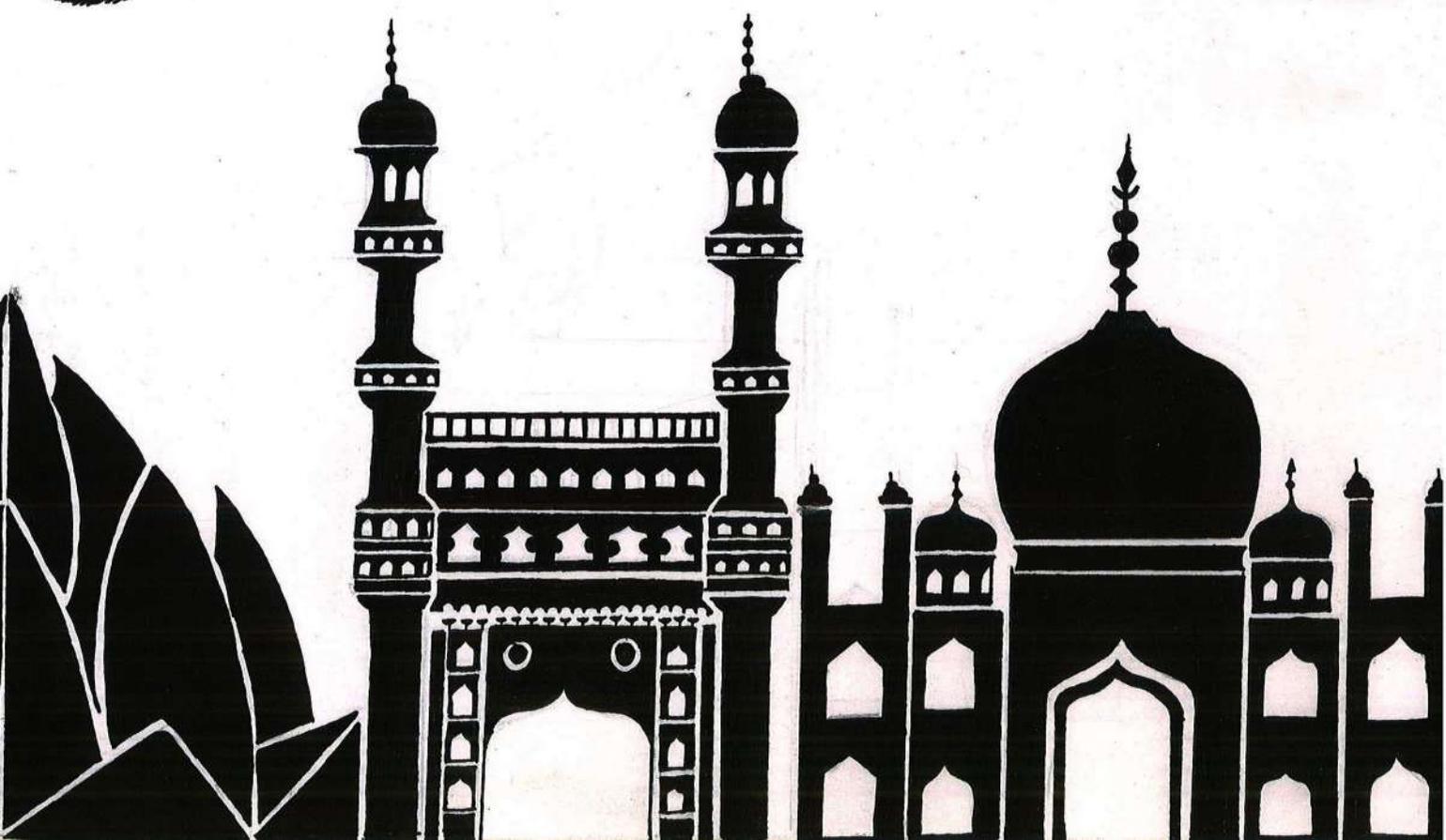ISSUE 4

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KAMALA NEHRU COLLEGE
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PREFACE

Marcus Garvey rightly said that "people without knowledge of their past history, origin and culture are like a tree without its roots". Culture is one of the important means to understand the great diversity of our country. Culture of any country is derived by its people. The values imbibed from these diverse cultures helps in uniting us as a nation.

The fourth edition of *Chronicle* the annual newsletter of the Department of History, Kamala Nehru College tries to throw light on some aspects of the cultural history of India. Students of the department have contributed to this issue through their articles.

The history of the magazine dates back to 2016, wherein Prof. A.G.K. Menon (Convenor of INTACH, Delhi chapter) released the **first edition "Chronicle 2016"**. The magazine had articles on topics like *Mapping Of Siri, Purana Quila, Abhigyanshakuntalam, Asura* and many other such interesting topics. The **second edition** of the newsletter was released on the College Day, 21st February, 2017. This featured articles written by our students titled, *Food History of Medieval India , Witchcraft In Medieval Europe , Medieval Clocks , Significance of Eyeglasses In Medieval Times , and The Twentieth Wife* . This edition also carried Historical Fun Facts and a report on Departmental activities.

The **third edition** of the magazine was published on the topic *"Womens Movements Across The World: A Historical Perspective"*. The magazine covered some significant topics like *Abusing The Women Question, From Revolting To Voting, China: A Journey From Foot Binding To An Uprising, Shades of Feminist Movement In The 19th Century History Of USA*. The newsletter also carried a report of departmental activities carried out in the year 2017- 18.

The theme for the **fourth edition** of the newsletter **"Chronicle 2019"** is **"Cultural History Of India"**. It consists of articles titled *"Artistic wonder of India: Ajanta Ellora", Ahom Art and Architecture: A Forgotten Past, Land Of Kings: Glance at Culture, Devadasis: Pioneers of Classical Dance or Mere Prostitutes, Drama Lovers on Foot, Cinema ke Paripekshya me: Mera Kanpur, Changing Face Of Telugu Film Industry and Demystifying Third Cinema.*

Chronicle essentially is a creative and an informative medium for educating its readers about some of the most intriguing topics, which need attention. The main objective of this year's newsletter is to encapsulate the minds of its readers in the direction of understanding India's Cultural diversity with a touch of contemporaneity in it. As past is a significant part of our existence through these articles best effort has been made to unite the past with the present.

Contents

Artistic Wonders of India: Ajanta and Ellora
Riya Malhotra

The period c. 200 BCE-300 CE saw an expansion in the number and scale of Buddhist, Jain and Hindu monastic complex which included dwellings for monks, stupas, shrines and caves. Many of the early Buddhist cave traditions are represented at sites like Kondivte, Bhaja, Kondane, Ajanta and Ellora with Ajanta and Ellora being the most important ones.

The **Ajanta Caves** are 30 (approximately) rock-cut Buddhist cave monuments, which date from the 2nd century BCE to about 480 CE in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra state of India. The caves include paintings and rock-cut sculptures described as among the finest surviving examples of ancient Indian art, particularly expressive paintings that present emotion through gesture, pose and form. **Ellora caves** are over 100 (34 of which are open to public) monasteries and temples, extending over more than 2 km. Ellora, with its uninterrupted sequence of monuments dating from A.D. 600 to 1000, brings the civilization of ancient India to life. Not only is the Ellora complex a unique artistic creation and a technological exploit but, with its sanctuaries devoted to Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism, it illustrates the spirit of tolerance that was characteristic of ancient India. These consist of 12 Buddhist (caves 1–12), 17 Hindu (caves 13–29) and 5 Jain (caves 30–34) caves, with each group representing deities and mythologies that were prevalent in the 1st millennium CE, as well as monasteries of each respective religion. They were built in proximity to one another and illustrate the religious harmony that existed in ancient India. Although these caves served as monasteries, temples and a rest stop for pilgrims their location on an ancient South Asian trade route also made them an important commercial center in the Deccan region.

The **Ajanta Caves** were built from the Basalt accumulated in the form of igneous rocks. These rocks were accumulated due to the volcanic eruptions occurred long back. The workers carved the rock with proper planning as cracks also occurred during the process. Most of the caves are in the form of Viharas having dormitories attached to them. At the backside of the caves, a sanctuary was built and each sanctuary has a statue of Lord Buddha in the center. Many other deities are also carved on the pillars and near the large statue of Buddha. According to Walter Spink, caves 9, 10, 12, 13 and 15A, were made during the period 100 BCE to 100 CE, probably under the patronage of the Hindu Satavahana dynasty (230 BCE – c. 220 CE) who ruled the region. The paintings seen on the interiors and exteriors of the caves include different images. For example - Great Buddha, a Goddess on the upper left corner of the shrine doorway, a Cherubic Dwarf, a Bodhisattva believed to be Padmapani Avaokitesvara. There is an impressive image of seated Lord Buddha in the shrine of Cave 4. Apart from that, one can see paintings of Kneeling Devotees, a Goddess under a Flowering Tree, Dwarf musicians playing Instruments, etc. Cave 17 has a contemporary porched doorway.

