



## POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND SOUTH ASIAN DANCE: THE CASE OF MALLIKA SARABHAI

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**ABSTRACT** The article examines the work of the Indian dancer-activist Mallika Sarabhai. It situates her in her socio-economic background as a representative of an influential family, which set up the Darpana Academy for Performing Arts, an institute built on the Nehruvian philosophy of modernity. It presents her vision of what makes a politically engaged feminist artist, looking at the inspiration for her works as well as the kind of movement vocabulary she chooses for her choreographies. It specifically addresses the issue of her position during a period in India which saw the rise of *Hindutva* ('Hinduness') and an escalation of violence against Muslims in the state of Gujarat, showing how her political engagement led to government harassment and loss of sponsorship to her institution.

**KEYWORDS:** *activism, artists as activists, Bharatanatyam, diaspora, feminism, Hindutva, Indian dance, Kuchipudi, Nehru, Peter Brooks, violence*

### Introduction

This article is part of a bigger research project, 'New Directions in South Asian Dance: Postcolonial Identity Construction', executed under the auspices of the Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) Centre for Cross-Cultural Music and Dance Performance in London. Much of the work I have carried out for the Centre has focused around two issues, which as a social anthropologist specialising in the study of dance, I am particularly interested in: (i) the study of institutions which promote dance and the kind of impact they have on the dance genres they promote; (ii) a focus on artists who see themselves as political/social activists and use their artistic practice to encourage people's awareness and understanding of different contemporary issues, such as gender discrimination, homosexuality, AIDS, world debt, domestic violence, or ecological issues.

The research I draw from for this article straddles both interests, focusing on dancer/choreographer Dr Mallika Sarabhai, director of the Darpana Academy for Performing Arts, an institution started by her parents Vikram and Mrinalini Sarabhai in 1949 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. In the winter of 2001–02, I was able to do fieldwork

at Darpana and in May 2004, Mallika,<sup>1</sup> together with a few members of her company, The Darpana Performance Group, were performers-in-residence at Roehampton under the auspices of the AHRC Centre, re-working aspects of *Colours of the Heart*, a human rights piece they had created earlier in the year, and working with local performers.

In this article I examine two issues in particular detail: I consider those aspects of Mallika's repertoire which deal with conflict and violence, and I address the issue of her position as a politically committed artist during a period in India which saw the rise of *Hindutva* (literally 'Hinduness'). A more detailed discussion of the politics and ethics of dance generally, of the Sarabhais' vision of the role of art in helping make the world a better place, and their implications for the dance scenes of both India and the diaspora, will be found in my forthcoming book *Dance, Politics and Ethics: Conversations with South Asian Dance*.

### *Hindutva* in Politics and the Arts

*Hindutva*, a term coined by the Hindu nationalist Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883–1966) in his 1923 pamphlet entitled *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* promoted ideas regarded at the time as 'rather marginal at that stage of Indian nationalism' (Thapar, 2000: 596). This built over the century into 'localized movements towards Hindu nationalism and nationalized Hinduism' (Appadurai, 2000: 645) and was somewhat crystallised in the rise to power of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, literally 'Indian People's Party') in the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> The promotion of 'Hinduness' is all-pervasive and found in many guises within Indian society and throughout the Indian diaspora. It is closely linked to modern mass media (Rajagopal, 2001). It can be extremely subtle as in the representation of musicians and dancers in film, or much more blatant as in BJP propaganda, with which this article is not directly concerned.

The ethnomusicologist Greg Booth (2005: 62), for example, has shown that whilst Indian cinema's approach to communal tension generally 'appeals to a pan-community and pan-religious brotherhood', a number of films, through their representations of Indian music and dance, 'betray an unspoken and perhaps unconscious political agenda vis-à-vis the identities of Indian classical music'. The presence of similar ambivalence in other aspects of films has been discussed in some detail in a number of works, such as the collection of essays edited by Pfeleiderer and Lutze (1985), and in Prasad (1998), Dwyer and Pinney (2001), Mishra (2002), Virdi (2003) and Desai (2004). Whilst he is careful to note that the film director V. Shantaram has produced films that are both explicitly anti-communal and often have a socialist content, Booth (2005: 62) also observes that the depiction of the contest between the two Kathak dancers in a film like *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baje* (1955) is worth examining:

Intentionally or otherwise, the contest pits Ghirdar of Varanasi, the ultimate Hindu city, against Ram Prasad of Agra, the former Mughal capital. Ghirdar's dancing, moreover, is accompanied by *pakhawaj*, the pre-Muslim classical barrel drum of northern India, whilst his opponent is accompanied by *tabla*, an instrument whose name and morphology connect it directly to the arrival of Turko-Persian culture in India. [...]

