

Art and Culture Class 11

27th March, 2024 at 9:00 AM

CLASSICAL DANCE (09:09 AM):

- **Bharat Muni's Natyashastra** is considered as the earliest treatise on dance, drama, and music.
- Probably it was written between **1st C AD to 1st C BC**.
- As per the story in Natyashastra, the text was written on the instruction of **Lord Brahma**.
- Bharat Muni was advised to take the elements from the existing Vedas and to create past time with the philosophy.
- As such Bharat Muni took the following elements from the existing Vedas.
- **Pathya** (Words) - Rigveda.
- **Abhinaya** (Expression) - Yajurveda.
- **Geet** (Music) - Samaveda.
- **Rasa** (Emotions)- Atharvaveda.
- As such he went on to create so called **Natyaveda** with the title **Natyashashtra**.
- Bharat Muni further mentions two aspects and three elements of dance.
- **Two aspects of dance (09:19 am):**
- **Tandav:**
- It is a masculine aspect of the dance characterized by strength, determination, fast movement, and aggression.
- In the Indian mythology, there are plenty of examples of Tandav.
- It is believed that the art of this dance was created by **Lord Brahma** and passed on to his disciple **Tandu**.
- It is said that mythologically, **Lord Shiva** was the first God to perform Tandav.
- **Lord Shiva's Tandav** has two stages:
- **Bhairav Tandav** - It is related to the destruction of the universe.
- **Anand Tandav** - Related to the reconstruction of the universe.
- Lord Shiva is often referred to as **Nataraja** (King of the Dance).
- Another mythological example is Lord Krishna's Tandav on the head of Kaliya Nag.
- Even in Jainism, it is believed at the time of birth of the **1st Tirthankar Adinath Rishabh Dev**, **Lord Indra** performed Tandav.
- **Lashya:**
- It is a feminine aspect of dance which is characterized by soft and beautiful movement, strong expression, and grace in the performance.
- Mythologically, the goddess **Parvati** danced on the occasion of marriage with Lord Shiva is considered as the first example.
- The other famous exponents of Lashya include the celestial Nymphs of Indralok ie **Urvashi**, **Menaka**, and **Rambha**.
- **Note:** Lashya and Tandav can be performed by any gender. The only condition is to execute the exact characteristics.

- **Three elements of dance (09:36 am):**
- **Nritta** - Pure dance movement without any expression.
- **Natya** - Dramatic expression.
- **Nritya** - Dance with expression.
- Later, **Nandikeshwar** wrote **Abhinayadarpan** in which he elaborated on the use of different types of emotions in classical forms which are as follows:
- Shringar - Love.
- Vir - Courage.
- Hasya - Laughter and comedy.
- Bhayanak - Fear.
- Raudra - Anger.
- Bibhatsa - Disgust.
- Adbhut - Amazement.
- Karunya - Tragedy.
- Shant - Peace.
- **Classical status:**
- The classical dance status is conferred by GOI body **Sangeet Natak Akademi**.
- The following criterion must be fulfilled to get classical status:
- The dance form must be very old.
- It must be popular in recent times also.
- In other words, it must be based in antiquity.
- The dance form must have its own pre-defined rules.
- Though the new elements can be added but not at the cost of removing the basic structure.
- There must be a system of preservation and propagation of the dance form.
- Till date, eight dance forms have been given classical status.

- **Bharat Natyam (09:51 am):**
- It derives its name from Bharat Muni.
- Another meaning of the dance is **Bhava-raga-taal Natyam** which means dance of expression, melody, and rhythm.
- Bharat Natyam is the oldest classical form of India which emerged from the temples of Tamil Nadu.
- The **Devdashi system** of Tamil Nadu temples gave rise to this dance form.
- As per the tradition, young girls were donated to the temples and symbolically married to the main god of the temple.
- They were supposed to serve the god with their dance for their entire lifetime.
- It also led to the exploitation of women because of which in modern times, the Devdashi system was banned by the British govt.
- But it also led to the decline of dance form.
- In this scenario, a freedom fighter **E. Krishna Iyer** revived the dance form in a master and disciple tradition.
- After India's independence **Rukmini Devi Arundale** through her performances gave global recognition to this dance form.
- **Features:**
- Bharat Natyam is often referred to as a fire dance as the steps of dancers resemble the dancing flame.
- Moreover, it also represents an element of fire in the body.
- The steps in Bharat Natyam are as follows:
- **a) Alaripu:**
- It is the very first step which is about the invocation of god to seek his blessings.
- **b) Jatiswaram:**
- Pure dance movement.
- **c) Shabdam:**
- Beginning of Abhinaya in the dance form.
- **d) Varnam:**
- Elaboration of Abhinaya.
- **e) Padam:**
- Mastery in Abhinaya.
- **f) Jawalli:**
- Highly energetic performance on short love lyrics.
- **g) Thillana:**
- Exuberant and joyous movement symbolizing temporary salvation.
- It started as a female preserve but it is also performed by males in contemporary times.
- **Ek Charya Lashyam** is a popular solo performance in Bharat Natyam whereby one single dancer takes up the role of many.
- **Katak Mukha Hasta** is the most often used mudra in Bharat Natyam.
- In this mudra, the first three fingers are joined to symbolize the universal sound '**Aum**'.
- **Carnatic classical music** is used during the performance.
- Mantra recitation is also an important part of Carnatic performance.
- The person who recites the mantra is known as **Nattuvanar**.