The cave stands adorned with a beautiful image of the seven Buddha's of the past, with Maitreya. The image of Lord Buddha shows him seated in the Yogasana, with his hands in the Dharmachakra Mudra. The other images are those of Apsaras and Flying Spirits, Indra and the Apsaras, Royal Procession, Shad-danta Jataka, Prince Simhala, the Return of Lord Buddha, etc. The painting techniques at Ajanta are also similar to European fresco technique. The monastery caves at **Ellora** have shrines including carvings of Gautama Buddha, bodhisattvas and saints. In some of these caves, sculptors have endeavored to give the stone, the look of wood. Caves 5, 10, 11 and 12 are architecturally important Buddhist caves. Notable among the Buddhist caves is Cave 10, a chaitya worship hall called the 'Vishvakarma cave.' It is the only dedicated chaitya griha amongst the Buddhist caves and is constructed along similar lines to Caves 19 and 26 of Ajanta. Cave 10 also features a gavaksha, or chandrashala, arched window and a side connection to Cave 9 of Ellora. Dhumar Lena, Rameshwara temple, Kailasa temple and the Dashavatara temple are some of the most important Hindu caves at Ellora. The carvings in these caves are larger than life size but, according to author Dhavalikar, they are "corpulent, stumpy with disproportionate limbs" compared to those found in other Ellora caves. Particularly important Jain shrines are the Chhota Kailash, the Indra Sabha and the Jagannath Sabha; cave 31 is an unfinished four-pillared hall, and shrine. The Jain caves contain some of the earliest *Samavasarana* images among its devotional carvings. Another interesting feature found in these caves is the pairing of sacred figures in Jainism, specifically Parsvanatha, which appear 19 times. Other artwork of significance includes those of deities Sarasvati, Sri, Saudharmendra, Sarvanubhuti, Gomukha, Ambika, Cakresvari, Ksetrapala and Hanuman.

The Ajanta and Ellora caves were chosen to be the World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1983. Both sets of caves represent a masterpiece of human creative genius. They exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time within a cultural are of the world, India, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design. These caves were designated World Heritage Site because of being an outstanding example of a type of an architectural ensemble which illustrates a significant stage in human history, that is, the Gupta and Post Gupta period. They also contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance. They are unique in terms of having exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition that had appeared in the past. These caves were directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance as they depicted Buddhist, Jain and Hindu traditions through the paintings. Because of their architecture, Ajanta and Ellora caves are of Outstanding Universal value from the point of view of history. They are considered to represent the "combined works of nature and of man" and they are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time and hence are among the 37 World Heritage Sites in India.

Ahom Art And Architecture: A Forgotten Past

Ipsita Choudhury

During the early 13th century, when a Tai prince from Mong-Mao (in the present-day Autonomous Prefecture of Yunan), called Chao Lung Sukafa wandered into the eastern extremity of the Brahmaputra Valley, he was unconscious of the fact that he would establish a kingdom that would rule the Brahmaputra Valley in Assam for around 600 years. The Ahoms possessed a sense of history writing in which they recorded everything. These accounts are known as *Buranjis.* During their 600 years of rule in the Brahmaputra Valley, the Ahoms inevitably went through a continuous process of cross-cultural change where the neighbouring regions of tribal polity were "Ahomized" while at the same time; indigenous traditions, religion and, language was adopted by the Ahom kings. One such example can be seen is that in the later in the period of Rudra Singha's reign, the *Buranjis* were recorded in Assamese rather than Tai-Ahom language. It was also during Rudra Singha's reign that the Ahoms officially adopted the Assamese language, blending traditional folk and Mughal influences into the cultural fabric of Assam seamlessly. Many notable Sanskrit works like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*

Rang Ghar (House of Entertainment)

were translated into Assamese. During this period the Ahom rulers embraced Hinduism and became devout patrons of the *Neo-Vaishnavite* movement led by *Mahapurush Shankardeva,* who, along with his disciple *Madhabdeva*, created a rich repository of songs, dramas, verses and, other literary works that were performed in the great halls of the *Rangpur* Palace on several occasions. Another instance of this cross-cultural assimilation can be seen in the Ahom style of architecture which is a synthesis of the various cross-cultural traditions and religious assimilations it went through. During the early years, Ahom architects primarily used wood and bamboo to construct their palaces and other important structures. However, with the passage of time, the use of bricks and organic cement made out of eggs, fish, molasses, pulses and lime became a defining feature of Ahom architecture, the proof of which can be still seen when observing the walls closely. Few of these secular buildings have survived today, like the *Rang-Ghar, Kareng-Ghor,* and the *Talatol Ghor.*

Standing as testament to the Ahom Kingdom's devotion towards sports and entertainment, the *Rang-Ghar,* or the House of Entertainment, is believed to be one of the oldest surviving amphitheatres in Asia. It was constructed during the reign *Swargadoe Parmatama Singha* in the early 18th century to serve as a royal pavilion from which the kings could watch traditional games such as bull fights, hawk fights and tiger fights were very popular. It consists of an oval amphitheatre built in two levels, with a roof in the shape of an inverted Ahom long boat. Its grand roof is crowned with crocodile or *makara* ends and rests upon rows of massive columns and semi-circular arches. The inner walls of *Rang-Ghar* were coated with a lime and brick plaster, decorated with elaborate panels depicting elephant & bird fights of which only a fraction of these sculptural embellishments survive to this day. One of the grandest Ahom architecture ventures is the *Kareng-Ghar* or the Palace which is presumed to be the royal palace of the Ahom Kings. It survives almost in complete form, with two major stories over ground, a third and fourth level, probably used as observatory, and even more underground levels to be used for evacuation, which no longer exist today. It is believed that the ground floor of *Kareng-Ghar* housed store rooms, stables and servants' quarters while the upper floors served as royal abodes. The ruins of this medieval structure reveal a flight of stairs running all the way up to the terrace, probably used as a vantage point in times of political unrest. The military stronghold of the Ahom kingdom was the *Talatal-Ghar*, which literally translates to 'underground home.' Built in brick and organic cement, it houses two secret tunnels; used as escape routes during Ahom wars, in addition to its three-storied underground structure.

The Indigenisation of the Ahom Kings into Hinduism contributed to the construction of impressive temple complex dedicated to the worship of Shiva, Vishnu and Durga. The complex comprising of three major temples or *"dols"*- Shiva Dol, Vishnu Dol and Devi Dol along with a lake called *borpukhuri* which was constructed between 1731 and 1734 CE, during the reign of Queen Ambika, and is regarded as one of the foremost examples of Ahom architecture. The sculptural and relief content of the both the inner and outer walls depict various icons from the Hindu Pantheon alongside unidentified images and certain unique ones not found usually in temple walls. Another defining feature of Ahom architecture is the excavation of large tanks, most notably *Joysagar*, which is the largest tank to be excavated under the patronage of Rudra Singha in 1698. Ramparts built at strategic locations with great moats surrounding their perimeter and *sila-sakus* or stone bridges are among the other examples of Ahom architectural ingenuity. Elaborate *maidams* (burial tombs) that the Ahoms built in the sacred city of Charaideo reflects the importance of Ancestor worship as a part of the Ahom culture. Yet despite having such historically rich art and architectural monuments, the Ahom Dynasty's achievements lie forgotten and detached from mainstream history. This continued exclusion of

selective readings of an 'Indian' past is largely rooted in colonial administrative strategies of the British.

Dr Sukanya Sharma, Professor of Archaeology and Cultural Studies at IIT Guwahati, points out that the British Raj had clear intentions to isolate the Northeast for its own gains. By doing so they could secure the supply of tea, oil and timber while simultaneously creating a strategic buffer between French Southeast Asia and British-controlled Northeast India.According to Dr Sharma, "to isolate Northeast India, major verifiable historical sources were disturbed. In fact, a whole new government department [Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies] was created to write a history of Northeast India highlighting Southeast Asian linkages. The hill communities were clubbed as 'uncivilised, savage' by using powerful mediums like ethnographic accounts and were described as so primitive that they had no history which was off course far from the truth." At such times it is of upmost importance that the history of the Northeast, especially of a ruling dynasty as powerful as the Ahoms be given their spotlight in mainstream media and India's educational curriculum is a vital place to start off at.

