CONCLUSION

Tradition and culture of a country are generally seen in the art of the state. India, being a vast country has a great and rich culture that has been handed to the present generation from the previous ones. The diverse cultures have made it possible for us to have a great number of folk, traditional, classical, martial, devotional, ritualistic dance and theatrical forms. These have been discussed in the preceding chapters in the required proportions to suit the research that has been made.

Dance is a composite art form that has been thoroughly influenced by the social, political and perhaps the economical conditions too, to quite a great extent. Its survival is therefore dependant on all these factors.

The very origins therefore relate to these factors. It can be seen that an architectural monument has been erected by the economically effluent dynasties during which the art developed to its zenith, thus recording the art of dancing that existed during the said periods. The expertise of the people of that particular period in the art of dancing can be evidently understood. The relation of the art to ritual is very evident since the representation of the art in the form of sculptures is always closely associated to the various places of worship, irrespective of the religion that was followed. Our country has had the privilege of having nurtured the great religions like the Vedic religion or Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism, Vaishnavism to mention a few. Invasions have left a mark that is indelible on the culture and tradition. But the traditions have been so deep rooted that they have stood the test of times. The patrons of the art form the prime factor that contribute
to the development of any art to its maximum extent. These patrons therefore have been the cause to have brought in a sea of change in the presentation of the art form since the survival of any artist is decided and rather defined by these. Ritual formed the very base and cause for the presentation of a dance in most of the cases in history while it remained a mere entertainment or a major part of any of the activities associated with everyday life during the Vedic and the prehistoric periods. The dancers were placed as the foremost in the hierarchy of the temple activities, especially with regard to those occasions in which the offering of dance was an inseparable part of the rituals that were conducted everyday. This elevated their social status too. The society of those times must have been a highly evolved, cultured and educated one to have incorporated the art as a major part of the temple rituals for there must have been a thorough understanding of the art for it to be so. Hence one can infer that, dance and ritual must have been complementary to each other, in the early stages of development of dance as a temple art.

The art of the people and a whole community became an important celebration for an entire village. The feasting had to be held at times when the occupation; primarily agriculture did not demand much attention. Many a time the dance marked the celebration of a good harvest. The celebration therefore revolved around nature, the work song, the motifs of their occupation and the like. Most significant is the offering of the entire celebration to the village deity as a token of appreciation for having taken very good care and provided protection to them from calamities through the year round. It is appreciable to note that the costumes that were used were colourful, with a religious fervor in the presentation most often. The
austerity observed by the performers and the kind of reverence that is developed in the minds of the onlookers in the event of a successful presentation is highly commendable. Perhaps, this is the spirit that will continue to lead the younger generations to continue to present these folk forms in all its purity and characteristics in the years to come. Ritual therefore will discipline the performers and the dance forms will thus continue to survive, develop and spread to a few more regions of the world and the on coming generations.

The themes and the occasions for dances are found to be more or less the same the world over and so also in the southern states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. A survey of the ritual associated dance forms of these regions has directly led to this conclusion. It can be noticed that the spirit propitiation follows almost the same procedures as seen in coastal Karnataka and the regions of Kerala that present the Teyyam. There is the creation of the illusion of the supernatural element in both the cases by a lavish use of the aharya. Fire walking, dancing to an ecstatic stage, prophecies and settlement of the disputes are the features that are common to the presentations irrespective of the language, caste, creed and regions that they hail from. The ultimate goal of propitiating the spirit in its possibly purest form, the associated rites and rituals are found to be more or less the same across the coastal regions inspite of their geographical and linguistic differences. This also found to be true with regard to the traditional theatres too. There are the reminiscent traits of Sanskrit theatre in all the traditional theatres wherein the ritual, forms quite an important and inseparable part of the presentations even to this day. There is a striking similarity in the drawing of the Mandalas or the Kolam as they are identified in the
respective regions. The dance as seen in the spirit worship in the regions of both Kerala and coastal Karnataka is found to end in an ecstatic trance with shamanistic characteristics and prophecies being made besides the settling of disputes if any between individuals or groups.

As much as religion has been the very basis of the cultures of population in India, ritual has also been almost a way of life itself. Myth is invariably the other side of this aspect of ritual.

These traditional and ritualistic forms provide an importance to the people of the lower sections of society who are otherwise a neglected lot and are unnoticed. There is a balance therefore in the society, which needs to give importance to all the sections to build a harmonious and peaceful living. The village being the basic level of a country, the harmony thus adds on to the well being of the country as well.

The traditional theatrical presentations were generally performed on the indigenous platforms that lacked facilities of Modern stage lighting and techniques of stage settings, stage properties, and the like, which had to be created by mere gesticulation and dialogues. The use of masks thus was an essential aspect of these presentations. They created the necessary dimensions to make-believe to the audience that the performer was not the ordinary individual but a personification of the character or the spirit that he represented. These (masks and other accessories used in the corresponding presentation) being the property of the temple even to this day, are revered by the impersonator who dons it and the audience too. Therefore its religious and ritualistic affiliation has created a particular discipline in the performer besides the joy and perhaps the pride of donning the same. In instances
where mask like make-up is a necessity, the performer gets ample time to psyche himself into the characteristics of the spirit or character that he is to portray in the event of a performance. This is definitely an advantage to the performer since the mind is totally tuned to play the role of the particular character and the actions hence follow unconsciously. The reverence of the people towards the spirit impersonators is generally very high since they are viewed as the mediators between the spirit and the people.

It is therefore essential that the tradition and culture that have propagated the very system of folk dance and theatre in India must be preserved with utmost interest and care. They are deeply rooted into the rituals and the religious practices as a result of which, they must be nurtured and developed such that the further generations are not deprived of finding the joys, the discipline and the faith that it instigates.

If on one hand ritual and myth are interrelated, on the other science and ritual are also associated. It can also be observed that the Science behind every ritual is also of quite a great importance. It is generally the faith that guides the Human mind, in most of the cases. The participation or just viewing the rituals like the Nagamandala throughout the night results in the ending of a disputed marital relationship, the wedding of the unmarried, the begetting of a progeny for the childless and all the associated problems with land, wealth and otherwise. The sub conscious is thus tuned to the positive attitude to beget the necessary salvation from their problems as the rituals like the Nagamandala and the spirit propitiation are conducted for a very long period of time and the atmosphere and ambience also add to ones’ positive self hypnosis. Faith which is synonymous with trust thus forms
the cause and effect of the entire presentation which in itself is a major necessity for the peaceful living of Mankind.

It can therefore be inferred that such ritualistic dances must continue for they help the further generations that are stressed in their everyday lives to de-stress themselves and thus lead to a happy and trustworthy, amicable living thus contributing to the peace and prosperity of the country in their own might.

Thus it can be inferred that **Dance itself is a ritual in all its manifestations and therefore has to be developed and cultivated in the masses from the grass root levels itself so that the rich culture, tradition and heritage continues to live and should be propagated to such an extent that it takes over all sections of the society as it has in the past few centuries irrespective of the religion, economic or social statuses.**