



VIRĀSAT

Kamaladevi

*A cultural festival
to honour the memory of
Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay*

2011



Centre for Cultural Resources and Training

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12 to 25
February
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Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

by Dr Kapila Vatsyayan

Known in her student days as the ‘uncrowned queen of India’, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was a rare combination of beauty, intelligence, courage and commitment. In her person, since her early childhood, she assimilated the values imparted by her mother, grandmother, and Margaret Cousins, an Irish suffragette and, later, an Indian patriot; in short, a generation of women who instilled in her values which guided her life and work for over seven decades. Kamaladevi represented a generation of Indian women who were freedom fighters, in and out of jail, but also those who were responsible for freeing Indian women from the shackles of narrow social and economic boundaries.

In this long journey, Kamaladevi eschewed power, position, explicit political leadership. No public office could attract her, and, instead, it was the mission of alleviating the suffering of the people which was her calling. She was active in the movement of rescuing women soon after Partition. She gave her full energies to the Faridabad refugee camp. Cumulatively, her proximity to Mahatma Gandhi and conscientiousness of the creativity of economic disempowerment gave rise to the Indian cooperative movement. It was this movement, along with her work at the grassroots level and her advocacy, which resulted in the recognition of Indian handlooms and handicrafts. She not only nurtured craftspeople but also gave dignity and value to their products. All this and more has brought about a sea-change in the tastes of the modern generation. Today, the handicrafts sector is recognised both for its vibrancy and its market value in India and abroad. The institutions of the All India Handicrafts Board and the All India Handloom Board came into existence as a result of her active advocacy.

For Kamaladevi, life was an integrated whole – the hand, the heart and the mind, and an unflinching commitment went together. As a young girl, she had defied convention to be a theatre artist. The arts were her love and passion, be it music, dance, theatre or the crafts. There was not an occasion when she did not discover a remote tradition of handloom or craft, or an obscure theatre form, to nurture it, to promote it and to present it.

And yet, there was a last mission to be fulfilled, to integrate the rich diverse and living traditions of our cultural heritage with the formal systems of education. It was her firm belief that unless there was equity between the creativity of the hand, the intellectual critical discriminating mind and the pulsating heart, a total human being would not be possible. It was this vision and conviction which motivated the Government to establish the institution of the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT).



The ^{2nd}
*Kamaladevi
Chattopadhyay
Memorial Lecture*

Considering the debt that the CCRT owes to Kamaladevi, it has instituted an Annual Lecture Series in her memory. The first lecture in this series, “Education through the Arts: Values and Skills”, was delivered by Dr Kapila Vatsyayan. The Second Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay Memorial Lecture will be delivered by Professor Krishna Kumar on 12 February 2011 at 6 p.m. in the Main Auditorium of the CCRT headquarters in New Delhi.

The Lecture will be followed by a Dastangoi performance, *The Sea of Eloquence*, or *Darya-e-fasahat*, by Mahmood Farooqui and Danish Husain, from 8 p.m., followed by Dinner in the CCRT Lawns, from 9 p.m.

Professor Krishna Kumar teaches education at the University of Delhi. Until recently, he was the Director of NCERT. Some of his books in Hindi are: *Raj, Samaj aur Shiksha*; *Vichar ka Dar*; *Shiksha aur Gyan*; and *School ki Hindi*. Some of his books in English are: *Political Agenda of Education*; *What is Worth Teaching*; *Prejudice and Pride*; and *Battle for Peace*. An essayist and short-story writer in Hindi, he also writes for children. He is currently working on a book in Hindi on girls’ upbringing and education.

He has been a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellow, a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Modern Oriental Studies, Berlin, and an Erasmus Mundus Scholar at the Institute of Education, London. On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of India’s Independence, he was invited to deliver the Gladwyn Lecture in the House of Lords in Britain. He was awarded a Padma Shri by the Government of India in 2011.

VIRĀSAT

Kamaladevi

A cultural festival

2011

To further celebrate the 'virasat' or legacy of Kamaladevi, the CCRT is organising a cultural festival, **Virasat ~ Kamaladevi**, at its headquarters in Dwarka, New Delhi.

Virasat ~ Kamaladevi includes:

- **A Dastangoi performance, *The Sea of Eloquence, or Darya-e-fasahat***, directed by Mahmood Farooqui, on 19 February 2011, 6.30 – 7.30 p.m., in the CCRT, Second Auditorium.
- **A crafts mela, *Basant Bazaar***, organised by Dastkar and CCRT, from 12 to 21 February 2011, 11.00 a.m. – 8 p.m., in the CCRT Grounds.
- **An exhibition on Delhi, *Dillinama: Biography of a capital city, or Dillinama: Ek rajdhani ki kahani***, presented by CCRT with the Delhi Urban Art Commission (DUAC) and seechange, from 12 to 25 February 2011, 11.00 a.m. to 8 p.m., in the CCRT, Main Building.