The Rhythm of the Hills
Preksha Kothari

Since time immemorial, humans have projected their sense of community belonging and self-expression through dance. There are instances of dance seen throughout the prehistoric world in the form of cave paintings, wherein there are artistic depictions of warrior dance, hunting, ritualistic dance, community dance. All of these signify that dance has been a part of our lives since the beginning. Evidence of dance can be found in the Indian subcontinent from various sources. We see evidence of dance as an art form in pre-historic India through the rock paintings of Bhimbetka Caves in Madhya Pradesh. The dancing girl of Mohenjo-Daro and the broken torso of the Harappan period suggests a familiarity with dance and dance postures. The Dancing Girl is the most widely known proof of dance in the ancient civilization. The gateways of Sanchi, that portray Apsaras whose existence dates back to the 3rd Century BCE, suggest some form of dancing. Natyashastra is a canonical text dated around first-century B.C.E written by Bharat Muni. It is the foremost literature on Indian dance, theatre, music, art and lays down the foundation of the majority of the dance forms of India, explaining the relationship between these different forms of art. There are mainly two divisions in the dances of India- Folk and Classical. Classical dance is one where there is a set of prescribed instructions, sometimes a text which outlines its foundation. An Indian folk dance on the other hand is a dance which is largely an oral tradition, that has been historically learned and mostly passed down from one generation to the next through word of mouth and casual joint practice. There are rhythmic patterns with a set vocabulary shared by everyone. In many of the folk dances, a lamp is placed in the center depicting the light of illumination, the divine light. In later expressions, the light becomes either Lord Krishna, the Devi or a tribal deity. The community dances together so as to show reverence to the deity and celebrate.

The Indian state of Uttarakhand has been popularly divided into two regions-Garhwal and Kumaun. Both of these regions are diverse and culturally rich. Kumaun, named after Kurmavtara of Vishnu, is replete with picturesque hill stations, lofty mountains, surreal lakes, charming villages, temples and unexplored destinations. Languages like Kumauni, Hindi, Urdu, and English are spoken here. The people of Kumaun engage in vivid celebrations and the performance of rituals around the year due to their deep-rooted connection with nature and the rich mythology. Like their simple lifestyle, the festivals and fairs are also simple yet culturally splendid. Each season is welcome with hearty folk songs and dance and so is the agricultural period. The ancestor spirit worship is exclusive to the state; Jaagar, as it is locally called, is held to wake the Gods and the local deities up from their inactive stage to solve their problems and shower on them many blessings. Dances like Barada Nati,

Bhotiya Dance, Chanchari, Chhapeli, Choliya Dance, etc are performed on various occasions in Uttarakhand. We will unravel two of these Kumauni dance forms- Choliya and Chanchari and see their development and significance.

Choliya dance is a popular dance form that is performed in the Kumauni region. It is a war dance performed by the men of the Rajput community during the marital ceremonies who wear traditional war costumes and dance to the beats of instruments like drums, turi, and ransingh. The dance is estimated to have its inception in the 10th century B.C.E. The Hindi terminology is choliya and in Kumauni it is called chaliya, which literally means deception. Its steps involve illusory moves which were used in warfare to confuse one's enemy and defeat them. The Choliya dance has its origins in the warring Khashiya kingdom of Khardesh, when marriages were held at the point of the sword. They were united by the Chand kings who arrived around the 10th century.

The word Khasha is still synonymous with Kshatriya, so they took on the customs of the Rajputs. One of the questions that come to mind is how did this dance transition into mainstream society from the battlefield? Local historians believe that when a king won a war, his achievements were enacted through dance, plays and, music by the villagers. The bards also recited the ruler's brave victories and astonished the people. The queens, king and the nobles enjoyed watching the Choliya, so the dance began to be performed in the court as well. With the end of the princely rule, the dance survived through its expression in weddings and auspicious occasions, mainly performed by the Rajput community who go on dancing till they reach the bride's house. The dance is performed with swords and shields in pairs, marked by high jumps, turns, powerful steps and several sword fighting feats. The performance is accompanied by drummers called Dholies, who usually belong to the Harijan community, while the Turi and Ransing are played by people from the Gosian, Jogi or Bairagi groups. Attired in the material costumes of ancient warriors along with the war-like music, huge red flags adorned with numerous animal symbols convey the feeling of fear, joy, awe, and wonder, through eyes, eyebrows, and shoulders, creating at the same time the impression of a group advancing for an attack. The dance costumes are superbly vibrant and consist of a churidar pyjama, a long chola, one cross belt, one waist belt, pattis on the leg and a colourful turban. They decorate their face with sandalwood paste and

red vermillion and embellish themselves with earrings. The full team consists of twenty-two members, eight of which are dancers and fourteen are musicians. British Raj influence can be seen with the usage of bagpipes as an instrument.

People still believe that Choliya have the power to ward off evil spirits and protect the couple from ill luck. *Chanchari* is a celebratory dance that is most well-known in the Almora and the Bageshwar district of Kumaun. It was originally associated with the worship of certain gods and goddesses and ritualistic worship of nature. Nowadays, there are depictions of folk tales of heroes and lovers and it is a secular dance. Chanchari is performed by both men and women. It is signified by vibrant costumes worn by both. Two half circles are formed by the men and women. There are two drummers in the centre who play instruments like the Hurka and Jhanj and lead the dance with their beats and the verses they sing. The dancers move their body on a slow tempo and show rhythmic movements using their legs primarily. Chanchari is performed on fairs and festivals as well. In its current setting, the dancers use Chanchari to showcase the current happenings in the society.

Hence these and many other dances of the Kumaun region form an integral part of its heritage and culture. Modernity has affected them as not a lot of people are keen on performing these folk dances anymore. It is very important to conserve, acknowledge and appreciate these art forms otherwise they will ebb into oblivion. The time has come to stop ignoring the richness that this region of Kumaun has to offer in terms of its traditions, scenery or art.

Land of Kings: Glance At Culture

Khushboo Khandelwal

Rajasthan by its name, describes itself as the 'Land of Kings. With its opulent palaces, historic forts and plethora of cultural offerings, it wins over hearts at first glance. The royal land of Rajasthan has been inhabited for several thousands of years, to be precise, since the Indus valley civilisation. "The Indus civilization is one of three in the 'Ancient East' that, along with Mesopotamia and Pharaonic Egypt, was a cradle of early civilization in the Old World. The cultural trade and blending that occurred caused a great deal of influence as borders slowly changed." People settled in the region because of its strategic location, as after the Indus people tribal communities like the Meenas and Bhills inhabited it, followed by Aryans and the great Mauryan dynasty. Later the Gupta dynasty conquered and built Buddhist shrines spreading Buddhism. Then came the most majestic era, the Rajput empire that was considered to be the warrior clan. Regardless of lineage, new traditions developed and time pressed on creating a melting pot of achievement and philosophy. Eventually, by 1200A.D. Islam annexed the Rajasthan by marriage alliance or wars but failed to conquer Mewar. Only after the battle between Uday Singh and Akbar and the Battle of Haldighati the prominent places were covered by Akbar. It's quite fair to say that Islamic history and customs have culturally influenced Rajasthani music and traditions. By the early 18th century the Maratha and Rajputana conjugated and their alliance was defeated by British. After 200 years of British rule in India, in 1947 India got independence and with formation of different states the largest area was covered by the state named Rajasthan. The name 'Rajasthan' was popularised by James Tod, an East India Company employee, who was enraptured by the beauty and opulence of the state. And today in contemporary India it is the largest and magnificent state with rich and symbolic culture, even identified by UNESCO.

With long history it too has exotic culture like its folklore music, ghoomar dance and all-time favourite of Rajasthani's dal baati churma served on their plates. The Sarangi, Rawanhattha, Kamayacha, Morchang and Ektara are the popular Rajasthani folk instruments of the stringed variety. Different shapes and sizes are present in percussion instruments, from the huge Nagaras and Dhols to the tiny Damrus. Festivals like Holi witness the Daf and Chang. Under the flutes and bagpipes category, Rajasthan excels with instruments such as Shehnai, Poongi, Algoza, Tarpi, Been and Bankia. Owing to the diversity in Rajasthan, the contributions to its folk music come from almost all parts of the grand state. Most famous among them are the Mirasis and Jogis of Mewat, Manganiyars and Langas, Kanjars, Banjaras and Dholies. Performances like the Kuchamani Khayal, Maach, Tamasha, Rammat, Nautanki and Raasleela are equally revered. Manganiyars and Langas are the most prominent ones who are known for their unique style of music worldwide and can be seen performing in their traditional attire with colourful turbans. Indeed, they are so popular that you will find them performing all over the world. Manganiyars have expertise over percussion instruments like Dholak and Khadtal, whereas Langas are known for Sarangi, Murali, Surnai, etc. Their musical compositions are very complex and have improvisatory rules build into them. Most of the music is not considered entertainment; It is a part of religious ceremonies, marriages, births, deaths, and any other large community function. In regards to the Festival, the performers from all over Rajasthan come together and perform, in order to make sure their own traditions can stay alive and respected and can take their family traditions forward in the future. Even ghoomar originated in marwar brought by Bhil tribe in ancient era is still considered best local dance forms and leave western world mesmerised by its swirling outfit made by kaleidoscopic colours. The whole attire of women in chaniya choli with kundan jewel is worn and dance is performed for goddess Sarasvati which in present scenario has been evolved to an extent and amount of Zari or mirror work on silk Ghoomar outfits indicated the level of wealth in a family.