Even the costumes of the two dancers [...] appear to reinforce a cultural dichotomy expressible in terms of traditional/non-traditional but also and respectively in terms of Hindu/Muslim.

Such representations might be read as reinforcing a feeling of Hindu superiority and reclaiming Kathak as a Hindu dance form by downplaying its Mughal influence. This could then become water to the mill of the BJP's appropriation of the past, through the creation of 'a Hindu linear identity from the very foundation of Indian history until now' (Thapar, 2000: 597), which 'excludes other groups that are said to have entered India at various times whether as invaders, or traders and intruders, and interacted with Indian civilization', including Muslims, Christians and Communists (Thapar, 2000: 597).

As the historian Romila Thapar has argued, and others too have observed, the diaspora has been significant to the rise of *Hindutva*, not only in aiding it financially, but also in constructing a climate where its ideology can flourish. This is why the study of South Asian Dance and its political and ethical entanglements has to take a 'global' perspective, though this article focuses mainly on one artist within India. Thapar (2000, 607) has commented that she was 'intrigued by the fact that the Hindutva ideology keeps on talking about the danger to the majority from the minority', that 'Hinduism was and is said to be in danger', and that 'people were called upon to stand up and proudly declare themselves as being Hindu' (Thapar, 2000: 607). Considering that Hindus make up some 80 per cent of the Indian population, this is indeed puzzling. If one, however, takes a global perspective which incorporates the diaspora, and especially the diasporas of Europe and America, one finds that 'the Hindu constitutes a minority, surrounded by societies that are not Hindu. He can develop a mentality of the ghetto and a minority consciousness, and see his identity in those terms' (Thapar, 2000: 607). In her view, then, 'the biggest carrier of the Hindutva approach has been among those Indians of the diaspora who accept these ideas and they influence the creating of a minority identity of the Hindu within India' (Thapar, 2000: 608). The diasporic Indian, or the NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) as they are often referred to—especially those based in the USA—are undoubtedly role models for the Indian middle classes, and one could argue that this is why the Hindu nationalists have chosen models, which 'rather than characterize Hinduism as ancient, nonmodern, or traditional, [have] embraced capitalism, Western science, and technology as element of a modern, Hindu nation [...returning] to Hindu values, while incorporating Western and Vedic sciences' (Subramaniam, 2000: 73–4).

In this way, the fact that Mallika has chosen in recent years to perform more in the USA than in Europe can be seen as a way of offering a contrasting vision of dance in India to that promoted by the hundreds of schools which have flourished in the USA, and which often reiterate in their presentations the myth of an unbroken lineage of dance from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*—the monumental Sanskrit treatise on the dramatic arts written around 200 AD—to today, even though this simplistic vision, perpetuated by dancers and scholars from the 1930s, has been discredited in the past thirty years or so.

Indeed, both dancers and researchers from the 1930s to the 1980s seem to have been fairly unanimous in presenting this vision of dance history. In the early 1980s, however, some writing came out referring to the 1920s and 1930s as a period of revival, for example, the writing of Srinivasan (1985). To my knowledge, however, it is only in 1988 that the doyenne of Indian dance scholarship, Kapila Vatsyayan, started a discussion which explicitly questioned the revival movement (Vatsyayan, 1988). A new generation of scholars has taken a much more nuanced approach to the reconstruction of the past in Indian dance.<sup>3</sup>

