

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The present work is the result of years of continued work behind which is involved help and cooperation, inspiration and guidance from many individuals and institutions too, to whom I owe my indebtedness in a number of ways. It is my bounden duty to place on record my sincere gratitude at this moment of completing the project.

I have to begin by thanking my supervisor Prof. Pradip Jyoti Mahanta for his encouragement and support throughout the tenure of my enrolment for this programme. I started my work when he headed the Department of Cultural Studies and at the time of winding it up, he holds the position of Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tezpur University. It is heartwarming to remember that braving all administrative and other academic engagements; he found out and spared his valued time for me and other research scholars as well, for consultation and guidance on any problem concerning the research problem. I have been amazed at his eye for detail in editorial work. Even a single 'period' doesn't skip his eyes. He never spoon-fed me and let me explore my own path. This was of tremendous help and a challenge for me at my workplace. While conducting my research I discovered that he was one of the key people responsible for the recognition of the Sattriya Dance by the Sangeet Natak Akademi as a classical dance form from Assam. More over it was his foresight to understand the need to put a formal structure of performance for the proscenium after the recognition came in and he undertook a lot of initiatives towards this process involving exponents, practitioners, scholars and connoisseurs that carved a new history of Sattriya Dance. This is still followed by anyone and everyone who presents the Sattriya on stage. Being the humble person that he is, he would never allow me to put his name in any other context than his academic scholarship. But I think it would not be unfair to express my heart in this personal space.

I would like to thank Prof. Mihir Kanti Choudhury, Vice-Chancellor, Tezpur University for his encouragement from my very first day at the University. The Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University and its staff members, Dr. D.P. Nath, Dr. Parasmoni Dutta, Prof. S.K. Dutta, Dr. Juri Gogoi Konwar, Dr. J.V. Das and Dr. Madhurima Goswami for their support and encouragement throughout my first day in the department. It was indeed a great joy in working in the Department amidst intimate

relationship with each other. Today I can't help but remember Dr. Parag Moni Sarma and Dr. Kailash Dutta, whose loss would always be felt by the department for years to come. I also would like to extend my thanks to Prof. Chandan Kumar Sarma of the Department of Sociology who helped me with finding some rare books online.

Tapan Banerjee, my youngest brother, an architect, who translated all my hand made diagrams of the Sattrra and its peripheries into digital copies. Mr. Deepak Singh, Sr. Creative Designer at TNBT (my husband's firm) who made the digital version of the 'Diagrammatic Representation of the Sattriya Art Forms' used in Chapter 2.

My work would not have been possible without the support from several libraries where I worked for my project. I express my heartfelt thanks to the librarians and staff members of Tezpur University; Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; National Museum Institute, New Delhi; Nehru Memorial Library, Teen Murti House, New Delhi; American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon; Sangeet Natak Akademi and the National School of Drama, New Delhi.

Narayan Chandra Goswami, Sattradhikar, Natun Kamalabar Sattrra, Majuli; Janardan Dev Goswami, Sattradhikar, Uttar Kamalabari Sattrra, Majuli; Sonaram Sarma Burabhakat, Kamalabari Sattrra, Titabor and all the monks from the Natun and Uttar Kamalabari Sattrras, who lent their support and encouragement. I was always welcomed warmly and they ensured my stay there was comfortable and easy in Majuli. They practically went out of their ways to accommodate me into their daily lives and witness their most spiritual as well as personal moments i.e. when they offer their prayers to the divine and their Gurus through their ritual performances. They allowed me to walk into their personal space for which I would be ever so grateful.

A very special thanks to Guru Ghanakanta Bora, a maestro of tradition, a Padmashri and Sangeet Natak Akademi awardee, Dr. Anwesa Mahanta, Dr. Bhabananda Barbayan, Gargi Goswami, Sharodi Saikia, Dr. Mallika Kandali for their invaluable input and time which they gave repeatedly and have a role to play in the shaping of my dissertation.

My travels and stay in Assam would not have been so easy had it not been for my friend Anjuman Borah and her entire family who showered their love and affection on me all this while.

Mrs. Minati Choudhury, the loving wife of Prof. Mahanta, who always welcomed me with a smile at her home in Guwahati. I have shown up on her doorstep at odd hours and at all hours in the last few years. She ensured not only that I was well fed when I left but also ensured I reached my destination safely even amidst her engagement as a Doordarshan Executive. I thank her so much.

I would like to especially thank Dr. Mayuri Bordoloi for her compassion and moral support whenever things seemed difficult. Dr. Manasi Borah, whom I came to know at a personal level towards the end of my thesis writing. Knowing her has been a wonderful experience.

My stay on campus would have not been possible without my lovely friends- Dr. Anggana Ray and Dr. Muhsina Kafia Huda with whom I have shared my time and enjoyed their companionship. Midnight snacks, gossips, laughs and giggles are the most memorable memories of a student's life which cannot happen without friends.

All my colleagues at the Alkazi Foundation for the Arts, New Delhi- it is a pleasure to go to work only for them. Rahaab Allana, Jennifer Chowdhry, Ayesha Mathan and Amira Sultan Kapoor- the intellectual stimulation that you all give amidst the mundane day-to-day follow ups for all the projects that we do is phenomenal. I extend my earnest thanks to all of them.

My friends Pavitra Kapur, Joyoti Roy, Abir Gupta and Anurupa Roy- That electric energy that I get from just being around these people is impossible to describe.

My sister's friends- Vijay, Shalmaly, Sonia, Faheem- The kind of academic dedication I have witnessed while they would hang around home is beyond expression. Thank you all for your best wishes always.

My extended family and my in-laws who have relentlessly prayed for me.

I remember my grandfather, who is up there watching over and my grandmother who had wished to study at a time when in her society, it was forbidden for girls to go to school.

Ma and Baba, without whom I do not even have the capacity to stand straight in life. Thank you for the umbrella called home that you always gave us. Without that, it would not have been possible to deal with life's not-so-easy situations. I owe my existence and being to you both. I dedicate this work to you.

Kreeti Goswami, my sister and the guiding star of my life. You are the reason for why I live.

And at last but not the least, Priyanko, you came into my life at a time when I needed you the most. Thank you for patiently dealing with my eccentricities and mood-swings and my prolonged absence from home all this while. Thank you for being who you are. Thank you for everything.

Date:

(Shilpi Goswami)

Place: