisha with his group of performers. Having been impressed by Kelucharan Mohapatra, he engaged in a discussion with him and imparted some valuable choreographic insights. Additionally, he introduced the utilization of Shastric Mudras at the Annapurna Theatre. Guru Kelucharan's expertise in Shastric hasta abhinaya enabled him to discover the neglected elements of Odisha's mudras, which are a form of expressive gestural language. Subsequently, he extensively studied neglected Odishan writings, images on temple walls, and old Sanskrit texts on dance, such as Abhinaya Darpana and Natya Shastra. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, Sanjukta Panigrahi and Minati Mishra, who were young students at Rukmini Devi's Kalakshetra school near Madras, introduced these texts to him.[13] They were on summer holidays from their training in Bharatanatyam, the reconstructed classical dance form of Tamil Nadu.

As per D.N. Patnaik, the lack of professional mentors led to the rise of dance instructors and performers with theater backgrounds who started teaching in cultural organizations. Guru Pankaj Charan Das taught dance at Utkal Sangeet Samaj in Cuttack, and Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra taught at Kala Vikas Kendra

in Cuttack. Sri Mayadhar Rout taught at Sangeet Parishad in Puri, Guru Deba Prasad Das taught at National Music Association, and Sri Batakrisna Sen started teaching at Smruti Kala Mandap.

By 1950, dance had become an essential part of the growing theatrical movement in Odisha. Odissi began to grow and establish its unique characteristics, with Cuttack emerging as a center of cultural activity and changing perspectives on dance. The arts training facility, Kala Vikas Kendra, was founded in 1952 and received assistance from Babulal Doshi. It played a vital role in the standardization of Odissi dance and music training. Esteemed individuals such as Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra and Guru Mayadhar Rout were involved with the center at different times. Notably, the initial three pupils of the Kendra included Sadhana Bose (renowned for her performances in Raj Nartaki and other films) and her cousin Basanti Bose.[14]

Odissi dance was encouraged by organizations such as Utkal Sangeet Samaj. The annual Kumar Utsav celebration commenced in Cuttack in 1952. In 1954, Sanjukta Panigrahi, then known as Sanjukta Mishra, mesmerized audiences with Kelucharan Mohapatra's accompaniment. The performance by Priyambada Mohanty in New Delhi Youth Festival in November 1954 caught national attention, sparking a resurgence of interest. In 1956, Odissi was recognized as a separate dance form at the Inter-University Youth Festival, where Priyambada Mohanty won first prize for Lucknow University. In 1957, in response to Rukmini Devi's rejection of Odissi, esteemed gurus and scholars such as Pankaj Charan Das and Mayadhar Rout made a solemn commitment to restore and systematize the Odissi dance form.[15]

Mayadhar Rout, a significant character in the resurgence of Odissi, was a multifaceted dancer who initially acquired skills in Gotipua dance from his elder brother Harihar and subsequently studied Odissi under the tutelage of Pankaj Charan Das. In 1955, he expanded his education at Kalakshetra, where he pursued advanced studies in Bharatanatyam under the tutelage of Rukmini Devi Arundale, and Kathakali under the guidance of T.K. Chandu Paniker. The revivalists found the knowledge and experience he gained from Bharatanatyam and Kathakali to be extremely beneficial in recreating Odissi. [16]

Rout played a pivotal role in reforming Odissi by applying the classical ideas he had mastered at Kalakshetra. He taught the gurus participating in the revival about Mudra Viniyoga, which is the use of hand gestures, and Sanchari Bhava abhinaya, which is the expression of emotions through movement. However, Guru Pankaj Charan Das was not included in this teaching. He played a crucial role in the

Jayantika initiative and made substantial contributions to the development of the repertoire of contemporary Odissi dance as it is currently performed. His notable contributions include of Sanchari Bhava Abhinaya and Mudra Viniyoga. In 1961, Rout choreographed Ashtapadis from the Gita Govinda, including "Pasyati Disidisi," "Priye Carushila," and "Chandana Charchita." At the time these choreographies were introduced, Odisha was not yet equipped to handle the poetic and romantic themes of the Gita Govinda or the Sringara Rasa. In 1967, Guru Mayadhar Rout moved to Delhi and became a member of the Sree Ram Bharatiya Kala Kendra. Starting in 1970, he persistently created choreography for dance plays, pure dance pieces, and particularly, the Ashtapadis, such as "Sakhi he," "Nindati Chandana," and "Yahi Madhava.[17]. In addition, he orchestrated several Mangala Charanas and Pallavis, supervised the production of Odia feature films, and composed scripts for dance dramas in Odia. He has received prestigious awards such as the "Natya Shiromani" from the Center for Indian Classical Dances, the Orissa Sangeet Natak Academy Award in 1979, and the Sangeet Natak Academy Award in 1986.

