



Appropriation of *Tandava* in Dance Reality Shows: A Critical Study

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Abstract:

The *tandava* of Lord Shiva is considered as the mythical fountainhead of all the subsequent Indian classical dance forms. Over the time, the *tandava* moved from funeral grounds to the precincts of temples and witnessed the heyday under royal patronage replacing the divine one, however, during the colonial period it suffered setbacks at the hands of colonial masters and missionaries allied with Indian elites. In contemporary times, *tandava* ceases to be a pure dance, embracing elements from folk and foreign traditions of dance as well as yoga and gymnastics. The hybridised version of *tandava* is created across traditional boundaries through digital technologies, without harming the sanctity of classical constituents. Classical dance movements and mudras are used not only as decorative and technical elements but also as a communicative component. The employment of basic structures and concept of classical dance with movements and mudras suggest that the secular space is appropriated to facilitate the dissemination of sacred themes in the name of entertainment. The present paper seeks to examine the re-enactment of Shiva *tandava* in the reality dance shows, namely *Entertainment Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega*, *Uggram Ujjavalam*, and *Dance India Dance (Doubles)*.

Keywords: Cosmic Dance, Mudras, Uday Shankar, Reality Dance Shows, Digital Technology

Introduction

Tandava, the eternal dance of Shiva is embellished with 108 *karanas* (synchronized movement of hands and feet) and the 32

anghaharas (graceful combination of *karanas*. The *karanas* fall under the category of *nrtta* that is defined as “pure dance” for their emphasis on movement formations. The *karana* literally translates as ‘doing, producing, or effecting” (Williams 254) and relates to a religious performance. The *karana* is not a static posture but “a small movement formation that has an initial, intermediate, and final position” (Vatsyayan 194). The *karana* is constituted of the movements like the *cari* (movement with a single leg/foot), the *hasta* (hand gestures) and *angaharas* (dance postures). In this way, *tandava* is specific and appropriate combination of *karanas* (movements), postures and hand gestures. Specifically, the *Natyasastra* describes the *karana* as simultaneous movement of hands and feet while dancing. *Karanas* are not merely technical expositions of dance as often considered; rather they can also be used as narrative and communicative devices. Specific and appropriate combinations of *karanas* constitute larger formations that enrich the repertoire of movement. This aspect of dance, according to the *Natyasastra*, is called *tandava*. In a particular way, the *karanas*, namely *asamyuta* (single-handed), *samyuta* (double-handed) and feet (*padas*) movement are the source of all dance movements.

Evolution of Shiva’s Dance

As the origin of *tandava* is ascribed to Lord Shiva, it was performed by the deity alone in fierce and awesome mood on the cremation or funeral grounds. From the cemeteries *tandava* undertook journey to the precincts of temples, assuming the religious role in place of the divine one. In modern times, under the influence of the European Orientalists and native nationalists, philosophers, poets and thinkers like Rabindranath Tagore, Krishna Iyer, Valathol Narayan Menon, Rukmani Arundale, Uday Shankar, the dancer *par excellence*, revolutionized the domain of Indian dance in both form and content. Shankar globalized the regional stylized Indian temple dance, recreating it in a new style named as ‘Hi-Dance’ and re-named as ‘Creative Dance’ which fuses European modern theatrical techniques and Indian classical dance with indigenous cultures and traditions. Shankar moved

away from the traditional use of *mudras* and facial expressions to body expression as, to him, beauty of dance lies in simplicity and naturalness than in the excessive use of *mudras* and intricate footwork. Shankar created concise, compact, clear and shortened dance performances, dropping repetition of words, phrases, emotions, gestures and poses. Khokar writes, “Though Shankar well learned the hasta-mudras, he had little fascination for them.” Shankar himself stated that he tried to avoid *mudras* as much as possible to make a statement such as ‘I feel angry!’ He felt that the same statement could be shown using the entire body in motion (qtd. in Paine 49). In Shankar’s compositions, movements were chosen for their aesthetic and expressive quality, rather than from a given geometrical (regular) motif. His motto about presentation was, “Give the audience what they want before they know what they want.” as he realized that the audience is an integral participant in any performance. “Short dances in quick succession with costume changes and distinctive melodies. This is what kept the audiences’ attention” (Erdman 80). Anthropologist Joan L. Erdman suggests that Uday Shankar’s performances had universal appeal and even creative hybridization. Presentation of his cultural art to another culture’s audience is not a “circus of the exotic” or a variety show, which offers excitement or allure” (80)