19 FEBRUARY

6.30 P.M. - 7.30 P.M.

CCRT, SECOND AUDITORIUM



CCRT

The Sea of Eloquence

A performance of Dastangoi
directed by *Mahmood Farooqui*

The driving-force behind the creation of institutions such as the Sangeet Natak Akademi and the National School of Drama, Kamaladevi was committed to the preservation and evolution of theatre forms in India. The on-going revival of the Dastangoi tradition of story-telling would have resonated deeply with her. This great story-telling tradition is being revived by Mahmood Farooqui, Danish Husain and their associates, to national and international acclaim. Dastan-s are epic tales, performed and composed by dastango-s, or practitioners of dastangoi, who were, traditionally, raconteurs par excellence.

The most famous dastan is the *Dastan-e-Amir-Hamza*, which celebrates the adventures of Amir Hamza, allegedly, an uncle of the Prophet Mohammed. The Urdu story-tellers developed several tropes unique to India such as 'tilism' (magical effect) and 'aiyyari' (trickery), which came to form the central theme in Dastangoi in India. Rich in drama, romance, fantasy and humour, the final version of the *Dastan-e-Amir-Hamza* was printed in 46 huge volumes, the crowning glory of Urdu literature and performance.

Simultaneously, as it reached its zenith in the early 20th century as a phenomenally successful oral and printed form, Dastangoi quickly lost ground to changing tastes and new media. The last great dastango, Mir Baqar Ali, died in 1928, and in no time this immense creation as well as the form vanished from popular imagination.

The revival of Dastangoi began with the legendary Urdu scholar Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, who painstakingly studied the Hamza dastan from the 1980s onwards. He guided Mahmood Farooqui through the first modern Dastangoi performance in May 2005. Ever since, Dastangoi has come to acquire a prominent place in the art and performance sphere in India and abroad. In places as varied as Gorakhpur, Bangalore, Lucknow, Chennai, Jabalpur, Patna, Karachi, Lahore, Sri Lanka, Dubai and New York, it has enthralled audiences, even those without any Urdu background, with its combinations of austerity of form and richness of content. As *The Kuwait Times* said: "Several times during the performance I really believed I understood Urdu".



12 TO 21 FEBRUARY

11.00 A.M. - 8.00 P.M.

CCRT GROUNDS

ORGANISED BY Dastkar & CCRT



CCRT



Dastkar

Basant bazaar

A crafts mela by Dastkar
to celebrate spring

Dastkar and the CCRT are joining hands to organise Basant Bazaar, a crafts mela to celebrate spring in tribute to Kamaladevi, who devoted her life to the promotion of the both the crafts and craftspeople, and emphasised their enduring relevance. As Kamaladevi said, *“Visionaries have tried to remind mankind not to lose this essence of life – what the Indians called rasa, and what in modern parlance is referred to as ‘quality’. What we seek today is not a repetition of the old pattern, but a positive contribution to strengthening the quality of current life.”*

Dastkar, a leading Society working with crafts and craftspeople, has been dedicated to bringing together rural producer and urban consumer, and promoting awareness of the beauty and potential of Indian handicraft. Its bazaars are a brand name for quality crafts at fair prices – contemporised for the market and sold by the craftspeople themselves.



The CCRT has been emphasising traditional crafts as educational tools, and encouraging interaction involving craftspeople, and teachers and students.

The first collaboration between the two organisations, the Basant Bazaar, will bring together 70 craft groups from 18 Indian states.

The Basant Bazaar will feature a rich, colourful medley of handicrafts and handlooms – weaves, embroideries, block prints, garments, footwear, furniture, home accessories, gift items, and folk art and toys. The wide range of crafts products include decorative juthis from Rajasthan, tribal jewellery from Orissa, silk saris from Banaras and Bhagalpur, stoles and shawls from Kutch and Uttarakhand, sujni and kantha embroideries from Bengal and Bihar, cane furniture from Assam, madhubani and phad paintings, and organic and herbal food stuff, soaps and oils, to name a few examples.