Madhumita Rout, his daughter, continues his legacy in the field of Odissi dance. Some of his students who have achieved the status of gurus are Hare Krishna Behera, Surendra Nath Jena, Ramani Ranjan Jena, and Dibakar Khuntia. The list of notable pupils includes Kum Kum Das, Sonal Mansingh, Alik Panikar, Ranjana Gauhar, Kiran Segal, Geeta Mahalik, Anne Marie Gaston, and numerous others.

Minati Das (Mishra) and Sanjukta Mishra (Panigrahi) underwent tuition at Kalakshetra, hence enhancing the Odissi legacy. Scholar Kalicharan Patnaik conducted theoretical research to define precise parameters for the Odissi style based on the norms of Natya Shastra. He expressed disapproval towards incorporating components from the South. At the 1958 All India Dance Seminar in New Delhi, he showcased his research findings. During the event, Jayanti Ghosh performed Odissi dance, which was a significant moment in the history of this dance style. [18]

In the late 1950s and 1960s, Odissi experienced growth and was standardized into its contemporary form. The dance was polished and imbued with Sanskrit influence, while clothing and jewels were made uniform. The Puspa Chuda hairstyle, which consists of a bun encircled by a pith circle and tahia, was created in 1959. The unique silver Bengapatia belt was initially donned by Sanjukta Panigrahi in 1963. This ornament corresponds precisely to the description of Rekamukha as outlined in the Abhinaya Chandrika.

A consensus was achieved on the syllables (Bols) composed by Balbhadra Sahu and Agadhu Moharana, and the choreography by Kelucharan Mohapatra and Pankaj Charan Das, during the Jayantika meetings conducted either in the Raghunath temple in Telenga Bazar, Cuttack, or in the living room of Loknath Mishra. The dance commenced with the presentation of flower tributes to Lord Jagannath, the principal deity of Odisha, and the rendering of respectful greetings to Bhumidevi in accordance with the Mahari custom.

The Pallavi, once referred to as Tarijhom, experienced substantial transformation. Pallavi is a dance performance that visually represents a musical composition. It incorporates specific musical notes and rhythmic syllables in a particular raga, and is the main focus of an Odissi presentation.

The initial Pallavis, created by Balakrishna Das, such as the Basant Pallavi, were derived from melodies of traditional Odissi poetry and subsequently accompanied by highly expressive works by Bhubaneswar Mishra, as well as other composers like Shyama Sundar Kar. These compositions emphasized lasya (graceful, feminine) and tribhanga (triple-bend) poses, which are abundantly used within this article. [19]

Abhinaya, the act of conveying the meaning of lyrics via facial expressions and hand gestures, was a particular skill of the Gotipuas. They received a valuable legacy of poetry from medieval poets such as Kavisurya Baladev Rath. known for his musicality, Gopal Krishna Patnaik for his poetic depth, and Banamali for his devotional fervor.

The integration of the Gita Govinda commenced with the dissemination of its songs via the theatrical production "Jayadeva" by the deceased Kabichandra Kalicharan Patnaik. Odissi is often seen as identical with the Gita Govinda due to its suitability as a medium and the skillful choreography by Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. The Gita Govinda saw increased usage as non-Oriya students began learning Odissi.

The last dance performance is the Mokshya Nata, which represents the process of being reunited with the ultimate reality. The dance, which is in harmony with this particular concept, is referred to as Mokshya Nata and consistently serves as the final performance. It consists of pure nritya (pure dance) and showcases typical Odissi variations, utilizing intricate rhythmic patterns like tala pahapata and Sariman at varying tempos.[20]

The introduction of "batu" in Odissi dance following the mangalacharan caused a dispute among the Gurus. Some individuals understood it as originating from the term "vadu," which means bondage, in relation to the mahari, while others linked it to the Batuka Bhairava cult, known for its statuesque stances resembling temple sculptures. "Batu" is a modified iteration of the "thei Ghara nata" from the Gotipua lineage, leading to discussions on its classification as thei, thai, or sthai nata, or the possibility of giving it an entirely new designation such as "Batunata." Pankaj Charan Das and Debaprasad Das individually created their own interpretations, reflecting their stylistic preferences. Pankaj Charan, deeply rooted in the mahari tradition with Vaishnava bhakti links, viewed "batu" as a ritualistic performance echoing Ganapati Vandana, later replaced by Sankaracharya's Jagannathastaka. Debaprasad Das, The performer, who is associated with the Akhada tradition and Sakhinata of South Odisha, chose to perform the "Tandava nrutyakari Gajanana" from the Prahallada nataka repertoire as part of the mangalacharana. Despite their differences, most dancers sought to connect Odissi dance to the Jagannath temple, performing jagannathstaka in mangalacharana before dedicating to Shiva and transitioning to Tai and Pallavi.

Jayantika made substantial contributions to the revitalization of Odissi dance, which proved timely and advantageous for the state. Regrettably, Pankaj Charan's departure led to the denial of a lyrical, feminine style of Odissi dance that was deeply connected to the Mahari tradition, which was sought after by the revivalists. Regrettably, the omission of maharis, who are possible early-stage dance instructors, as pointed out by Frederique Marglin and Ratna Roy, was unfortunate. Today's Odissi dance recitals are a result of a meticulous rebuilding process that incorporates elements from the mahari legacy, Gotipua lineage, Chhau martial art, as well as inspiration from temple sculptures and visual imagery. The beginnings of Odissi was influenced by the mahari and Gotipua systems, but its present form was mostly shaped by the Rasa Leela and Jatra traditions of the early 20th century. Singhari Syamasundar Kar and Sri Durlav Chandra Singh deserve acknowledgment for their active involvement in training the upcoming generation of dancers and musicians. [21,22]

Guru Kelucharan delivered numerous performances both in India and abroad, participating in festivals like The Indian festivals celebrated in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan. His dance performances, whether in Nritya or Abhinaya, continuously upheld an exceptional level of quality and had a profound impact on the audiences. The actor's depiction of Sanchari Bhabas was creative, and his contribution on the pakhwaj instrument enhanced the dancing performance. His dance was visually appealing, drawing inspiration from sculptures and patta paintings. Kelucharan enhanced the Odissi

dance form with his distinctive creativity and vision, which is clearly obvious in the modern repertoire where his distinct style is easily recognizable. His Pallavis and Astapadis have achieved the status of timeless masterpieces, reflecting sophistication, beauty, and an overarching aesthetic that define his hallmark. His contribution to Odissi is exceptional and enduring. Until his passing on April 7, 2004, Kelucharan continued his work at his institution, Srjan, founded in 1994. With his son Ratikanta actively involved in performance, teaching, choreography, and significant dance programs, he is following in his father's footsteps, the legacy of this Odissi legend lives on.

Guru Debaprasad Das exhibited a strong inclination towards southern forms, particularly in his predilection for waist motions associated with Sakhi nata and Gotipua nata. He was considered the most traditional among the three gurus.

He advocated for the use of waist swings, emphasizing their local origin and uniqueness to Odissi, termed as Samachhinna Udvahita. His abhinayas strictly adhered to the Bhavas of the lyrics, devoid of Sancharis, and he favored Odia lyrics over Sanskrit ones. His style reflected aspects of Odissi practiced in the forties and fifties, characterized by Concise, assertive, and unadorned statements, accompanied by straightforward yet significant actions and focused, intense emotions. Although he is well admired for these attributes, unwavering traditionalist stance earned him labels of conservatism.[23] However, his dedication to authenticity led him to explore motifs from Odishan folk and tribal performing arts, ensuring Odissi remained true to its roots and distinct from tourist-centric Various styles. Debaprasad's Odissi style was heavily influenced by Gotipua, a traditional dance form. Some of his early students, like Vijayalaxmi Mohanty, began their training as skilled Bandha Nritya dancers. His dance drama "Manini" was one of the early examples in this genre, specifically designed for the National Music Association.

Guru Surendranath Jena has developed a unique form of Odissi dance that focuses on the Alasa, or gentle lethargy, element. This style has gained a small but significant following outside of Odisha. Pratibha Jena, his daughter, is recognized as the most prominent exponent of this particular artistic approach.

Sanjukta Panigrahi, a protégé of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, enhanced the renown of the dance style in both India and outside countries with her enchanting and elegant performances, attracting audiences wherever she went.

Sonal Mansingh distinguishes herself as a creative dancer who has developed a unique style, enriched by her extensive travels and exposure to diverse cultures. Renowned dance critics Sunil Kothari and Avinash Pasricha note her artistic and cerebral approach, highlighting her keen understanding of various dance forms and her adept fusion of poetry and dance. In her speeches, she also displays a heightened sense of *auchitya*, which refers to appropriateness.