Though India has been affected by western culture that spark of our exotic historic culture is still present in the roots. In modernised India people continue to celebrate the diversity and existing relics of cultural artefacts and embrace the local dance and music on international level. Still Rajasthani music is related to village, tribal life and the simplified. Its lyrics largely talks about valour, love for one's motherland, love stories, tradition, worship, or even day to day life. In contemporary times giving recognition to states local culture and making it populous is the step towards preserving our blended historic culture.

The Purdah system

Devanshee Sharma

The practice of purdah is said to have originated in the Persian culture and is believed to have been acquired by the Muslims during the Arab conquest of Iraq in the 7th century A.D. Muslim domination of northern India in turn influenced the practice of Hinduism, and purdah became usual among the Hindu upper classes of northern India. During the British hegemony in India, purdah observance was strictly adhered to and widespread among the highly conscious Muslim minority. A woman's withdrawal into purdah usually restricts her personal, social and economic activities outside her home. The usual purdah garment worn is a burqa which may or may not include a yashmak, a veil to conceal the face. The eyes may or may not be exposed. Married Hindu women in parts of Northern India also observe purdah, with some women wearing a ghoonghat in the presence of older male relations on their husbands' side, some Muslim women observe purdah through the wearing of a burqa. A dupatta is a veil used by both Muslim and Hindu women, often when entering a religious house of worship. This custom is not followed by Hindu women elsewhere in India. Purdah literally means curtain or veil, and refers to the various modes of shielding women from the sight primarily of men (other than their husbands or men of their natal family) in the South Asian subcontinent. Purdah can refer to the veiling or covering of the entire body or of parts of the head and face through the manipulation of women's' attire. It can also refer to the practice of the seclusion of women inside their homes. In the sense of attire, purdah can denote the practice of completely covering a woman's body by wearing a loose, body-covering robe called the *burqa*. Among sari wearers, the end part of the sari called the *palla* is used to cover all or part of the head and face. In those parts of the subcontinent where women wear the *salwar-kameez* (long, loose tunic worn over trousers) or long skirts (*lehenga/ghaghra*), a scarf (*dupatta*) is used to cover the upper part of the body as well as part of the head and face. Purdah in its many variations is still used by both Hindu and Muslim women, although the burqa is almost always exclusively associated with Muslim women.

One must understand that a woman could be unveiled and yet observe purdah by remaining in seclusion within the home. Purdah has further connotations for living arrangements within the home in the sense of separate living spaces for men and women — a feature that is often manifest. As Cora Vreede-de Stuers pointed out in her book (1968; <u>Purdah: a study of Muslim women's life in Northern India)</u>, "in its most extended sense purdah refers to approved norms of modest and circumspect feminine behavior, as for instance in downcast eyes, the bowing of the head, the complete silence a woman observes in the presence of a man, or by the hasty gesture of veiling her head with a corner of her sari or *dupatta* if she is caught unaware." The degree and kind (the actual veiling or seclusion) of purdah observed by women has varied across time and place and from family to family and is also related to class status. Purdah in the form of seclusion is almost exclusively a characteristic feature of upper-class status, but one that is frequently emulated by lower-class aspirants to it.

The practice of purdah derives from a concern to control female sexuality and to shield women from being the objects of the sexual desire of men other than their husbands. Secondly, in its association with circumspect feminine behavior (which in turn was associated with female subordination), it is critical for preserving hierarchy within the patriarchal family. Thus, women observe purdah usually with the male members and often with senior female members of their husbands' families. Purdah is observed much more loosely and sometimes not at all by women when they are with their natal families. The belief that the custom of purdah was introduced into the Indian subcontinent through Muslim conquests of northern India in AD.1200 is of limited validity. The purdah, as veiling, was possibly influenced by Islamic custom, and the practice of covering the head and face is more prevalent in those parts of India believed to be more heavily influenced by Islam than others. But, in the sense of seclusion and the segregation of men and women, purdah predates the Islamic invasions of India. In medieval Indian society, purdah was common with the Muslim ladies. Strict purdah originated with Amir Timur, when he conquered India and entered in this country with his army and womenfolk. He made the proclamation, 'As they were now in the land of idolatry and amongst a strange people, the women of their families should be strictly concealed from the view of stranger'. Muslim men were zealous in guarding their women from public gaze and considered it a dishonor if they were exposed unveiled. Antonio Monserrate, mentioning about harem ladies of Akbar's time, wrote that they 'are kept rigorously secluded from the sight of men'. Similarly, Manucci's, writing during the time of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, recorded, 'The Mahomedans are very touchy in the matter of allowing their women to be seen, or even touched by hand….' At other place, he writes that amongst them, 'it was a great dishonor for a family when a wife is compelled to uncover herself'. He also refers to an incident concerning this wherein a soldier was travelling in a cart along with his wife and daughter, when the tax collectors

tried to check his cart by force. The soldier became so furious that he chopped off the head of that tax collector and also wounded many of his attendants.

Purdah came to be identified with honor and had come to stay as a symbol of decency, status and modesty and only women of easy virtues or of the poor families were seen out moving without veils. In the nineteenth century, the custom of purdah, specially in the sense of the seclusion of upper-class women, was increasingly viewed by British colonial rulers of India as an indication of the degraded condition of Indian women and, even more broadly, as a symptom of the overall primitiveness of Indian society. Indian social reformers in the nineteenth and early twentieth century's attempted to eradicate purdah as part of a program to 'improve' the social conditions of women. The long-term results of this, as well as other factors, led to a reduction (but not elimination) in the observance of purdah in South Asia throughout the twentieth century.

Devadasis: Pioneers Of Classical Dance Or Mere Prostitutes

Anoushka Deb

Sculptures of Devadasis on Temple Walls of India

Charulata hung up and kept her phone by the bedside, ready to go to bed, however she couldn't stop thinking about it. Who knew carrying out field work for your thesis would prove to be this disturbing? She switched of her laptop and climbed under her blanket, her mind still stuck there. If she knew carrying out research on the lives of devadasis would be this troublesome, maybe she would've heeded her mother's advice and worked on something else. She returned to her hotel a while back from the Jagannath temple in Puri, after speaking to the priest about the devadasis kept by the temple. That's when her friend, working in the same field in Andhra region called her. The priest in Jagannath was distressed as to what will happen in the next Nabakalevara ceremony. It is a ceremony, wherein the current deity is changed for a new Jagannath idol. The ritual has never taken place without the presence of devadasis. It is true that the system is not extinct, but the temple is left with none. It even tried to recruit a few in the 1950s by advertisements, a move scorned widely, either because the practice is synonymous with prostitution and looked down upon or because this step is disrespectful to the entire system of the devadasi tradition.

The question of this system's origin in Orissa remains somewhat unanswered. A. L. Basham emphasizes that the system must have been known even during the Indus Valley Civilization. Some like K. C. Mishra believe that the practice came to Orissa from the present Sri Kurumam in Andhra Pradesh during the Early Medieval period. The earliest reference to the system in Orissa is seen during the Somavamsi period. The Somavamsis hailed from Western Orissa, a region that had the least cultural exchange with the South. Pointing to this fact, many scholars believe that Mishra's theory seems less likely. In a Brahmeswar Temple inscription of Somavamsi queen Kalavati, it is mentioned, among other things that the queen dedicated to Lord Brahmeswar three beautiful women, to sing and perform before the deity. It was hereafter that dance and music came to be a part of temple service and become intertwined with the religious life in Orissa. So much so, that even queens donated girls to

the temples. The tradition reached its peak in the Ganga and Gajapati period. Almost every temple, including Sakti temples were given devadasis. Every temple, especially all the Ganga temples like Jagannath in Puri and Sun temple in Konark had Natamandapas or dancing halls. The devadasi tradition was introduced in the Jagannath temple as early as its construction. Vaisnava Lilamrta states that Chodagangadeva introduced the Mahari or devadasi dance at the consecration of the temple. Almost all rituals since the first day was conducted in the presence of the devadasis. They even sang and danced to lull him to sleep. These rituals were obligatory. Some rituals couldn't be performed without the participation of the devadasis.

