

Bhangra BLAST

LAVESH PRITMANI, FOUNDER OF LEARN BHANGRA IS CHANGING THE PERCEPTION OF THE DANCE FORM THROUGH HIS APP. **BINDU GOPAL RAO** SPEAKS TO HIM ABOUT HIS JOURNEY TO DATE

If you are a dance lover, there is no escape from the Punjabi Bhangra. The dance form is not just known for being high energy and fun, but is also today being propagated as a fitness format. And for Lavesh Pritmani, it is much more than that. He is the founder of Learn Bhangra - that has grown from just an app to workshops, choreography, instructor certifications and more. "I am originally from North Carolina, USA where I grew up in a large Sindhi family. Never really being the studious type, I loved sports, particularly basketball and was highly competitive growing up. Most of my close friends were Punjabi as we did not have a big Sindhi community outside of my family, so I was always around both cultures as a kid," he shares.

Incidentally, Lavesh did not dance at all as a kid, but when

he got to high school he realized that his dreams of playing in the National Basketball Association were not going to materialize and he needed an outlet to channelize his energies. "My Punjabi friends and I came across a Bhangra competition DVD and a light bulb went off! Why not get into competitive Bhangra? Also, it is something we can compete in during college, a huge source of pride/culture for my friends, and girls love guys who can dance! So, I started learning from the DVD, taught my friend, and we started our own team. Almost around the same time, an Indian dance studio had just opened in North Carolina and I decided to join, quickly becoming one of the founding members of Natya Academy."

After spending eight years there, Lavesh realized that he wanted to expand - not just to other areas in the state, but