Guru Gangadhar Pradhan, among the dynamic "second generation" gurus, boasts disciples worldwide and showcases choreography reflecting individuality shaped by training under Kelucharan.

Odissi schools like as Srijan (established by Guru Kelucharan), Guru Gangadhar Pradhan Foundation, Guru Pankaj Charan Odissi Foundation, Orissa Dance Academy, and Guru Debaprasad Dance Institute have effectively offered a worldwide stage for Odissi dancers to showcase their abilities. [24]

Recent books on dance identify four unique *gharanas*, or styles, of Odissi: Pankaj Charan Gharana, Kelucharan Gharana, Debaprasad Gharana, and Mayadhar Gharana. Proficient disciples who possess expertise in both practical and theoretical areas are advised to create distinct guides including precise directions for training in each of these *gharanas*. [25]

The Odissi dance revivalists of the 1950s, whose visionary efforts transformed the dance form from dormancy to vibrancy, are now seen as essential figures whose absence poses challenges to its growth. It's imperative to acknowledge and pay homage to these pioneers who not only revived Odissi but also established it on the international stage. According to eminent dance critic Mohn Khokar, prior to India's independence from British rule, Odissi was virtually unknown to the world. However, through the pioneering endeavors of individuals and institutions, Odissi is regaining its proper position in the dance scene of India. [26,27]

Notable scholars in the field include Kabi Chandra Kalicharan Patnaik, Dhirendranath Patnaik, and Sadashiva Rath Sharma. Renowned gurus include Mohan Mohapatra, Pankaj Charan Das, and Kelucharan Mohapatra. Additionally, Maharis like as Haripriya and Kokila Prabha have made significant contributions. Various institutions have also played a crucial role in the development of this field. Kalavikash Kendra and Utkal Nritya Sangeet Kala Parishad have all played pivotal roles in advancing the cause of Odissi in their own unique ways.

In addition, it is important to acknowledge Saroj Vaidyanathan's book "Classical Dances of India" and the individuals who made significant contributions to the development of Odissi. Included in the group



are Dayanidhi Das, Dhruvacharan Panbir, and Gangadhar Pradhan. Geeta Mahallik, Harekrushna Behera, Jiman Pani, Kiran Sehgal, Krishnachandra Mahapatra, Kum Kum Mohanty, Madhavi Mudgal, Mayadhar Rout, Pratima Gouri Bedi, Sanjukta Panigrahi, Raghunath Datta, Ramani Ranjan Jena, Sharon Lowen, Sonal.[28]

Notable dancers who have made significant contributions to the development of Odissi include Minati Mishra, Priyambada Mohanty, Hazmadi, Sudhakar Sahoo, Dhuleswar Behera, Ritha Devi, Yamini Krishnamurthy, Ramli Ibrahim, Ganendra Kumar Panda, Ratikatha Mohapatra, Sujata Mohapatra, Aruna Mohanty, and Illiana Citasisti. The original trailblazers of the Odissi revival have deceased, although their heritage continues to be significant. It is imperative to recognize and appreciate the significant impact that intellectuals have had on promoting Odissi, both nationally and internationally, via their writings and discourses. The distinguished panel comprises Kapila Vatsyayan, Susil Kothari, Shanta Serbjeet Singh, Leela Venkataraman, and Ashis Khokar.

Odissi has now gained widespread recognition as a separate genre of Indian classical dance. Debates surrounding criticisms suggesting Odissi as a mere imitation of Bharat Natyam or Kuchipudi have settled. It's imperative for academicians, dance teachers, and practitioners to move beyond the constraints imposed by traditionalists, we aim to broaden the scope of Odissi, creating an environment conducive to its revitalization and rebirth.

Odissi dance has expanded beyond its conventional limitations in the present setting and is no longer limited to its established repertoire. To enhance the global recognition of Odissi, the new cohort of choreographers has presented a multitude of inventive choreographies. Today, we are informed about Odissi performances like "Leelavati," which is based on Bhaskaracharya's 12th-century mathematical treatise. It has been choreographed by Jhelum Paranjape from Mumbai. Another performance called "Yagnaseni" is inspired by Prativa Ray's acclaimed novel and has been choreographed by Kum Kum Mohanty from Bhubaneswar. Furthermore, works such as "Sri" exemplify a modern reinterpretation of the Savitri-Satyavan narrative, while yet adhering to the traditional study of feminine energy within the Odissi framework, showcasing a profound level of inventiveness. Nevertheless, these groundbreaking choreographies have not supplanted the conventional ones; rather, both the classic and contemporary styles coexist harmoniously in the domain of Odissi dance.

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