### Mallika Sarabhai, the Feminist Artist

Mallika is especially interesting for anyone concerned with the interdisciplinary and intercultural issues involved in South Asian dance, as she exemplifies both in a number of ways. She is an academic, an artist, as well as a businesswoman, and she does not make a distinction between the three roles in her own life. She has a Master of Business Administration (MBA, 1974) from the Indian Institute of Management and a PhD in Organisation Behaviour from Gujarat University (1976), with the thesis *Psychological Maturity and the Power Motive: Dynamics and Development*. This is a work she put in practice to manage Darpana when she took over the running of the institution in the 1990s. She is deeply committed to India generally and Gujarat specifically, but she is also a cosmopolitan artist working in Europe and the United States as well. She was awarded a D. Litt (1998) from the University of East Anglia in the UK for her contribution to the arts and was knighted by the French government, which made her a *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres* (*Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters*),<sup>4</sup> describing her as having a 'myriad of talents in the field of culture' and being 'an activist espousing causes for changing lives of people for the better'.<sup>5</sup> In 2005, she and her mother were also among 1,000 women nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Although generally labelled as a 'dancer', she works in both dance and theatre, refusing to see a division between the two (she is also an accomplished singer), because they 'are all different strings to the same instrument' (Sarabhai, 2004d). Similarly, choreographically her work explores both so-called 'pure classical styles' and 'fusion' work, always bringing a questioning twist to whatever she does.

In short, like many artists, she refuses to be categorised. Unlike many artists, however, she belongs to a cosmopolitan elite and has always been able to do what she felt was right for her, rather than follow artistic trends or bow to the social norms belonging to the women of her social class. Furthermore she has never been shy of controversy, whether in her private or artistic life. A key moment and turning point in her career has undoubtedly been her highly acclaimed performance as Draupadi in Peter Brook's *The Mahabharata*, which premiered at the 1985 Theatre Festival in Avignon, France. As she put it: 'When I ended my work in the *Mahābhārata*, I was no longer a dancer and an activist, but I had become a performer who used activism and performance together'.<sup>6</sup>

Mallika then developed new kinds of works, more politically and socially focused, such as *Shakti*, *Sita's Daughters*, and *V is for Violence*, often in collaboration with

theatre director John Martin. Dance critic Reginald Massey (1991: 354) wrote in the *Dancing Time* at the time:

So far, I must confess I have seen very little experimental work from India or, more precisely, experimental work based on Indian techniques that has moved me. Now, thanks to Mallika Sarabhai, John Martin, and their musicians Adrian Lee (who composed the music), Dawson Benhassine-Miller and Tiken Singh I see a light at the end of the tunnel.

When discussing her work, Mallika describes it as being often 'womencentric', and *Colours of the Heart*, like many of her productions, is centred on women. It has been described in the following way by Sunderlal (2004):

The singer and dancers weave personal narratives into a universal one, and focus on issues that impact women all over the world. This production talks about the loss of innocence and the shackling of women by customs and traditions.

When asked if she was a feminist, Mallika replied (cited in Devik, 2004):

I think I was born one. I can remember being so for a long time. In my earlier days I drew inspiration from my mother. Women's issues are human rights issues. Women constitute 51% of the world population. Women are not a minority. To me 'feminist' is not a dirty word. It's an honest fight against injustice.

As scholar-performer Ananya Chatterjee (2004: 104) puts it, 'Sarabhai has continuously performed critiques of patriarchal politics and repressive state action'. Furthermore, as Mallika said in her International Women's Day statement for the *Times of India* in 2004: 'Empowering women also means empowering men to allow them to be what they want to be' (Sarabhai, 2004b). As she argued in a talk during her London visit: 'What is anti-Muslim today will be anti-Dalit tomorrow and is anti-women all the time' (Sarabhai, 2004c).

There is no doubt that Mallika's political engagement and her artistic life are totally intermingled and she will use every platform for her cause. Whilst she graciously accepted the Woman of the Year Award for 2003, she also used the occasion to criticise corporate India (cited in Maluste, 2004):

I feel strongly that corporate India has shown its frailty over ethical and moral issues in the aftermath of the Gujarat genocide. This segment of society was the only one powerful enough to stand for truth against political leaders who backed violence. But they did not, because the bottom line was more important to them. Money is the only god. By giving me this award, one segment of this society is saying 'Mallika, we believe in you, we may not have the courage to say it aloud but by giving you this award we support what you stand for, for this country'. That gives me a lot of warmth.

It is this spirit that pervades her artistic production, and whilst she certainly wants her works to be judged on artistic merit, they do not exist for her separately from

their social and political message. Hers is a kind of war waged against social injustice and the financial apartheid so common in India, where, as Appadurai (2000: 637) puts it, 'one wants the poor near at hand as servants but far away as humans'. It is through the aesthetic dimension of her work that Mallika believes her message will gain potency, so that militancy and art are not separate domains.

