
IDENTICAL MALAYSIAN AND INDIAN FOLK FROLIC DANCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

(The Infinity of Traversing Traditions Envisioned)

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Abstract

Acclimatisation of the Indian Folk Frolic Dances through acculturation process usually from India to various parts of the world or at times vice-versa is the antiquarian process from time immemorial. A study of this process is quite imperative to remove the intercultural ambiguity to trace the antiquity and to familiarise the interdependency of cultures barring the geographical boundaries of physical environs of countries and as research in this context did not find space in contextual form, forms the base of this study. The geographical boundaries of India that forms a major chunk in Asia distinctively left a lasting impact on its' neighbouring countries especially Malaysia. As the dance genres of India are multifarious and the dances of India too are multiple, they were encouraged and gradually imbibed into the similar cultures of distinctive cultures spread throughout the horizons of this Universe. India also well acknowledged as "Incredible India" due to its' distinctive emphasis on cultural diversity and Malaysia which is styled spectacularly as Truly Asia through its' adaptive culture too share common cultural ties through a few folk dances. This study opens up new vistas in the spheres of culture, sustainability of environment and tourism as it throws limelight on the conglomeration of cultural sharing between India and Malaysia distinctively through the folk dances shedding light on the unprobed area of research and throwing open a neo-sphere of research to the posterity.

Keywords— Acculturation, Cultural, Folk Dances, Genres, Pollution

FOLK FROLIC DANCES AS TOURISM PRODUCTS AUGMENTS CULTURE, DEPLETES POLLUTION AND PROMOTES GREENING

Dance as a tourism product minimizes pollution by embedding the feeling of oneness with the nature and also taking *one back to the culture that was one of oneness with the environment. It provides recreational experience through the natural setting in microcosm and supplements the drastic effects of modern tourism especially pollution in macrocosm.* [1] With this underlying intent, this study focusses, investigates and identifies an innovative research area i.e., folk dances as a solidly potential and emerging as well as inspiring area of tourist interest without or with minimal pollution. Also, performances can be utilised as a influential medium for generating awareness pertaining to environmental protection, as this will substantially lead to sustainable behaviour through the usage of only eco-friendly products in daily life through encouraging green practices, nature-based attire and also the usage of eco-friendly accommodations, minimizing the flocking of tourists to only urban areas and so on aiming to create balance with the nature are envisioned. Hence, this study highlights on the identical folk dances of both India and Malaysia as they promote non-pollution through the usage of eco-friendly products and eco-friendly genres and melodies.

For a long while, the elite... did not acknowledge the presence of dance as a part of their culture and existence; then came a stage when dance became the emblem of a rich and glorious history and tradition – an image that has stayed.[2]

History is inseparably intertwined with art especially folk arts as from bygone ages, the then contemporary history of the commoners as well as connoisseurs has been passed on to the forthcoming generations through folk music and folk dances. Say it the history of the connoisseurs or the commoners, society or the polity, economy or the ethnicity that has been lively passed is being lively witnessed from generations in folk forms. The increasing intricacy of deriving historicity in folkloric artistic experiences raise the need for contemplating the simple complexity of Indian Folk Dances genre traversing beyond boundaries. Working along these borderlines, to embody knowledge about how a few Indian folk dances coalesce with the Malaysian Folk dances beyond boundaries forms the cognitive genre here. Malaysia is well known for its' innumerable unique dance styles inherited as well as shared with a wealth of identical folk frolics or dances of and with India.

THE AREA OF STUDY

As Indians form one of the largest communities in Malaysia, this study explores the dances that have either migrated from India to Malaysia or performed in both the countries similarly due to cultural impact in particular. The vital aspect of this study is to make an elaborate examination of either migration of dances of India especially the unique and popular folk dances to Malaysia or the sharing of the similar cultural ethos by both Malaysia and India.