- **Famous exponents of Bharat Natyam:**

- Ragini Devi.
- Balasarswati.
- Yamini Krishnamurthy.
- Mrinalini Sarabhai.
- Padma Subramanian.

- **Kuchipudi (10:21 am):**

- It emerged from the Andhra village **Kuchelapuram** (Kussevapuri).
- This dance was initiated by a group of male dancers from this village who created a moving troop.
- They performed on Hindu religious themes and they were often referred to as **Kusselva's**.
- In the **Neo-Vaishnavite**, dance form was monopolized by the male brahmins of this village.
- They started to perform on the theme of **Bhagawat Purana**.
- Their dance form was highly enchanting and they came to be known as **Bhagawathalu's**.
- Their dance was patronized by the Vijayanagar Kingdom so as the Golkonda Kingdom.
- In modern times, the dance form was popularized by the stalwarts of Bharat Natyam ie **Ragini Devi**, and **Balasarswati**.
- **Features:**
- It started as a male preserve but in contemporary times, it is also performed by females.
- It represents an element of earth in the body which is manifested through the themes which are incorporated in Kuchipudi performance.
- **Shringar Rasa** or the emotion of love is highly emphasized during the performance.
- One of the most popular themes in Kuchipudi is **Bhamakalpam** written by **Siddhendra Yogi**.
- It is the depiction of the jealous wife of Lord Krishna **Satya Bhama**.
- The very first step is known as **Daru** in which dancers enter into the stage one by one and introduce their characters through a small piece of performance.
- Collectively they perform invocation of god.
- Though it was a group performance but there are many solo performances which are as follows:
- **Manduk Shabdam:**
- It tells the story of the frog.
- **Tarangam:**
- It is one of the most difficult classical performances in which dancers keep their toes on the edges of a bracelet and they also balance a water pot on their head and two lit lamps in hand.
- They cover the entire stage while balancing these articles.
- **Talachitra Natyam:**
- In this particular performance, dancers create an image or Rangoli on stage while dancing.
- It also uses Carnatic classical music during performance.
- **Famous exponents:**
- Raja Reddy.
- Radha Reddy.
- Yamini Krishnamurthy.

- **Kathakali (11:05 am):**
- It derives its name from the Sanskrit words **Katha** which mean story and **Kali** which means drama.
- Originally Kathakali was part of traditional theaters of Kerala like **Ramnattam, Krishnattam, Koothiattam, and Chakiarkoothu.**
- Later, it also became a separate classical performance.
- Initially, it was patronized by rulers of **Travancore, Cochin**, and feudal lords of Kerala.
- In contemporary times, the dance form was popularized by **Malyali poet Valathol Narayan Menon** under the patronage of **Mukund Raja.**
- It depicts elements of the sky in the body.
- **Features:**
- Kathakali is the depiction of the eternal fight between good and evil in which good is victorious on evil.
- Kathakali's performance is noted for heavy usage of eye and eyebrow movement to depict different kinds of emotions.
- Many a time, it is also referred to as the '**Ballad of the East**'.
- Kathakali is noted for very elaborate facial makeup and the use of different colors in the facial makeup which are as follows:
- **Green** – Depicts Satvik's character (noble, virtuous, honest).
- **Red** – Rajasik (Royal characters).
- **Black** – Tamsik characters
- **White beards** – Divine characters.
- **Yellow** – Sainly person or beautiful woman.
- The theme of Kathakali is mainly inspired from **Ramayana, Mahabharata**, and various episodes from **Puranas.**
- Regional music of Kerala is used during the performance which includes musical instruments like **Chengila, Maddala, Idakka, and Sankhu.**
- **Famous exponents:**
- Guru Kunchu Kurup.
- Gopinath.
- Rita Gangully.

- **Mohiniattam (11:33 am):**
- It means dance of enchanters.
- The origin of Mohiniattam can be traced back to the mythological story of the churning of the sea (**Samudra Manthan**).
- At this time, **Lord Vishnu** disguised in the form of **Mohini** to take back the pot of elixir from **Asuras**.
- Historically this dance form was patronized by rulers of Travancore.
- In modern times, Mohiniattam was revived by **Malyali poet V.N. Menon** under the patronage of **Mukund Raja**.
- **Features:**
- It started as a female preserve and continues as a female preserve.
- The **Lashya** aspect of dance is highly emphasized.
- It represents the element of air in the body.
- The costume in the dance form is of utmost importance which is generally off white **Kasavu Silk Saree** with golden brocade on the borders.
- **Black Kasavu Silk Saree** is also used for the depiction of Asuras.
- **Jasmine Gajra** is also an important part of the costume.
- The Lashya aspect of the dance is dominating and highlights the element of the sky
- There are **40 basic steps** in Mohiniattam which are commonly known as **Attava Vakul**.
- The steps of dancers often resemble sea waves and the swaying of paddy fields, palm trees, and coconut trees.
- The steps of Mohiniattam are inspired from Bharat Natyam and the vigor of dance is inspired from Kathakali.
- Carnatic classical music is used during the performance.
- **Famous exponents:**
- Kalyanikutty Amma.
- Madhuri Amma.
- Jayaprabha Menon.
- Baijayanti Mala.
- Sunanada Nair.
- Hema Malini.

TOPIC FOR THE NEXT CLASS:Continuation of Classical dances.