In contemporary times, *tandava*, embracing elements from folk and foreign traditions of dance as well *yoga* and gymnastics, ceases to be a pure dance, taking on secular and universal dimensions, and this new form befits the new technologies in its creation and circulation beyond the traditional boundaries. The hybridized version of *tandava* dance can profitably be created through the digital technologies, without harming the sanctity of classical constituents. It is only through the new media the genre of *tandava* is assuming new formats and functions, from the sacred to the secular, involving masses and money, transcending the classical range and purpose. The images of mythological figures and mythological locales such as cosmic mountain or *Kailash* Mountain, abode of Shiva, can be created in a short while, using new technologies. Traditional musical instruments like *sitar*,

sarod, *tambura*, *sahnai*, and *sarangi* are easily replaced by the creations of new media without harming the beauty of the performance. Moreover, the new media help introduce the audience with legendary dancers both alive and dead, through computer generated images as source of motivation and guidance for the budding dancers.

In the recent times, in the field of television/entertainment, producers are under acute pressure to create something new and saleable. Television reality shows display “the lives of ordinary people engaged in sometimes extraordinary events” (Jagodzinski 320). *Tandava* becomes the favorite subject of reality shows due to its primitive association with divinity. The cult of masculinity is also propagated through the image of Shiva. Even the larger number of female performers and audience desirous of emulating the cult of masculinity to be strong and sturdy constitute the audience. The present study analyzes the re-enactment of Shiva *tandava* in dance reality shows, namely *Entertainment Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega*, *Uggram Ujjavalam* and *Dance Indian Dance (Doubles)*, using the dance-dramas of Uday Shankar as critical baseline. In these dance performances, blend of a wide range of folk, semi-classical, classical, martial art, acrobatics, yoga, theatrical contemporary and western styles caters to the taste of spectators/audience from diverse cultural backgrounds. These shows are cultural platforms where not only male participants but also female performers, irrespective of class and colour, region and religion, are provided with equal space and opportunity to showcase their talent and technique. Contrary to the classical costume, the costume in these shows varies from dance to dance, episode to episode in harmony with the intended colour effect, flouting the conventional code of costume where female dancers were restricted to *saree* with fan-shaped pleats and male to *dhoti*. The traditional costume is replaced with skirt/ short and *sherwani* respectively in harmony with the contemporary cultural fads not only to facilitate the dance movements but also to illustrate the overriding theme. Classical dance movements and *mudras* are

used in the shows not only as decorative and technical element but also communicative component. The employment of basic structure and concept of classical dance with movements and *mudras*; gestures and postures suggests that the secular stage is appropriated to facilitate the dissemination of sacred themes in the name of entertainment.

Entertainment Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega (Season 3):

The show was created by Wizcrafts and an American derivative of the show 30 Seconds of Fame, hosted by Craig Jackson and aired on Sony TV started from August 2010. In the show, nine dancers unfold dance performance, with one in the lead, and the rest in the background. The act depicts their experiment with a new style and genre by using glowing costumes and interactive projections to transport viewers into a fantastical world, thereby making it a live technological performance in the line of Uday Shankar who under the influence of *Kathakali* dance used bright and bulky costume in harmony with the concept of Indianness to create colour effect even at the cost of comfort of the performer.

The pictorial representation of multiple-armed Shiva depicts his indulgence in battle with cosmic forces and expresses his multiple qualities through various *mudras*. Shiva in *jnana mudra*, in which the index fingers are folded in a way that they touch the inside root of thumbs and straightening the remaining three fingers of each hand in a way they are slightly apart and relaxed, followed by appearance of eighteen arms with unfolding of two arms at a time. These arms are contrary to the four or sixteen or twenty arms making *abhaya mudra* possessed by Goddess Durga, Lord Ganesha and other Hindu deities. The deity takes a step forward and sits in *murumandi* position, spreading his knees apart while sitting low as possible. His heels are in an elevated position with his toes pointing in opposite directions and the other performers making shapes of mountains (*Kailash Parvat*) using their hands.



Fig. 1. A girl as Shiva doing *chakra asana* (Photo: Screenshot taken by the author)



Fig. 2. Shiva standing in *nataraja mudra* and the other performers in *anjali mudra* (Photo: Screenshot taken by the author)

Shiva begins *tandava* style with rapid movements of *bharatanatyam adavus* steps, taking proper care of *sthanakas*, *mandalas*, *charis* postures and finishing the step with Shiva in *vriksasana vi* posture while the other performers are visibly raising their arms in the background. The floating arms of Shiva and other performers with the back towards the viewers make shapes of *damru* on the right and *trishul* (trident) on the left suggests the importance of the audience instead of the deity. The move is finished with doing *chakra asana*, in Fig.1 in the front direction while the other performers arrange themselves behind Shiva in the form of a mountains or *Kailash parvat*. With the next beat, Shiva kneels down, partially forming the *virasana vii*, and starts spinning with to and fro movement of his body from left to right. Shiva rotates thrice and stands in a position with his right leg raised and his both arms open with one hand pointing downwards and the other pointing upwards, followed by a freestyle dancing and rotating his body twice in a squat position. In the next moment, Shiva is seen rotating sixteen times in anticlockwise direction and ends with upright and firm standing in *Nataraja* posture, in fig. 2, with his right hand in *abhaya hasta viii* position and the left hand in *danda hasta* position, stretched across his body and pointing towards upraised left foot in *kuncita pada* position. Meanwhile, the other group members arrange themselves, behind Shiva, in *anjali mudra*, with their palms joined above the head in *namaste* position.

The dance performance accomplished in complete darkness is undoubtedly unimaginable but the deity chooses evening for dance and darkness is lit up by His ornaments such as the moon on his crest and the bright rays of light emerging from the gems on the hoods of snakes. The act begins with projection of Shiva in neon blue light against the dark background of the stage, using the neon choreography to demonstrate *tandava*. Movements of the limbs through the light take body as the central tenet in the tune with Uday Shankar's emphasis on the body itself, not on parts and movements. The light helps the performers experiment with various new genres and styles of light while performing *tandava*.

Each glowing costume has its own complex multichannel light system managed by unique wireless 12 controllers. The perfect synchronization of light and sound is controlled by a special application on P.C. Additionally, the Touqueer group unveils the presence of neocolonial Western dance in the performance, while deploying the neon dance technique, the performers move out from the traditional movement vocabulary and reach out to the urban, religious-neutral and modern dance. The performance is a compilation of steps and patterns emerging from neon light. The dance conceals the forceful movements and essence of the underlying *bhava* of the performer responsible for conveying the meaning through facial expressions or words. The pre-requisite, for a classical dancer performing *tandava*, is to master the nuances of *bhava* to convey its true aesthetic appeal is missing in the performance. Besides, the performance also lacks the beginning invocation and ending salutation prevalent in the traditional spiritual choreography but it is replaced it with the Bollywood dance and music, however, the performers are putting in efforts to represent and reinvent the dance form while retaining the original movement vocabulary.

The masculine version of *tandava* as merged with neon lights is performed by female performers with hand and leg movements in tandem with the body, taking the energy to a whole new dimension in the lines of Uday Shankar who emphasized the importance of body itself in his dance performances. Performance of Shiva *tandava* by women suggests the realization of vision of liberated women who have fully realized their potential. Selecting all female performers to perform *tandava*, the choreographer intends to celebrate “the powerful conceptualizations of the feminine creative spirit.” The whole group of female performers powerfully align themselves in various patterns to indicate different icons and weapons of Shiva through blue colored neon lights. This dance production gave the women an opportunity to assume non-traditional roles in the way Uday Shankar’s performances did in the 1930s when he took women to the stage as in the ballet “Shiva-Parvati.” With advent of modernization, an

expansion of occupational opportunities for women leads to the development of gender consciousness and refutes the order of gender inequality. While performing *tandava*, female performers challenge the male leadership order which “constantly challenged the historicity of her existence and the progressive demands of her art” (Mitra 68). The lead performer signifies Shiva’s benevolent and mild character at one time, and malevolent and fierce at the other. The performer not only reflects life giving and nurturing processes but also reproduces the related processes of death and decay analogous to that of the deity.

