

Genius and globalization of Indian dance: the life of an Indian Singaporean dancer

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As globalization and liberalization have spread, India has undergone dynamic economic and social change. Consideration of the effects of widespread internal, or urban, migration and international migration is increasingly important. Therefore, migration has received remarkable scholarly attention. Recently, performing arts have become an analytical lens for examination of migration and mobility phenomena. Research specifically addressing migration or diaspora of the performing arts, however, has not kept pace with research investigating the broader field of migration. This report specifically examined methods of practitioners' socio-cultural mobility and experiences, particularly as exemplified ethnographically by a Malayalee dancer and his life history.

The late K.P. Bhaskar, a pioneer of Indian dance in Singapore, was originally from Kerala. He traveled widely and performed on the stage during British rule and during WW II on the Indian subcontinent. After migrating to Singapore in 1953, he contributed his effort to the development of Indian performing arts in Singapore. This report presented K. P. Bhaskar's experiences and mobility as a dancer, especially those before coming to Singapore, along with their social and cultural context. And This report argued that anthropological research examining performing arts and globalization must be done both theoretically and methodologically to ascertain how and when the migrant practitioners' mobility becomes distinct, and to examine intercultural aesthetics, migrant mobilities, and geopolitics, rather than assessing them as genes and forms.