Today Indians form a largest community in all parts of the world. The research explores the ways in which Indians or their culture have migrated, particularly to Malaysia peninsular and will try to make an attempt to understand the process of artistic and cultural migration from India to Malaysia under various migratory systems and colonial regulations.

The present study portrays the history of the multi-cultural legacy and essence of Malaysian folk dances, that are either gleaned or spread their essence from or to a few popular Indian folk dances. Hence, this study forays on how folk dances being the rejuvenators of the classic and the common folk beyond the boundaries of continents, cultures and traditions, led to the spread of Malaysian dance culture. Due to paucity of time and space, this study focuses particularly on Malaysian folk dances with that of India.

SIGNIFICANT SOURCES:

The *Primary Sources* include live dances witnessed during personal visits to Malaysia, publications of the Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia as well as the performances available on the web and the *Secondary Sources* include rare and antique sources collected from various libraries of India and the Tourism Department of Malaysia. Secondary sources are books and newspapers published across India and Malaysia.

FOLK FROLICS OR FOLK DANCES INTERTWINING FEATURES – A NEO THEORETICAL PARADIGM:

Analysing, articulating and affirming history through art history is a hermeneutic and discursive code. It examines the context of practice-based research and its implications apart from focusing on the creative process of building alternative approach to the textual basis of discursive study as the social traditions and cultural customs can be lively witnessed and recorded. Hence, this study on the folk dances of the folks in Malaysia that are identical with a few of India, reaffirms the epithet *Malaysia: Truly Asia*. [3] Dances crossed genre boundaries to many parts of the world and also became popular as the performing arts in various parts of the world. This paper is another attempt to trace the ontological grounding for understanding the relationship between the folk dances that are in Malaysia as well as in India. [4] Though as destinations Malaysia and India are diverse in nature, a few folk frolic dances that are migrated long back are quite identical as they survived across folk dualisms of nature and nurture.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Present study focuses on the entwining artistic layers of Malaysia with that of India laying focus specifically on folk dances. However, a further study on this area, if given an opportunity will establish that the folk culture and especially the folk dances of Malaysia has a strong bonding with that of India. [5]

By establishing a chair for St. Tiruvalluvar at the Malaya University, the Government of Malaysia is presently expecting to further strengthen the ties between the two countries [6] and further research in this area will be of thriving importance for the commoners as well as the connoisseurs to strongly bond countries cultural ties.

BHANGRA DANCE:

The Bhangra dance of Punjab is traditionally performed by Malaysian Punjabis by playing instruments such as the bhangra dhol on variegated occasions like festivals, functions, weddings and especially during Vaisakhi and Deepavali festivals. Tracing its' origin from Punjab in 1940's, it is a fest to celebrate the occasion of harvesting by performing jumps, kicks, spins to the energetic beats of cane sticks on large traditional drums. This Punjabi dance initially became quite popular through bhangra competitions held in North America, UK and Australia and picked up momentarily in South East Asian countries. [7] This dance is considered as a stress buster dance of harvest season [8] and so became the most chosen dance in Malaysia. In fact, the Bhangra folk dance is now being evolved and embraced as a global dance by various communities worldwide such as Australia, Canada, UK and US. [9]

JOGET:

Joget, which is also a popular dance of India, is interacted by both male and female performers to melodic tunes and innovative exciting tunes to dance genres. This transnationalism dance ensembles, usually performed by couples. [10] Originated in Malacca, this Malay dance belongs to colonial era and is also known as *chakunchak*. Ethnomusicologists opine that the music of this *Joget* dance has also the element of acculturated music of India. The dancers hold handkerchiefs and dance with brisk filled enthusiasm. [11] As such, to forge folk dances into the main stream of youngsters and to face the threats of extinction and modernization, the government of Malaysia geared a project entitled connecting communities through which weekend dance workshops of multiple genres are also being conducted. [12]

MAGUNATIP:

The Magunatip dance otherwise popularly known as the pounding paddy dance or the warrior dance of East Malaysia is an identical traditional dance of India in Mizoram as Cheraw Bamboo dance. Performed by the Murut people of Borneo, this dance requires skill and timing as the dancers moves their legs while bamboo poles are quickly moved. Identical in structure both the countries is the tapping of the bamboo poles made of belian wood, down and clapping hands together. During the dance, the dancers do not move anywhere, but they push or pull the hands in opposite directions and perform with bamboo staves and the rhythm will be created by hitting the bamboos with each other.