At the end of the performance, the choreographer, being a Muslim boy, states that he faced flak from Islamic clerics for taking up Hindu dance forms. Subsequently, the choreographer was banned from pursuing his passion to teach dance for fourteen years. Anu Malik, one of the jury members on the show, encourages him by putting emphasis more on talent than religion. The performance is not just an example of cultural synthesis or syncretism but evidence of a successful plural society. The choreographer, following the precedent set by Uday Shankar to secularize Indian dance, transcending the regional and religious boundaries, is trying to secularize performance traditions. Touqueer uses real phenomena of blue colored neon lights, performers shaping themselves into a *trishul* (trident), *damru*, *shivalinga* and mountains, girls performing the aggressive *rudra tandava*, to celebrate diversity as well as individuality among Hindus and Muslims. In the present times, the idea of choreography is highly influenced by the ticketed performances, corporate and government support, and TRPs rather than spirituality. The jury’s response to Touqueer’s verbalized story not only helps in selling the dance narrative but makes the audience respond emotionally to it.



Fig. 3. Prince Dance Group members standing in *Virbhadrasana III* (Photo: Screenshot taken by the author)

Uggram Ujjavalam Uggram Ujjavalam begins in a conventional way with a group of dancers in the *anjali mudra*, raising both their hands in a conventional way in praise of the deity, bringing the body in a position with their upper body bent horizontally forwards. Secondly, the dance is regulated by the gong played in the background to signal to start the dance. The way the gong is employed in the background suggests that the contemporary dance is still based on the dictates of the conventional dance tradition. Movements and *mudras* such as *bhujangatrasa mudra*, right hand *abhaya mudra* and the left hand bent slightly downwards in *gajahasta mudra* to get into *nataraja mudra*, rotation in anti-clockwise direction while maintaining the same *nataraja mudra*, *sarpashirsha mudra*, *anjali mudra*, *pataka mudra*, etc. suggest the continuity of classical conventions.

With the strike of gong, the performers stand grounded on one leg and at the same time lift the other leg and stretch it backwards in a horizontal position and tilt the torso forward with the head, pelvis and lifted leg to form a straight line to get into *virabhadrasana III* or warrior pose III as in fig. 3. The dancers fasten up their moves with the music being played in fast motion and start rotating arms in anti-clockwise direction along with

jumps towards the left of the stage, and the same step is repeated but with jumps towards right in the opposite direction with their arms waving in clockwise direction. While performing the next move, with their face towards the left of the stage they start throwing their arms first in the front direction and then lifting them upwards, and repeat the same move facing the right side of the stage. The performers then start hopping with their arms bent inwards in L-shape and resting the other arm on it in *pataka mudra* where the finger tips are bent forward to form a hollowed palm and make *sarpashirsha mudra*. The similar *mudra* is attained by the actor Vrajeshvar Hirjee in the movie *Golmaal Returns*, directed by Rohit Shetty, when Hirjee is caught by Ajay Devgn, Tushar Kapoor, and Shreyas Talpade, in Ajay Devgn's house. The *mudra* also resembles *baba ji ka thullu* posture which is made popular by the comedy artist Kapil Sharma in the show "Comedy Nights with Kapil." With these performers grooving in front, the other five dancers along with Shiva, who is hidden behind the dancers, slide onto the stage from the left and place themselves at the centre. Amit as Shiva steps forward with other performers making a trail behind the former whereas the latter stand at the end of the queue in *anjali mudra* in *namaste* position and half of them tilted the body towards the left and the other half towards the right.



Fig. 4. Prince dance group performing *Nataraja* act (Photo: Screenshot taken by the author)

In fig. 4. Amit as Shiva stands at the centre of the stage with six performers each on the either side with their arms touching each other making an arm wave. Shiva starts waving his upper limbs in *sarpashirsha mudra* with his fingertips bent forward to form a hollowed palm and the fellow performers imitate him twice, moving to the front of the stage. He starts waving again in *sarpashirsha mudra* but with a slight variation with one arm bent inwards in L-shape and resting the other arm on it in *pataka mudra*. Shiva lifts both his arms alternately thrice which is followed by other performers. Furthermore, the performers align themselves behind Shiva and the latter in front sits in the *aramandi mudra* with heels facing each other and toes of both legs pointed to the opposite direction making a straight line from one end of the toe to the other. Amit being in *aramandi mudra* delineates aggression which is vivid from his physiognomy: his nostrils filled with air, wrinkles on forehead and intense stare justify the fierceness of the deity.

Prior to switching over to the next move, Shiva in the same *mudra* throws both arms outwards, places arms and shoulders in a straight line and opening the palms upwards and downwards alternately which is once more imitated by the performers. Amit kneels down one knee whereas the rest of the performers align themselves behind him in a straight line placing both arms on the shoulders of the one standing next to him. Amit throws both arms outwards, places arms and shoulders in a straight line and starts waving them in the frontal direction which is further imitated by performers behind him resulting in the arm wave motion. Shiva stands up and moves towards the right of the stage with a trail of eighteen performers joined behind him with their arms placed on the shoulder of the performer standing in front. Amit stands facing the right side of the stage and tilts partially to the right which is imitated by eighteen performers at his back creating a wave motion effect. Before enunciating the next move, three performers kneel down on both knees, eight of them are standing and six of them lift Shiva on a gold-colored metal sheet and arrange

themselves in the front, middle and at the end positions respectively.



Fig. 5. Amit as Shiva in *gyan mudra* (Photo: Screenshot taken by the author)

Fig. 5 delineates Shiva, with his eyes closed, sits on a gold-colored metal sheet in *gyan mudra* by sitting in *sukhasana* with his spine straight, placing both hands on knees with palm facing upward, joining the index finger with the thumb forming a uniform circle and the other three fingers are in a slightly stretched position. The performers standing in the front begin the tutting, a prevalent style in hip hop, by creating shapes (such as boxes) and movements using hands. The performers take down Shiva and spread all around on the front part of the stage. The former revolves, hop, and swing their arms whereas Shiva stands still, holding a trident in his right hand, at the back. With the beginning of the next move, the position of Shiva and the other performers has been interchanged.



Fig. 6. Amit as Shiva in *Nataraja mudra* (Photo: Screenshot taken by the author)

Fig. 6 depicts the frame in which Amit reaches the front and takes the *Nataraja mudra* with his right hand holding the trident and left in *danda hasta* position whereas the right leg is placed on the stage and the left thrown across the body in *kuncita mudra*. Meanwhile, the group members arrange themselves, behind Shiva, in *anjali mudra*, with their palms joined above the head in *namaste* position. Two performers come at the front with one of them performing “spin down sweep” technique and the other goes for a “headspin” whereas Shiva spins in an anti-clockwise direction by balancing his body on the left leg, and the right leg thrown across the body in *kuncita mudra*, holding trident in the right hand and the left in a relaxed position. The performers arrange themselves in three groups on the right side, centre and the left side of the stage, and Shiva is lifted on a gold colored metal sheet again at the

back on which he stands and waves his trident in all directions. Towards the end, they align themselves in a chariot form, of which two of them taking the shape of an elephant and the others as horses.

The dance performance is enhanced by the costume as chosen by the choreographer. Painted in sparkle gold color from head to toe with a snake designed in black colour on the torso symbolizes power and divinity in Hinduism where deities are usually shown with golden haloes. All participants, except Amit, have covered the body using shorts whereas the latter wears shorts along with a scarf in leopard print around the waist. The crown worn by Amit has hair locks attached to it in a way that it looks as if they were flying in two separate directions. String of *rudraksha* beads is visible on both arms and wrists, and a black colored snake is coiled around his stomach. As the light reflects on their costumes, they encapsulate a vision, memory and a sense of joy for the dance performance. The fusion of techniques and movement vocabulary prominent in bharatanatyam, hip hop and free style dancing with slow instrumental music makes the performance aesthetically pleasing. The essence of *tandava* is preserved even after blending the classical and the contemporary dance forms. The song and dance technique of Bollywood is blended to repackage and re-choreograph the performance as a new product. Following the lead of Uday Shankar, this dance show also blends Indian classical forms with western theatrical techniques reflected in the way the traditional bharatanatyam style is fused with hip hop and free style to morph into new hybrid forms. In the present times, the nomadic effect of remix has stepped down from the Bollywood dance to its byproduct, the dance reality shows. The remixing of various dance styles leads to the production of hybrid cosmopolitan dancing bodies of postmodernism, endowed with new emotion of aspiration.

Karan and Carling (DID Doubles):

Dance India Dance (DID), started in 2011 in Hindi language with seven seasons and more than two hundred episodes, produced

and created by Essex Vision Productions, and is aired on Zee T.V. The dance show opens with Karan as Shiva and Carling as Parvati standing in the Nataraja position, with their backs facing each other, in the mechanically revolving “circle of fire” and they unfold their performance with performing the *rudra tandava* and the *lasya tandava* together and step down and place themselves on the left and right side of the stage as the oval shaped ring of fire stops revolving. The way the show includes a variety of Indian as well as international dance styles such as jazz, hip hop, contemporary, bharatanatyam, Bollywood, freestyle, salsa, and kalaripayattu reminds us of the dance maestro Uday Shankar who widened the range of Indian dance by creating a new dance style known as ‘Hi-Dance’ and re-named as ‘Creative Dance’ that fuses European modern theatrical techniques and Indian classical dance with indigenous cultures and traditions.



