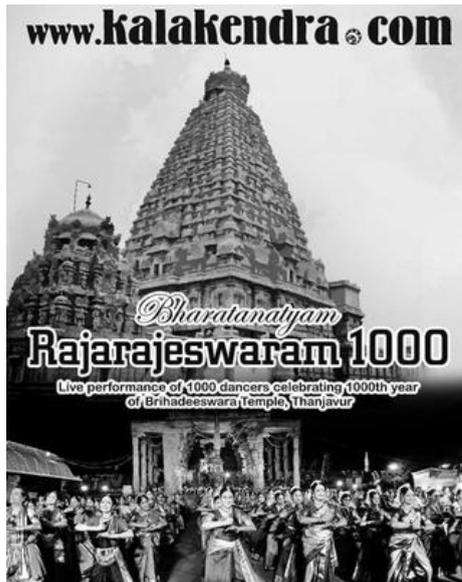


## It thrives by tapping tools for arts

- [Ramya Kannan](#)

*Kalakendra showcases all that India is synonymous with*



K.S. Sudhakar could have done a number of things when he returned to India in the late 1990s, but was seduced by the options technology was throwing open for entrepreneurs.

That was when he decided to use information technology applications in fields where it was not really explored. With the idea firmly established, Mr. Sudhakar launched a company that would see the huge potential in the area of arts. A Bharatanatyam dancer complained of insufficient teaching and training tools, and it seemed one of the first tasks of the organisation: produce visual content for students of the dance form.

That was how it began, eight years ago. And today, Mr. Sudhakar says, the company has grown 10 times, both in page views and the number of artists it accommodates. Easily [www.kalakendra.com](#), the online venture of Swati Soft Solutions, had become that virtual aggregator of culture in the intervening years.

“Kalakendra is a small but significant effort to explore the hitherto un-projected facets of India's vibrant tradition,” he says. As a portal, it has begun to showcase all that India is synonymous with — Yoga, Vedas, Bharatanatyam and other forms of Indian dance, Carnatic Music, Ayurveda, Hindustani or the musical traditions of northern India, or simply any form of Indian art.

There is also an active blogging component to the site that Mr. Sudhakar is rather proud of. A wide range of works (audio and video), including content on classical music, Tamil plays, yoga demonstration in DVDs, are on offer. “We have our own label that produces these DVDs, but we even display and sell labels that are not our own. The point is to provide artists with a platform to take their content to the world outside,” Mr. Sudhakar explains.

A digital downloading platform is also on offer for audio content, for subscribers. The video downloading platform is on its way too. Work on providing streaming options to customers who pay a monthly subscription is under way.

Taking the call on the types of content, the company decided to stay ‘Indian,’ ‘classical’ and the ‘stuff that you can listen to, or watch with your kids.’ About 40 per cent of the business comes from India, and the bulk (60 per cent) from outside the country. “We've had people tell us that they copied songs in violation of copyright primarily because they were unaware that copyrighted material on the classical arts was available at a reasonable price on the web,” Mr. Sudhakar says.

Kalakendra's biggest moment came recently when it coordinated and webcast live the dance performance at the Big Temple at Thanjavur on the 1000 {+t} {+h} anniversary of the temple.

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