She was trained by her mother Mrinalini in Bharatanatyam, the classical genre originally from Tamil Nadu, but now very much pan-Indian, and by the renowned guru C.R. Acharyulu in Kuchipudi,<sup>7</sup> the dance form from Andhra Pradesh. Mallika uses the movement material of both genres as part of her choreographic work. She comments, however, that for her, Kuchipudi has a softer quality, which is less suited to her more politically abrasive work. She prefers the sharpness of Bharatanatyam or the strength of martial art forms from both North and South India, which she also practises, as well as movements derived from folk dances, which Janavak, the folk company she directs, performs.

For her, every movement is potentially a choreographic movement, from those derived from yoga, which is part of the daily training of the Darpana Performance Group, to every day movements which she likes exploring, to movements borrowed from many genres of dance she is learning from the variety of artists who spend time in Darpana. Observing her work both in India and in London revealed how the abstract rhythmic structures of Carnatic music underpin her compositional methods and add an intensity of emotion which helps give her dancers a strong performance presence to create—as the choreographer Carol Brown put it when she took part in the workshop led by Mallika at Roehampton University, 'a powerful alchemy which transforms choreography into social and political agency'.

### 'Values', 'Truth' and the Sarabhais

Mallika was born into a family committed to science, the arts and a modern India rooted in its heritage, a family that 'always stood for value and truth' (Maluste, 2004). Her father, the late Vikram Sarabhai, was a 'pioneering scientist, educationist, and industrialist, highly respected in diverse circles' (Chatterjee, 2004: 103). Talking about him, Mallika commented that his 'greatest commitment was to India—an India where each individual citizen prospered and was nurtured and cared for' (Sarabhai, 1992: 35). Mallika's mother, Mrinalini, was similarly strong-minded. As she put it to me when I interviewed her: 'I came from a family where women were never downtrodden', adding emphatically: 'I have never felt unequal as a woman in my life, ever!' Mallika sees herself as 'the inheritor of the mantle of two families who have given their all to nation building and to spreading truth and love, fearlessness and pride in being Indian' (Sarabhai, 2004a). This is very much the ideology that has underpinned Darpana right from its inception, and throughout its existence Darpana has followed quite closely a Nehruvian philosophy of modernity, salient features of which include: national unity, parliamentary democracy, industrialism, socialism, scientific temper and secularism. Darpana is an institution committed to diversity and to social justice,

and one could say that the key belief of its ideology is that the performing arts can be an effective medium to bring about social change.

As a privately funded institution, Darpana has been able to set its own agenda, having the dual role of housing artists as well as patrons of the arts through Natarani, the theatre which is part of Darpana and other artistic ventures it sponsors. This gives those at Darpana a somewhat privileged position. As any other artists, however, their work can be censored and these days, when the family fortune is not anymore what it was, the institution needs corporate sponsorship with all the problems this entails, as we will see later. Nevertheless in a country where people often feel they should not pay for art, and few artists can count on box office income to sustain their artistic production, they have enjoyed a freedom that many both within India and in the diaspora have envied. Unlike many artist-activists who have to privilege solo performances because of financial limitations (see Burns, 2005), they regularly present large-scale works with complex staging. As a result there is undoubtedly a certain amount of professional resentment leading to a great deal of gossip about the supposed arrogance of the Sarabhais. Indeed, presenting my work, I have encountered what, to me, is a surprising degree of hostility towards them. Whilst it is true that the Sarabhais are in a privileged position, and when one is in a prominent position for a long time it is easy to become somewhat autocratic, it is also true nevertheless that many artists with similar social positions choose not to speak up. Neither do they spend the amount of time and energy, let alone money, the Sarabhais do to sustain a complex institution employing a large number of people and paying them a decent wage. I am sure there must have been times when Mrinalini and Mallika must have felt that their lives would be a lot easier if they concentrated on their careers as solo artists.

### **Mallika Sarabhai, the Political Artist**

As the political situation changed in India in the last quarter of the twentieth century, the Congress Party becoming increasingly corrupt and complacent after so many years in power and the nationalist parties gaining more support throughout the country, Darpana's position changed. Although critical of the Congress, Darpana these days has remained loyal to it, because it still sees the party as the best bet for a liberal democracy. Therefore, when the BJP came into power at the centre, Darpana became part of the 'opposition'.