Fig. 7. On the left, Carling as Parvati; on the right, Karan as Shiva hopping on alternate legs (Photo: Screenshot taken by the author)

Karan and Carling start performing *tandava* in Indian classical style in fast motion, using the traditional vocabulary movements as codified in the *Natyasastra*. The *tirumanam adavu* is being done in fast motion, placing their right arm forward parallel to the body and stretching the right leg forward and gently throwing the left hand in *alapadma* position to finish the *adavu*, but they end up doing the *tirumanam adavu* in a wrong way, jumping between two consecutive *adavus* and leaning forward way too much whereas the posture must have been kept straight to finish the *tirumanam adavu*. The same step is repeated but with different combination of left leg and right hand in doing the *tirumanam adavu* as in fig. 7. Karan as Shiva lifts the left leg with a bend from the knee with the sole facing the right leg and extends the right hand upwards with the left hand thrown across the body towards the right in *hamsapaksa* position. The move is further extended but with the opposite pair of limbs while Carling performs the same steps synchronizing with him on the left, and the move is performed twice. Further, they sit in the *aramandi mudra* with left hand raised upwards and standing up placing the hand in the same position whereas the right leg is thrown outside the body diagonally, and the movement is done twice with a background soundscape of bells and gongs for creating a contemporary effect. The performers then assume the *anga bhramari* position by starting with the feet placed one cubit apart, leap in the air and after a circling movement land in the original position.

Both Karan and Carling, then, begin with *kuditta metta adavu* by jumping on the toes and striking the heels and finishing the move with *mayuri gati bhedah* in which the performers are moving on the toes with their knees outwards and going down alternately with both hands extended outwards. Further, they turn towards the right of the stage and jumps with their alternate leg on the floor, moving forward and backward to complete the move with *hamsi gati bhedah* in which they place one foot after the other slowly at a distance of half a cubit with knees slightly bent and bending the body alternately on either side with both hands held

in *kapittha*. While doing *hamsi gati bhedah*, they move to the right of the stage, coming backwards, turning right and making a semi-circle on the stage. Further, facing the audience they start jumping on the toes and striking the heels in *kuditta metta adavu* with their right hand in *kataka mukha* by bringing together index finger, middle finger and thumb. Subsequently, they move back to the centre, place themselves in *mayuri gati bhedah mudra* and start swirling their bodies to the right and left alternatively. Karan as Shiva now sits in the *aramandi mudra* whereas Carling is seen standing behind Karan in *ardha chakrasana mudra*. Both jump on the stage and interchange their places with Karan as Shiva on the left of the stage and Carling as Parvati on the right. At the next moment, they start the *mayuri gati bhedah* movement in fast motion and Carling promptly stops herself to perform *natta adavu* by stretching her legs alternatively in *alidha* position in a manner that one heel is always resting on the floor with toes facing upwards and her right arm is in *tripataka mudra* to face up and left arm remaining in *tripataka mudra* facing down.



Fig. 8. Karan and Carling, standing in the “circle of fire”, as Shiva and Parvati respectively (Photo: Screenshot taken by the author)

At this juncture, Karan is seen whirling by taking multiple turns and tucks both legs underneath and rotates while Carling runs towards the revolving “circle of fire” placed at the back and climbs it with her one leg lifted and thrown across the body to the right and foot is upraised in *kuncita pada* position. The left arm of Carling is holding the “Circle of fire” above her head and right hand placed in *abhaya mudra*. Karan picks the trident from the stage and starts to dance aggressively, combining Indian classical movement vocabulary with gymnastics. With a trident in his hand, he performs side aerial cartwheel thrice and starts whirling multiple times while moving towards the left of the stage. Karan delineates his freestyle moves with his continuous hops and moves on the stage and climbs the revolving “circle of fire” and stands with his back against Carling’s back with one leg lifted and thrown across the body to the right and the foot is upraised in *kuncita pada* position. The left arm is thrown across the body in *gajahasta* and hand in *hamsapaksa* position and holding the “circle of fire”, from the top, with his right arm. The performance ends with both Karan and Carling as Shiva and Parvati respectively standing in the “Circle of fire”, in fig. 8, with the background soundscape of “Om” chanting.

Alike Uday Shankar, the choreographer in this dance production chooses Indian traditional dance costumes long with creative soundscape to retain Indianness. Karan wearing black clothes is painted in black whereas Carling has been given golden coloured costumes. Carling is shown as the female Shiva, *mohini avatar* of the deity, wearing a tiger skin as loin cloth, *rudraksh* beads on the ankles, the wrist and the biceps of both hands, a golden coloured moon (*chandrama*) on her matted hair (*jatayein*), blue throat (*neel kanth*) and ash on her forehead whereas Karan appears as male deity with all the objects coloured in silver. One of the reasons is to become like the God which is also an underlying notion in *Shaiva Siddhanta*. The performance

combines both *sringara* and *raudra rasas* in a special *bhavasabalata*. Carling as Parvati having *sringara* as her main theme and Karan as Shiva having *raudra* to illustrate these two *rasas* and combine the Siva-Sakti principle. The televisual framing of their performance is done in such a way so that the audience can have strong responses to the dancing bodies. It is obvious that the performers not only succeed in adding new techniques but also manage to retain the originality of classical dance forms, representing the cosmic dance. The show provides stage to performers for inventing new modes of dance through new ways of being feminine and masculine. The hand gestures, facial expressions and movement vocabulary are taken from *bharatanatyam* repertoire. The swaying of arms and legs, and repeated pelvic thrusts by both performers make the performance an exuberant spectacle.

Carling performing *rudra tandava* in disguise of *lasya tandava* indicates widening boundaries of a domesticated Indian woman. The dance reality shows blend eroticism and celebrity culture for which the spectators constantly await the consumption. The short costume, above the knees, worn by Carling not only unsettles the past notions of Indianness but idealized gender identities as well. In the earlier times, the gender codes were established by Indian nationalists on respectable Indian women. The nationalists established Indian women as the epitome of domesticity, spirituality, and motherhood. With emergence of Bollywoodization and globalisation, a performance in a reality dance show has transcended itself from choreographers and dancers to the westernization of Indian culture through revealing costumes. Performing in the reality dance shows wearing revealing costumes represents women as bearing low moral stature and unsettles the notions of a respectable Indian woman established by the Indian classical dances. At some places, the performance is digressed from *tandava* to the representation of Carling's body on screen. In the end, the jury marked a few hand gestures, by Carling while standing in the "Circle of fire", as incorrect which might be due to the costume and make up worn

by her. The frequent usage of the accoutrements, by Karan and Carling, on the stage, has played a dual role by making performance complex for the performers and allow the performance come into being in the world and at the same time help in bringing the outside world onto the stage.

The foregoing analysis reveals the fact that Indian dance has come a long way from its origin as it is no longer legacy of a particular region, sex, gender, religion family, social-cultural and educational background and household; rather it has taken on democratic and cosmopolitan dimensions as it comes to embrace in its fold producers, choreographers, participants, performers and audience from the cross section of Indian society even Indian diaspora. It is the open competition that makes it imperative for the contestants to put in a substantial amount of time and energy in rehearsing a variety of styles— acrobatics, ballet, jazz, hip hop and lyrical to win awards/ trophies or to get professional/career opportunities. Even though the traditional Indian dance performances are very ritualistic, it is now being performed in various venues and for various occasions. The long established view that dance originated from the Gods and should be performed in temples is slowly diminishing. Innovations are being incorporated while maintaining some sort of legitimacy and retaining fidelity to the classical spirit of ancient performing arts. Among the dancers, there is an almost universal feeling of being torn between a desire to remain firmly anchored in their original culture and an imperative need to draw on liberating techniques from other cultures. The proliferation of Shiva *tandava* in reality dance shows not only transforms the media landscape but also shapes the lived religion of the spectators. The issue of identity and nationalism is illustrated or reflected through the cosmic dance of Shiva in the dance reality shows on the television. The advent of new technologies in the wake of liberalization, globalization and privatization accelerates the dissemination of religious/ cultural symbols and ions as increasing markers of national identity and pride. Besides, proliferation of dance shows offers opportunities to the masses to make career and create

capital respectively. In other words, dance instead of a matter of passion and pride has become a profession for the consumerist-globalized society.

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