India is embellished with several major dance forms. Among these, there are eight schools of dance styles recognized as classical dances of India. In the present work ‘A Comparative Study of Two Classical Dance Forms of India: Bharatnāṭyam and Sattrīyā’ an attempt has been made to compare the two enduring dance styles of India.

These two dance forms have developed and prospered in Tamilnadu and Assam respectively. Although there are lots of differences in varied social circumstances, as well in the field of culture, the theory of unity in diversity is always an established fact. Except the folk forms all the art forms of India have emerged from religious background. Being ritually practiced in the temples of South India, the Devdāsī dance tradition was evolved from the esoteric temple ritual to artistic presentation of proscenium. In the same way, the dance form Sattrīyā which was earlier practiced in the precinct of Sattra-s has come to the modern stage. The common backgrounds of these two dance forms are the Indian Classical works on dance, drama, music for which these two forms are categorized as class style. In the present context I had the opportunity to learn both theoretical and practical aspects of these two dance styles under great Guru-s, Experts and exponents. An inquisitiveness
always forced me to analyze and examine the common features as well as affinities with the Śāstric elements of the two forms i.e., Bharatnāṭyam and Sattrīyā. As a result the topic is selected to compare both the dance styles.

With such aim in view, I approached Dr Kesavananda Dev Goswamian an exponent and scholar of repute to suggest and give guidance in this respect. He, besides being an awardee of ‘Bhasa Sanman of Sahitya Akademi’, is the recipient of the most prestigious and the highest Civilian Award of the Govt. of Assam the ‘Sankaradeva Award’ for his lifelong and distinguished contribution to the field of art and culture. Many researchers worked on Sattrīyā dance, drama and music under his able guidance. When I approached him regarding my work, he suggested me the topic to pursue research on that. I met many research scholars, performers and senior students whom he has always encouraged to explore new thought and ideas in respective fields. He is my Nrītya Guru also. As he was born and brought up in Sattra, he inherits all the aspect of Sattra culture. Keeping the traditional fervor intact, my guide has composed and choreographed many Sattrīyā dance, music and dance-dramas. And every time a new flavor, a new technique was blended in his creations. I had the opportunity to perform in many compositions of my Guru (who is commonly known as K.D Sir). He is very strict in his principles. Like other students I also had to do very hard labour to come up to his expectation. Really, I am lucky enough to have the guidance in both theoretical and practical field of Sattrīyā.
The octogenarian scholar of versatile genius helped and encouraged me always despite his impaired health and kept me spell bound. The debt of a Guru could not be repaid except bowing down at his feet with joint palms.

I shall be failing in my moral duty if I do not mention the name of my ‘Barma’ Mrs. Tilottama Goswami, his wife and Dipankara Goswami his son, for their kind assistance and support provided to me during the long period of my work. Also I am thankful to Nitu Da, my Guru’s youngest son who helped me much in University work.

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