Whilst Mallika's activism remained primarily social and confined within her artistic practice, it was largely only tolerated, if not necessarily valued or supported. Although 'her dancing body on the stages of New York, Brazil, and Delhi signalled a particular image of Indian women, one directly contradictory to the image preferred by the fundamentalist camp' (Chatterjee, 2004: 106), it was only marginally threatening. As the BJP's power increased, however, and its lack of respect for human rights became apparent, Mallika became more actively political. A turning point was undoubtedly the traumatic destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1992, when Hindus destroyed the mosque and murdered Muslims in horrific acts of violence to reclaim the supposed birthplace of Ram, as part of what Appadurai (2000: 645) argued was

'one form of [the] politicized Hinduism [which] took as its major program the liberation of Hindu temples from what were argued to be their illegitimate Muslim superstructures'. Watching on the news government ministers in jubilation over such acts deeply shocked Mallika. This led her to set up the Centre for Non-violence Through the Arts, under Darpana's auspices and to become more directly involved politically. As she put it: 'As a dancer, it made more sense to me to dance the horrors of caste violence than of bhakti and the love for Shiva' (Sarabhai, 2004a).

Mallika's political campaign was paralleled by a government harassment campaign. Whenever Darpana engaged in building work, for example, government officials would find all sorts of problems about planning permission, health and safety, or anything else that would delay the work. In a similar fashion, Darpana's accounts were regularly scrutinised, even though nothing out of order was ever found. Darpana's paperwork and accounts had to be immaculate with full documentation for every transaction in the knowledge that government officials, who were constantly on the lookout for anything that they could use to get the institution in trouble, would pounce upon the slightest irregularity.

### The State Versus the Artist-Activist

Another turning point came with the Godhra massacre and its aftermath in February–March 2002, when 58 people were burned to death in a train returning from a Hindu pilgrimage, and this led to communal violence. Communal violence was certainly not new to Gujarat. There had been serious communal riots in 1969 and 1992–3, but the government at the time had not been publicly partisan. There had been a public disapproval of the violence and the government had pleaded for communal harmony. In 2002, however, according to Lord Bhikhu Parekh (2002) and many others, any pretence of neutrality disappeared and the government openly encouraged Hindu violence against Muslims. Most of the Gujarati media were pro-government, provocative and grossly biased.

With the violence so close to home, Mallika became immediately involved, publishing an article on 5 March 2002 in *The Times of India* entitled—after Zola and the Dreyfus affair in the nineteenth century—'I Accuse'. Personal threats started that night. Yet she continued, and on 1 April 2002 she filed, with two other persons (Digant Oza and Indu Kumar), a public interest litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court of India against the government of Gujarat for its involvement in the anti-Muslim pogrom. As with other advocates of inter-communal harmony, the government tried to terrorise her into silence, in the hope that she would withdraw the litigation.

Despite ongoing threats, Mallika continued both her litigation against the government and her work with Darpana, planning overseas tours, as obviously the institution needed to earn money in order to pay its staff. It was on one of these tours that the government latched on to try to cow her into silence by accusing her of illegal human trafficking. I cannot go into details of the whole affair here, as it is rather convoluted.<sup>8</sup> Suffice it to say here that Darpana comprises a number of organisations, including



the folk dance ensemble Janavak mentioned earlier, which often performs at folk festivals worldwide. Janavak is made up of permanent professional dancers from Darpana and of dance students trained by Darpana. The latter have to pay for the trip, generally having to cover their fare and other expenses, whilst the organisations hosting the festival generally house and feed the dancers. Students are interested despite the cost involved because it gives them an exposure to international dance, allows them to travel outside India within a context approved by their families and, in a few instances, because it is believed that it may allow them easier access to a visa in the future. I was told, for example, that some felt that if they had been given a US visa for one of these tours, and had returned to India as planned, it would be easier for them to apply independently in the future. Whether this is true or not is debatable, but some certainly believed it. Not all students selected for intensive training—a training they pay for—however, will necessarily be taken on tour, as clearly they have to be of a professional dance standard and fit in with the rest of the company. This undoubtedly creates disappointment. It appears that a student in such a predicament, encouraged by the government, filed a complaint. Mallika was accused of human trafficking (under sections 14, 34, and 420 of the Indian Penal Code of 1860), for allegedly using Janavak's tour for smuggling Indian nationals into the USA.