12 TO 25 FEBRUARY

11.00 A.M. – 8.00 P.M.

CCRT, MAIN BUILDING

PRESENTED BY CCRT

WITH DELHI URBAN ART COMMISSION

& SEECHANGE



Dillināmā

Biography of a capital city An exhibition

In October 2010, a highly informative exhibition on Delhi, titled *Delhinama* or *Dillinama*, was organised by the Delhi Urban Art Commission at three venues: Red Fort, University of Delhi, and India Habitat Centre. In bringing *Dillinama* to its headquarters in Dwarka, the CCRT aims to extend this engaging exhibition about their capital city to the people of south-west Delhi and Gurgaon, including students of the numerous local schools.

Most of the great cultural institutions of India envisaged by Kamaladevi are based in Delhi. Virasat ~ Kamaladevi celebrates Delhi as a city of myriad histories, facets and possibilities by playing host to *Dillinama* for a fortnight.

The name Delhi is said to originate from the Persian word ‘Dehali’ or ‘Dehleez’, a reference to the location of the city at the ‘threshold’ of or ‘entrance’ to the Indian subcontinent. Delhi is now a gateway to India on the global stage.

Dillinama follows some of the strands in the city’s complex weave. Situating itself in contemporary Delhi, the exhibition threads its way through images of diversity and multiplicity, of Delhi as a point of human confluence, a global landscape, and its relationship with its natural environs. It is thus organised into 4 interlinked sections: “*Who is a Dilliwalla?*”, “*Multiple Cities*”, “*Globalizing Capital*”, and “*Between River & Ridge*”.

Dillinama is based on a year of intense research at the DUAC, and innovatively designed by the Delhi-based creative firm seechange. The Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India, supported the production of the exhibition, as well as the research and collation of a vast amount of rarely accessible data, maps and images.

About the CCRT

by Dr Kapila Vatsyayan

The Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) was established in May 1979 as an institution to bridge the gap between the systems of formal education, and the diverse, rich living cultural traditions of India. Its principal aim and objective is “to draw upon all the cultural resources and interweave them into the educational system at all stages of formal and non-formal education”. As, for example, to use the traditional arts—ranging from pottery, carpet-weaving, print-making, block-making, different forms of puppetry, and multiple forms of music and dance—as pedagogical tools in disciplines such as mathematics, chemistry, physics, not to speak of history and the social sciences.



In order to meet these goals, several innovative schemes have been evolved. At the level of programmes, regular workshops are held for educational administrators and teacher trainers; orientation and refresher courses for teachers; and workshops and camps for students. Finally, for the identification of cultural talent and scholarships, the CCRT serves as an institution for a Government of India scheme.

Towards fulfilling these objectives, the CCRT collects and documents material, and prepares audio-visual kits, which are used in different configurations, to promote, say, the study of a regional culture, or a specific art form and knowledge about the people who create such art forms.

Institutionally, the CCRT has established a wide network with the SCERTs and, of course, the NCERT.





Today it has three regional centres – in Udaipur, Hyderabad and Guwahati. The CCRT has played a vital role in concretising the noble ideals of fostering national integration and cultural identity amongst the student and teacher community in India. In a land of such rich and diverse natural and cultural heritage, it is important for young people to grow up with an understanding of and deep appreciation for their culture and that of others.



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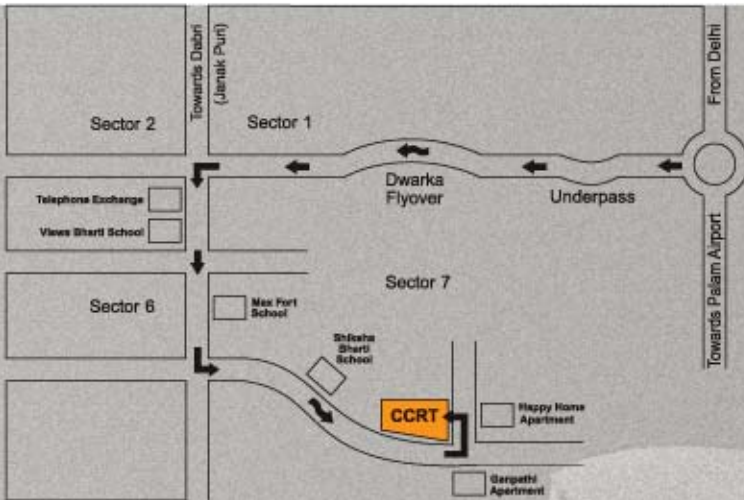
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A child comes into this world not with a blank slate on which teacher or parent may write what they propose, but with a seed pregnant with infinite possibilities that has to be brought out with least hurt to the child's personality.

~
Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay



Centre for Cultural Resources and Training

(under the aegis of Ministry of Culture, Government of India)

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