One of the facts that disturbed Charulata while studying their lives was that devadasis were recruited at a very young age, before hitting puberty and could never marry. Often families themselves gave their daughters to be devadasis or rulers designated girls to specific temples. However, in Andhra, it was often the temple priestess, as Gurumurthy analyses, who later became a devadasi. Myths went on that the temple deity felt powerless and attacked by another major deity. To free the deity, girls other than the priestesses were required to fulfill his sexual appetite. In the mother goddess temple, a lesser deity was introduced as her brother to protect her. Gradually, she was made the wife of the male deity and thus there was a decline in her position. Meanwhile, ideas of ritual impurity and auspiciousness were gaining importance and the priestesses were considered impure owing to their menstrual cycle. She was made a devadasi, following the decline in the position of the goddess herself. The initiation ceremony, in Jagannath, included the devadasi being married to the temple deity. After getting inducted, she remained a 'Sadhavas' or a woman who never became a widow, except when the Navakalevara ceremony happened. They were forbidden from any sexual contact and lived a life of austerity. Nor were they allowed to sing or dace outside the temple premises. This was a stark contrast with the devadasis down in Andhra of the same time period. Charulata and her friend had discussed this.

Frederique Marglin mentions an officer, *dosandhi parricha,* who was appointed to make sure that the devadasis in Puri didn't have any sexual relation with men from non-water giving castes. In Andhra, the patron, the zamindar or king had less influence on the devadasis. Restrictions on sexual relations were rare, if at all present, they were dictated by the girl's parents. Often, the parents would choose the first man, their daughter would have sexual relations with, much like in the system of arranged marriages, as Devash Soneji writes. This was the case even in the 1920s when the idea of a devadasi being a prostitute had crystallised. Not every devadasi had similar functions. There were some who just sang in the innermost part of the temple where the deity resided who were called *Bhitara Gauni,* some danced and were called *Nachuni, Samprada,* the one who sang outside the inner sanctuary, *Patauri* who danced in the ceremonial processions of the lord and those who fanned the lord were called *Gaudasani.* The devadasis were required during the marriage ceremony of

Rukmini, during the Rath Yatra and also had to play the role of Lakshmi in a quarrel between Lakshmi and Vishnu post the Rath Yatra. The devadasi dance was considered extremely pious and they weren't allowed to perform anywhere outside the temple. The devadasis in Puri functioned for a long time. Gradually they moved from just temples to rulers, landlords and wealthy men. Even in Andhra, the devadasis in the nineteenth century performed at the houses of the zamindars. Finally, it ended up for anyone who could pay. While there exists virtually none now in Orissa, the case is quite different for Andhra, where they lived, stigmatized and shunned. Charulata couldn't shake her thoughts and neither could her friend. Talking to each other, although therapeutic, increased their disturbances, at each step thinking if they can go from merely researching on them to actually helping those who exist, living without warmth or home.

Dastangoi : Magic and Mystique

Apala Naithani

There are stark contrasts in reading a saga, epic, or a story or narrating the same. The weave the different strands of a story and presenting them to an audience has been an integral part of every culture. Storytelling is one of the most enriching and prosperous segments of cultures across the globe. One of the most celebrated and singularly recognized form of storytelling is Dastangoi.

The Dastangoi is an oral narrative genre. It is believed that this oral tradition reached Asia through the Arabian Peninsula via Persia as early as the 7th century C.E. It is a popularly held belief that a Pagan, Nazr bin-Al Haris of Mecca fancied Persian Dastans to the message of Allah and turned men away from Prophet Muhammad's preaching. Dastangoi is a 13th century Urdu praxis of storytelling. The Persian tradition of telling stories was reinvigorated in the 16th century. It is said that Akbar was a major instigator in the transmission of this tradition. As noted by many historians, Akbar had dyslexia, and thus he ordered a picturesque portrayal of Dastan-e-Amir Hamza. Large paintings were painted and a Dastango (storyteller) narrated the story of the Adventures of Amir Hamza. The layout for Dastango is quite simple. The Dastango has to wear a white *kurta-pyjama* they have to sit in a *Namaazi* position and keep a silver bowl filled with water besides them. It is a kind of informal *baithak.* To complete the look a white *Wajid Ali Shah* style Topi is worn by the Dastango. Initially only one Dastango narrated the story but later the trend of two Dastangos became famous.

Dastangoi as mentioned above is "*the Persian art of storytelling";* the contents of the Dastan pursue a definite, clear cut and a palpable pattern of magical elements, anecdotes etc, which add distinctive features and giving it a unique edge over other forms of storytelling. There are three prime attributes of a Dastan and they are (a) – *Tilism (enchantment), (b) aiyaari (trickery) and, (c) razm (warfare).* The chronicle revolves around these three templates in a Traditional Dastan. Thus, the Traditional Dastan is infused with mysticism, suspense, magic and fantasies etc. The Dastango is obligated to follow these

patterns. There has been a change and two pertinent bifurcations in Dastangoi have surfaced. The first one, as mentioned above, Traditional Dastan which comprises of Adventures of Amir Hamza and a well-known chapter of the same book, *Tilism-e-Hoshruba.* There has been a break with the past and the traditional style of Dastangoi has undergone a metamorphosis and thus a new style of Dastangoi has been born which is categorised as the Modern Dastan, an exemplar of which is the the *Dastan-e-Tasqeem-e-Hind,* telling the gruesome tale of the partition of India and Pakistan. Dastangoi is a performative art and it's essence solely relies on the writing i.e. the content of the Dastan, it is a celebrated fact that if the writing of the Dastan is concrete then the performance of the Dastango will automatically improve. Dastangoi has gone through different contours and has given birth to its various forms. It was commonly thought that only the people who are proficient in Urdu, can make sense and learn the art of Dastangoi. But this myth has been busted by the growth of Modern Dastangoi. Dastangoi was initially seen as a tradition which was exclusive only to the "*elite Urdu speaking gentry*" but recent innovation and modification has been witnessed and the proliferation of this art form in the 21st century has been on two basic grounds. The first is that this skill of telling tales and legends endeavours to manifests itself as a popular art among the masses. The second that this art form was initially restricted in the aspects of magical realism, mysticism and anecdotes but in the 21st century has burgeoned as an art form which accommodates socially relevant issues and also thrives to synthesise the elements of edification and entertainment. The cradle of Dastangoi in the Indian subcontinent has been Lucknow, the city of Nawabs, and Delhi. There has been a sprinkling of female Dastangos in these male bastions. The most illustrious being Fouzia Dastango and Valentina Dastango. They have broken the shackles of this ancient tradition and have succeeded in expanding the horizon of Dastangoi. They usually like to engage with the audience comprising of little kids and, as children are ardent story listeners, they share with them the Tale of Little Prince (Dastan Little Prince Ki). Fouzia has worked on the Dastan of our very own Gandhiji and has performed Dastans which attacks the nerves of gender issues like *Nanhi ki Nani* a beautiful story of one of the most eminent female writer *Ismat Chugtai.* Dastangoi is the literal amalgamation of "*text and performance".* The Dastango's performance completely rests on the richness of the text. An experienced Dastango can add his own nuances to embellish the texture of the narrative.

There has been a revival of this tradition and many young artists have been attracted to this art form. The late *Ankit Chadha,* a child prodigy who passed away on 9th May, 2018 was one of the most popular Dastango's of the 21st century. The boy who revelled in sharing the reminisces of Amir Khusrau and the legends of Kabir. Dastango- a lucid, uncomplicated, simple but significant form of art, doesn't require an elaborate setup. It was performed in *bazaars (markets), chai stalls (tea points)* was and it has continued it's legacy to make the audience take a break from the hectic schedule of life and transfer them in

the lands of unknown magic and mystery. Dastango has evolved in the years down the line and has refused to die out. It's an art form which has familiarised itself with the current situations and thus became relevant in today's time. *Danish Husain* the foremost and revered Dastango of modern times has aptly said," *Art does not happen in a vacuum. It happens within real people, by real people, for real people. So it is inevitable that it will take shape, reshape, distort, mould as it unfurls in the milieu it performs in.*"

The Drama Lovers on Foot

Ananya Chaudhuri

As you finish reading the title, you will probably start to wonder what this article will be all about. This article is one which talks of very peculiar and vibrant theatre culture of Assam, which is performed not in rigid theatres but on the move and outside the boundary walls of a hall. This is a form special to Assam, standing the test of time. The state has always had a glorious past associated with theatre. One of the most important forms is the Bhaona, composed by Vaishnava reformers like Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva, staged in community halls named Naam-Ghar. But the ever famous Achyut Lahkar, who founded The Nataraj Theatre Company in 1963, is known to have been the founder of the modern mobile theatre concept in Assam. Pathshala, a place in lower Assam, also called the Hollywood of Assam by some, is considered to be the home of the roving theatre movement in the State. The best part about this industry and the reason for its continuity could be attributed to the fact that Assam's mobile theatre has evolved in so many ways that now it performs on topics not just related to mythology but other interesting stories like classic Greek tragedies, Shakespearean tales, plays based on other Assamese writers and their novels, sinking of the Titanic, Gaisal Train tragedy in India, Lady Diana, Osama Bin Laden's kamikaze attack of 9/11, etc. Some of the ever famous mobile theatres would be Kohinoor Opera, Abahon Theatre, Srimanta Sankaradev Theatre, Hengool Theatre, etc. These have delivered outstanding performances to a length that their turnover could be roughly edged to 10million. How amazing is that! Who would think that a culture which is barely heard of and even less promoted across the country has so much of potential? A popular journalist, Tora Agarwala, once wrote in an article that "Assam's theatre industry is under fire for rapidly shedding its traditional identity for embracing the contemporary. But it continues to thrive on popular demand". These mobile theatres are not simply a caravan of a group of people roaming from village to village but an organized group of around 200 people including the playwrights, the actors, the musicians, the helper, even the cooks. They move in trucks packed with equipments, props, costumes and everything necessary to keep the show on.

Even big stars from the Assamese movie industry, like Jatin Bora and a few more have shifted to this mobile profession which performs literally for the public and remains at the ground level. Although they continue during most periods of the year, they are specifically active during festivals, owing to the presence of a 'holiday enjoying crowd'. They have become a major source of entertainment in both urban and rural areas. The theatre units are now representing a rich culture with new innovations, understanding of the audience's need and delivering quality plays. Each season of a particular theatre would stage at most four plays and the number of shows usually depends upon popular demand. However, the most important part of this culture is that usually when these groups are performing in rural areas, the host village itself starts to help them assemble their equipments, set up the stage and, sell and book tickets. They also give their feedback at the end of the play which helps the group improve and fill up their gaps, if there are any, and also forms a bond between the audience and the group itself. Also, because they actually move to the remotest areas, providing entertainment to those who do not get to avail the luxury of a cinema hall, they are even more popular among the Assamese masses. They have created plays based on regional folklore, adapting to the music and dance sequences of bigger budgeted cinema, creating a vibe of positive and vibrant energy. They are also known to have started recording music for the plays by famous singers of the Assamese film industry like Zubeen Garg, which is a huge change from the earlier performing live orchestrated bands.

However, it has been heard that the language being used, for some, stands to be an issue in these plays. The language at times could be a little rough but the kind of audience this theatre mainly delivers to enjoy that kind of delivery. The colloquial language might be an added bonus to show how this industry is basically meant for the masses, considering they are still most popular in the rural areas. This industry acts as a medium of providing employment to a huge number of people, right from struggling actors to cooks! Yes, earlier this industry wasn't as stable as is with many others from the media background but recently, Assam's mobile theatre industry has started to gain so much momentum that it is able to sustain itself economically as well. This has inspired so many other places to form such groups in their areas but what remains unique to this State is the kind of subjects being taken to woo the audience and in turn the audience also enjoys it. It was also noticed how the creators of the mobile industry were not so keen in commercializing their plays to achieve an "official industrial' status considering the fact that theatres are not thriving as much in Assam. But at the end of the day, they continue to attain a place as one of the most important modes of entertainment in the state.

सिनेमा के परिप्रेक्ष्य मे : मेरा कानपुर

Shivangi Dixit

कानपुर, उत्तर प्रदेश का एक बड़ा शहर ; पर हिंदुस्तानी सिनेमा में, बहुत छोटी जगह । कल्पना में बहुत अजीब , पर वास्तविक सत्य । सिनेमा, जिसे आजकल मूवीज भी कहा जाने लगा है, आज भी हमारे मनोरंजन और ज्ञानवर्धन का एक बहुत शक्तिशाली माध्यम है पर क्या यह सिनेमा अपने उद्देश्य को प्राप्त करने में सफल हो पाया है ? सिनेमा या मूवीज तो आज भी हम सभी देखते हैं पर क्या उस सिनेमा में जो दिखाया गया है या जो हम देख के आये हैं वो वास्तविकता में कितना यथार्थ है इस की जाँच भी करते हैं ? तो जवाब होगा - नहीं । उत्तर प्रदेश, जिसे अक्सर हम ने कभी मूवीज में, जैसे ओमकारा (2006), जिला गाज़िआबाद (2013) में ; तो कभी मिर्जापुर जैसे वेब सीरीज में देखा है , उस से हमें इस राज्य की छवि के बारे में जो पता चलता है, वो है - भ्रष्टाचार, पिछड़ापन, गुंडागर्दी , गाली - गलौज वाला माहौल , माफिया इत्यादि । उसी प्रकार की मानसिकता हमारी इस प्रदेश के कुछ चुनिंदा शहरों के बारे में भी बन जाती है । उन्ही शहरों में से एक शहर है - कानपुर, जिसे हम उस के उस रूप से पहचानते हैं जिसे सिनेमा ने हमारे सामने प्रस्तुत किया है । पर क्या वह वास्तविकता में भी वैसा ही है ? हम ने बंटी बबली (2005), टशन (2008), तनु वेड्स मनु (2011), दबंग २ (2012), जॉली ऐल ऐल बी २ (2017), इत्यादि मूवीज में कानपुर शहर का नाम सुना या उस की झलक देखी ; परन्तु शायद ही किसी ने कहानी की पटकथा , नायक - नायिका , गाने और संवाद के अलावा इस शहर को देखा या यथार्थ में उस के परिवेश को जानने की कोशिश ही की हो ?

करते भी क्यों ? आखिर कानपुर शहर कौन सा मुंबई , दिल्ली या कोलकाता की तरह कोई जाना माना शहर है; या फिर आज के इस २१ वी सदी के भारत में उभरता हुआ कोई प्रगतिशील शहर । दरअसल इन चलचित्रों को देखने वालो में से तो कई लोगो ने ये ध्यान भी नहीं दिया होगा कि इन चलचित्रों की भूमिका आखिरकार किन शहरों को लेकर बनायीं गयी है । इस में सामान्यता दर्शक वर्ग की कोई गलती है भी नहीं। सिनेमा ने जो जगह कानपुर को अपनी मूवीज में दी है, दर्शक वर्ग ने भी उसी नम्बर के चश्मे से उसे देखा है। जहाँ बंटी - बबली में मात्र कानपुर रेलवे स्टेशन की एक झलक देखने को मिलती है तो वहीँ टशन में गैंगवार के लिए पृष्ठभूमि की तरह इस्तेमाल किया गया इस शहर का नाम । तनु वेड्स मनु २ में एक अक्खड़ , मनमर्जी करने वाली कनपुरिया लड़की है तो दबंग २ में एक भ्रष्टाचारी कनपुरिया राजनेता का आतंक । जॉली ऐल ऐल बी २ भी अक्षय कुमार के एक सकारात्मक किरदार में कनपुरिया लहजे और रौब की नकारात्मक छवि लिए हुए कानपुर की अस्मिता का कुछ भला नहीं कर पाती । हमें इस मूवी का वो संवाद तो अच्छे से याद ही होगा जहाँ नायक ने अपने कनपुरिया अंदाज में अपने लखनवी समकक्ष को करारा जवाब दिया था । परन्तु इस का कारण क्या है ? यदि हम इस सवाल का जवाब ढूंढें तो इस के उत्तर में दो वजहें पाएंगे - पहली, या तो कानपुर शहर में ऐसा कुछ है ही नहीं, जिसे फिल्माया जा सके या फिर दूसरी, कि सिनेमा को इस शहर को पृस्ठभूमि में ले कर कुछ दिखाने का कोई आर्थिक लाभ नहीं होता परन्तु इस में पहली वजह तो पूर्णतया बेवजह है । २ स्टेट्स मूवी में आई आई एम् अहमदाबाद को जो दर्जा , जो प्रतिस्ठा और जो सम्मान मिला है वो आई आई टी कानपुर को किसी मूवी में नहीं मिला । पद्मावत और मणिकर्णिका जैसे मूवीज में जो स्थान क्रमशा राजपूत महाराजाओं की शान, झाँसी और लक्ष्मीबाई को मिला है वो १८५७ की संघर्ष में कानपुर और कनपुरिया नेताओं (नानाराव) तथा १९४७ तक की आज़ादी के संघर्ष में इस शहर कि भूमिका को कभी नहीं मिला । ना कभी रांझणा के बनारस की गंगा और घाटों की तरह कानपूर की गंगा और बिठूर घाट को कोई कुंदन ही मिल पाया और ना ही कभी मुंबई के भीड़ भाड वाले मरीन ड्राइव की जगह कानपुर का कोई औद्योगिक समृद्धता और लोगो से भरा सिविल लाइन्स ले पाया ।