Although it was immediately obvious that the claim was spurious and civil liberties groups throughout the country and overseas came to Mallika's support, Mallika had to surrender her passport and was not allowed to travel outside Gujarat without permission. November through January are important months for an Indian artist, as it is the season when the major festivals take place. Mallika was forced to apply for permission to travel for every performance. Giving permission for short periods only, and sometimes awarding it only a few days before the event, the government deliberately jeopardised her work, as sponsors organising the tours, especially the foreign ones, were not always willing or able to wait till the last moment. Whilst following legal regulations, the government was in effect undermining the very livelihood of Darpana, as all Mallika's dance earnings go into the running of the institution. Further, as the campaign against her grew—with headlines screaming 'the traitor of Gujarat', 'the whore of the Muslim' and so on—Darpana lost all its corporate sponsorship. Needless to say, this was a complete disaster.

As Mallika (2004c) stated in London: 'From being the most celebrated daughter of the state I would walk into a place and nobody would meet my eyes'. She also commented, when asked about the Congress returning to power in Delhi after the election that had just happened then, on how this would affect her situation: 'I will go back to a country where I am no longer a fugitive, but I am not sure I am going to a state where I am no longer a fugitive'.

### **The Aftermath: Can Dance be Unpolitical?**

On 12 December 2004, *The Gujarat Age* ran the headline 'State drops the case against Mallika'. The saga had lasted from 18 October 2003 to 12 December 2004. These

had been fourteen months of state harassment to drown the voice of an artist to no avail. Yet what has been achieved? Although enquiries into the massacres are still taking place and Amnesty International filed a report in May 2004, the process is slow. The BJP is still in power in Gujarat and according to human right activists, four years after the massacre, victimisation and terrorisation of Muslims in the state continues. The goal of reducing Muslims to second-class citizens seems thus to have been accomplished in Gujarat and many believe that the Hinduist regime of Narendra Modi, Gujarat's Chief Minister,<sup>9</sup> 'taught a lesson to Muslims'. Innocent people are regularly detained illegally before being charged under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), and individuals criticising government officials can be charged with 'anti-national activities'. The human rights group *Counter Current* noted on 6 September 2006, that after a journalist had criticised a number of BJP ministers for mishandling a recent crisis, he was arrested (Gatade, 2006). Committed activists like Mallika continue to be needed to remind everyone that the fight for securing justice has not been won. Mallika may have won her battle, but she certainly has not won the war.

### Notes

- 1 From now on, when referring to Mallika Sarabhai, I will refer to her as Mallika. This follows the Indian practice and will be useful when distinguishing the different members of the Sarabhai family referred to in this paper.
- 2 The BJP was created in 1980, as the main opponent to the Indian National Congress, the party of Indian independence, which dominated central government for the first four decades. The BJP led the Government of India between 1998 and 2004, and is still in power in the state of Gujarat, where Ahmedabad, the home of Mallika Sarabhai, is situated.
- 3 See for example the work of scholars such as Pallabi Chakravorty (2000, 2001), Uttara Coorlawala (1992), Alessandra Iyer (1996), Avanthi Meduri (1996, 2001) or Janet O'Shea (2001, 2003), to cite but a few.
- 4 She was awarded both the title of Knight and Officer, respectively, in 1999 and 2002. However, she 'physically' received the order on 14 July 2005. The other recipients at the ceremony were the dancer Alamel Valli, the writer Nirmal Varma, and the artist Naresh Kapuria.
- 5 See [www.france-in-india.org](http://www.france-in-india.org).
- 6 Cited from Darpana's website, accessed on 8 September 2005.
- 7 It is worth noting that she co-wrote *Understanding Kuchipudi* (1995) with him. See Sarabhai and Acharyulu (1995).
- 8 See the discussion in Chatterjee (2004) for further details.
- 9 Narendra Modi has been extremely important in the rise of the political dominance of the BJP in Gujarat. According to the biography on his website, he joined the BJP in 1987. Within a year, he was elevated to the level of General Secretary of the Gujarat unit and in 1995 he was made its National Secretary. He became Chief Minister of Gujarat in 2001 (<http://www.narendramodi.org/bio.htm>).

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