While Magunatip is performed by Murut tribe of Malaysia Cheraw bamboo dance is performed by the Mizoram people during rituals in India. Being considered as the traditional dance of Mizoram, the Cheraw dance is considered as the most traditional bamboo dance of Mizoram and the central part of the Naga culture. [13] As a healing ritual and also as a paddy

pounding folk dance game, this Magunatip dance of Mizoram, is considered as a central part of the Naga culture.[14] Also, this Cheraw bamboo dance is quite familiar with another name as *Ruakkhatla*[15] and is many a times performed to chase the evil spirits in Mizoram.

MAKYONG:

Makyong dance of Malaysia is considered as the oldest form of Malay traditional dance in South East Asia.[16] It is an artistic framework of dance combined with storytelling. Captivating storytelling with a combination of charismatic performance of dance and music while enacting ancient myths and legends is on one side, on the other it showcases how this dance also partially is being performed as a remedy to heal patients through performances. This dance is hailed as an embodiment of spiritual element.[17] Being a trance-dance, this dance is mostly composed of a heal through song with a background of Malay folk tales and as such this trans-dance is generally performed by women.[18] Similar story telling dances that are attributed to India are Burra Katha. It is a theatrical folk dance quite popular in various parts of Andhra Pradesh.

THAIPOOSAM:

The manifestation of Hinduism in the diaspora of Malaysia is quite prominent and *Thai Poosam*, the religious dance performed generally near the God Muruga [19] also occupies a very great importance throughout the length and breadth of Malaysia. It is a dance that lays emphasis on the psychological and socio-political aspects of the ritual.[20] Enlisting the ethnographic perseverance, the ethno-religious and cultural impact at Batu caves [21] and especially on the folk dances of the country can be crystal clearly gleaned from the performers of this dance at the destination. Copious books succinctly encapsulate the very essence of this veritable dance of Malaysia.

CONCLUSIONS:

A study on the folk dances that are many a times performed throughout the length and breadth of both India and Malaysia provide the real socio-cultural structure of the countries, say it in the point of view of the performers or the viewers. As major dance festivals such as Chennai's Margazhi Festival, Konark Dance Festival, Mamallapuram Dance Festival, Hornbill Festival of Nagaland, Perumthitta Tharwad Theyyam Festival of Kerala, Kathak Utsav of Delhi, Rann Utsav of Gujarat, Hampi Utsav of Karnataka happens in and around the month of December, a thorough analysis of the inflow of tourists to India in 2025 during this season of culture and dance crystal clearly discloses that the inflow of tourists to India increased from 27,928 crores to 31,371 crores marking it as the month of high tourist exchange earnings. Correspondingly, to Malaysia too, the inflow of international tourists tremendously upsurged from 18.91% to 27.81% and 26.97% during the seasons of My Dance Festival, Sibu International Dance Festival and Tari Folk Dance Festival. [24] Hence, this study keenly analyses and places on record that the ongoing similar cultural and artistic practices in both the countries are quite bonding, healthy and are in the nurturing state. As such,

as a unique art form, dance...enhance the competitiveness...of...cultural tourism industry and promote the sustainable development...and promote the prosperity and innovation of ...cultural tourism industry.[22]

The similar folk dances performed as well as viewed in both the countries, increases public awareness to accept and appreciate the cultural heritage and leads to the healthy sustenance of the age-old arts with the notion *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* means *The World is One Family* which is also the motto of the India's G20 Presidency i.e.,

One Earth, One Family, One Future.[23]

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