अभी मैंने जिन संस्थानों, चलचित्रों, स्थानों, और महानायकों का ज़िक्र किया ; मेरा अभिप्राय कदापि उन के महत्व को कम कर के आँकना नहीं है अपितु मैं केवल अपने इस कानपुर शहर को किसी और से किसी भी मामले में कम ना पाते हुए मात्र इसे सिनेमा जगत में उस का आधिकारिक हक़ दिलाना चाहती हूँ । कानपुर शहर ने हमारी मूवी इंडस्ट्री को अल्ताफ राजा, अभिजीत भट्टाचार्य, देव कुमार, राजू श्रीवास्तव, अंकित तिवारी, पूनम ढिल्लों जैसे श्रेष्ठ नायक, नायिकाएं, संगीतकार, गायक इत्यादि दिए परन्तु हिंदुस्तानी सिनेमा ने बदले में इस शहर को पूरी तरह से नजरअंदाज कर दिया । तो फिर प्रश्न यह उठता है कि क्या हमारे सिनेमा कि यही जवाबदेही है ? यही उत्तरदायिता है ? जिसे सिनेमा ने मात्र पैसा कमाने के लिए बड़े बड़े शहरों और उन कि कहानियों को प्रदर्शित कर ना केवल कानपुर जैसे बल्कि उत्तर प्रदेश, मध्य प्रदेश, बिहार के कई और छोटे छोटे शहरों को दरकिनार कर के असफलतापूर्वक निभाया है । तो अब इस

का एक ही मतलब निकलता है कि शायद कानपुर को चलचित्रों में प्रदर्शित करने से हमारे कुशल निर्माता निर्देशकों का कोई मतलब नहीं निकलता । पर मैंने उम्मीद नहीं छोड़ी है , मुझे पूरी उम्मीद है कि कभी ना कभी तो हमारा सिनेमा इन छोटे शहरों के प्रति अपनी जिम्मेदारी को समझेगा और इन्हे भी बाकी के कुछ बड़े शहरों की तरह ही नेतृत्व मिल पाएगा । ना केवल वो इन शहरों में फैले (कुछ लोगों के द्वारा किये जाने वाले) भ्रष्टाचार, गुंडागर्दी, अक्खड़पंती , गाली - गलौज वाले माहौल को दिखाएगा बल्कि (शहर कि ज्यादातर आम लोगों के चरित्र) शहर के इतिहास, उस कि अस्मिता और उस के गौरव को भी दिखाएगा ।

Changing Phase of Telugu Cinema

S. Ishwarya

"A film is like a thali with a lot of elements put together on one plate"

Cinema is a very powerful and an effective visual medium to educate people about ones culture. Therefore, in order to understand the people of Andhra and Telangana, their culture and traditions, one of the most convenient source would be the Telugu and Telangana Films popularly categorized as 'Tollywood', which forms the second largest industry following Bollywood. In this article our focus would essentially be on the stereotyping of the Telugu Film Industry. It is true that cinema if not in its entirety but in a broad sense displays the true essence of ones culture. However, the popular perception that movies of Telugu film industry are essentially "mass movies" is a way that they are being stereotyped. While we do have mass movies like 'Simhadri', 'Aadi', 'Samarasimha Reddy', we also have 'Fidaa' (RomCom), 'Bharath Ane Nenu' (political), 'Baahubali', 'Mahanati' (autobiography), 'Rangasthalam' (Drama), among many others. Telugu film industry has also produced some realistic and classy movies as well. For instance, in the movie 'Bale Bale Magadivoi' the hero is shown having a severe problem of memory loss and the movie is about the problems that he gets to face in his everyday life as a result of it and how he deals with it; 'Mahanubhavudu' is a movie which deals with the problem of OCD and the way hero tries to overcome it; the movie 'Anand' is about the heroin losing her family at a very young age and her leading an independent life with self esteem. All these movies have been taken in a very entertaining and a non-preachy manner. In fact actors like Nani (called as Natural Star) and Sai Pallavi are known for acting in a realistic manner in films that are true to real life experiences. In the past, movies in order to elevate the hero often displayed his heroism by showing him smarter than the villain. In more recent times there has been a shift in this trend. This

can be seen in movies like Julayi where the villain is equally smart like the hero. This new take makes a movie more gripping to watch.

Andhra Pradesh is a land of immense cultural variations. While on one hand we have *Coastal Andhra* which is very well represented in movies like 'Seethamma vakitlo sirimalle chettu', 'Uyyala Jampala' etc, we also have *Rayalaseema*, portrayed best in movies like 'Maryada Ramanna', 'Aravinda Sametha', to name a few. The variation is shown in terms of their dialect, food habits, personality, festivals, etc. When it comes to movies portraying Rayalaseema traditions, the region is often depicted for their faction and extremely hot headed people, strong and powerful personalities of both men and women, importance being given to athidhi maryada (i.e. respecting the guest), etc. But in recent movie like 'Aravinda Sametha' a shift has been shown where there is importance being laid on non-violence. The movie clearly states that people give importance to who won the war while they neglect the after effects of the war. The movie shows heroism as in someone who can stop the war from happening in the first place. This is a diabolic shift as earlier the same actor who worked in this film was part of faction oriented movies. In the movies previously there was not much portrayal of coastal culture and language but over a period of time change has taken place and movies like 'Seethamma Vakitlo Sirimalle chettu', and 'Uyyala Jamppalla' which are coastal centric movies have come up. This makes people well accustomed to costal culture as well.

Telangana as a language was always made fun off in films. Comedians in such films used to talk in Telangana dialect and it was considered to be a comic relief. Of late this trend has changed for good. For instance, in movies like Life is 'Beautiful', 'Fidaa' (both are movies of Shekar Kamula) and other such movies Telangana language and culture has been very well portrayed. The way people look at Telangana language now is undergoing a massive change. Shifting our focus to some of the old Telugu movies it needs to be pointed out that they not only portrayed traditional, orthodox culture but also had a modern touch in them. For instance, in the movie 'Pelli Chesukumdam', the heroin (Soundharya) who is a rape victim is given a lot of strength by the hero portraying a very modern outlook. He gets her out of the feeling of shame and that she is not the one to be blamed for rape. In another instance, in the poster of the movie 'Pavitra Bandham', the hero (Venkatesh) is shown touching the feet of the heroin, which was completely a non- conservative portrayal and revolutionary at the time. In the movie 'Illali Korikalu' (1982), Feminism is shown in the character of female protagonist. The wife goes on to work against the wish of her husband. In the same movie, unwanted pregnancies and use of protection is emphasized upon. Keeping in mind the time of this movie's release, it was a modern idea, which was well depicted. This shows that there is no dearth of progressive movies in the Telugu industry even in the past.

Further talking about stereotyping, Telugu movies are often considered to be conservative in nature. But more recently, movies like 'Arjun Reddy' has broken this trend. There was a lot of upheaval over the poster and adult content in this movie before its release in the state. In spite of this, the movie was well received by the audience as content is the king anywhere. After this movie one can observe the breaking of conservative mindset with respect to creativity both in the minds of audience and the filmmakers. One such outcome is the movie 'RX100' which did not shy away from showing cozy scenes when needed in the film. Moving on to another stereotype, in comparison to some other industries the Telugu film industry does not focus much on weight of the heroin. For instance, in the movies 'Kitakitalu' and 'Size Zero' the problems of an overweight girl, problems she faces in society and her response to it is very well portrayed. Like any other industry Telugu film industry also has a few negatives, which needs to be worked upon. The negative problems which are being talked about is that the industry is male dominated, prevalence of nepotism, heroes being awarded titles, despite there being songs with lyrics beautifully describing women there are also lyrics which objectify a women in the so- called 'Item Numbers'. Earlier female oriented movies were very few. However, a change has been coming in this sphere too with respect to movies like 'Mahanati', 'Fidaa' and 'Anand'. Telugu industry is also known for some of its most talented dancers like Chiranjeevi, Allu Arjun, Jr. NTR, Ram Charan, etc.

Though Many Bollywood directors have been remaking Telugu films like 'Pokiri' (Wanted), 'Ready', 'Temper' (Simmba), 'Arjun Reddy' (Kabir Khan); 'Baahubali' franchise has become a game changer and people have started taking more notice of Telugu films. Earlier Telugu films did not receive a strong response abroad in comparison to movies of the Bollywood Khan's. But now its not the same. Therefore Telugu industry is also a great contributor to the indian cinema like all other industries. A lot of meaningful cinemas have been coming up over the period of evolution of the industry and not just mass movies as is often assumed and generalized. When it comes to the age old debate of whether movies are influencing the society it is safe to say that movies are not only influencing society but they are also a reflection of the society. This stands true in case of Andhra and Telangana movies too. Though there are stereotypes in this Industry just like any other industry it does not negate the fact that some wonderful films have been produced by this industry. It is also undergoing change for the better.

Demystifying Third Cinema

Seerat Kaur

'There are no rules in film-making. Only sins. And the cardinal sin is dullness.'
– Frank Capra

In any discussion about films and film- making, it is most important to understand what the genre of the film is. According to Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, genre is 'a category of artistic, musical, or literary composition characterized by a particular form, style, or content.' In most basic terms, genre helps to classify different kinds of films. It helps us to distinguish and characterize them. Some genres have sub-genres as well. Since we've understood the concept of genre, we can discuss what the terms 'first cinema', 'second/parallel cinema' and, 'third/alternative cinema' mean. Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino wrote an article called, 'Towards a Third Cinema'. They more or less broke down the world of cinema into three categories: First Cinema, being Hollywood, Second Cinema, being European art cinema, and finally, Third Cinema. The purpose of this article is to understand the concept of third cinema.

Third Cinema developed as an aesthetic whose principles have guided film-makers in the regions of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. First Cinema conjures up images of Hollywood films, bourgeois values, and consumption. Second or parallel Cinema consist of European art films which exhibit aesthetic innovations. Third Cinema, however, subverts cinematic codes, and tries to combat the passive film watching experience of commercial cinema. Films such

as 'Dev-D', 'Black Friday', 'Dhobi Ghat', etc., are not considered as truly commercial films. They have a certain darkness about them. These films usually leave you feeling a bit unsettled and sickly. In contrast, mainstream, commercial Bollywood films such as 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai', and 'Dil Dhadakne Do', are lighter films. They don't necessarily carry a social message. Third Cinema films more or less always carry a social message. They express frustration towards a racial, gender, religious or class oppression, and discrimination. It is probably best understood as a tool for documenting social realities. Third Cinema is not confined to only some specific countries. The African Third Cinema was for the longest time known as the 'Cinema of Silence'. The Africans wanted their spirituality to be protected and to be filmed without any form of invasion. The silence in Third Cinema produced in Africa has two levels of readings: First, tradition is instinctual and articulation is not necessary for active opposition to the external religions; Second, the silence depicts a kind of reverence for traditional culture which, in spite of the attempts by foreign forces at imperialism, remains deeply bound to African identity. The importance of Third Cinema as a medium also developed in Europe. It began and was pushed forward by the Black Audio Film Collective formed in the 1980s within U.K. borders. In their struggle to find a new form of expression under Thatcherism, Black Audio Film Collective assumed a fundamental role in the presence of Third Cinema.

Therefore, to say that Third Cinema was confined to Africa, Asia, and Latin America would be wrong as that would be dismissing the powerful effect it had within European borders. However, the objective of this article in to understand the evolution of Third Cinema in the Indian Context. Some Directors who have contributed greatly to the development of Third Cinema in India are Satyajit Ray, Shyam Benegal, Guru Dutt, Anurag Kashyap, Kiran Rao, Gulzar, Dadasahib Phalke, and countless others. Some famous actors who have participated in pushing this movement forward are Naseeruddin Shah, Shabana Azmi, Smita Patil, Om Puri, and many more.

Aurobindo Ghose suggests that the concept of Third Cinema in India seems somewhat diluted. He feels that it is not revolutionary but reformative which compromises between minimal commercial viability and the availability of some significant social messages concerning women, children, and the un-employed, which one can see in most Anurag Kashyap films. These issues end up reaching a large section of the masses as they can relate to them. Given the socio-economic situation of India today, it is evident that Third Cinema plays a crucial role. It tries to highlight the issues faced by the marginalized sections, and the downtrodden. It also tries to educate the masses toward developing some social concern and a more empathetic mind. When we talk about the relationship that Bollywood and Third Cinema share, it is best understood by analyzing films such as 'Dangal', 'Raazi', 'Rang De Basanti' and so on. These are films have elements of Third Cinema. Each of them talks about one or the other social issue, or display frustration with some sort of oppression. However,

these films also did well commercially, at the box office. They star some of the most commercially popular, and critically acclaimed actors. The relationship between Bollywood and Third Cinema seems to be growing stronger by the minute. As put forward by Solanas and Getino, Third Cinema is 'above all, a new conception of film-making and the significance of art in our times.' They also invoke Marx's eleventh thesis on Ludwig Feuerbach, 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways ; the point, however, is to change it.' By doing so, they've tried to connect Third Cinema with Marxism and this shows that the historical development of class consciousness must be linked to developments of race, as well as nationalist consciousness in the process of knowledge making. This point connects the decolonization movements with the history and theory of the Marxist revolution, and these thematics inform to various degrees the work of many third world film-makers. The last point we need to discuss to end our discussion on Third Cinema is audience mentality towards it. There are a large number of people who find films such as Dhobi Ghat extremely vague and unenjoyable. There's an even larger section for whom the entire film-watching experience is a kind of escape. Many people want to watch slap-stick comedies to switch off from the 'real world'. Similarly, there is another section that find films such as, 'Pather Panchali', and 'Dangal', thought-provoking.

In conclusion, Third Cinema is an important category of films and the amalgamation and relationship of Third Cinema and Bollywood has created some exceptional films that have, in spite of being quite different from the commercial Bollywood cinema, done exceedingly well at the box office. In the course of our discussion we have talked about the very first few Third Cinema directors such as Satyajit Ray and Guru Dutt, and we have also talked about the new-age Third Cinema directors like Anurag Kashyap, and Kiran Rao. If one watches a Rao film, and an Anurag Kashyap film, they can see how Third Cinema has progressed and evolved over the years in India. Third Cinema films always make for an interesting movie-watching experience.

DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT 2018

The year 2018 witnessed a number of events organized by the Department of History. The year started off with an **INTACH Workshop** which was held on **16ᵗʰ January 2018**. The Department since long has been involving students in heritage awareness programs and this is evident in the many certificate courses and workshops that the students have undertaken under the guidance of INTACH, Delhi.

On **7ᵗʰ February 2018**, the faculty of the department took the students on a visit to **Purana Qila** to witness the ongoing excavation there. Students got to see a number of artifacts that were unearthed and they got to make a sense of how archaeological work is carried out.

This was followed by the **Department's Annual Day** which was held on **27ᵗʰ March 2018**. The annual **lecture** was presented by Prof. Sunil Kumar followed by a panel discussion with Dr. Lata Singh and Dr. Saumya Gupta on **"Cultural Contestations In The Making of India"**. This was followed by a **quiz competition** on the topic **"Food And Culture"**; **Poetry In Motion** on **"War And Peace"**. The annual day was wrapped up following the **debate competition** held on the topic **" Should Housewives Be Considered As Contributors To GDP?"**

The department also came up with its **annual newsletter " Chronicle 2018"** on the topic **"Women's Movement Across The World: A Historical Perspective"**. The students of all the three years contributed articles for the newsletter covering different dimensions of the topic.

On **27ᵗʰ April 2018**, second year students bid farewell to third year students wishing them success and happiness in their future endeavors. On **8ᵗʰ august 2018**, **Departmental elections** was held wherein the department president, vice- president, General Secretary and treasurer were elected.

On **27ᵗʰ august 2018**, the department held its **Fresher's Day** for the students of first year. It was a very simple gathering of students of all the three years as a mark of welcoming the first years into their college life and to the department.

The Department every year organizes lectures by some prominent scholars/ historians, which is a great learning experience for students. On **30ᵗʰ August 2018**, **Prof Pius Malekandathil** presented a lecture on **"Indian Oceanic Trade Network In The 17ᵗʰ And 18ᵗʰ century.** And on **5ᵗʰ October 2018, Prof, Najaf Haidar** delivered a lecture on **"Courtly Culture And Norms Of Good Behavior In Mughal India: Nobility, Harem, And The Mirzas".**

Therefore, the Department of History witnessed a number of exciting and informative events in year 2018.