

## UNIT V

### Cultural Heritage and Performing Arts

#### **Dance**

The two major dance forms in India are Classical and Folk dance. The major difference between classical and folk dance is the origin. Classical dance has a deep-rooted relationship with the Natya Shastra where the specific features of each of the classical dance forms have been mentioned. Folk dance on the other hand, emerged from the local tradition of the respective state, ethnic or geographic regions.

#### **Basic Elements of Classical Dance**

The Natya Shastra written by Bharat Muni is the most prominent source for establishing the characteristics of the dances.

There are two basic aspects of classical dance

1. **Lasya** - It denotes grace, bhava, rasa and abhinaya. It is symbolic to the feminine feature of dance as an art form.
2. **Tandava** - This is symbolic to the male aspects of dance and has more emphasis on rhythm and movement.

There are three basic elements of classical dance

1. **Nritta** - These are the basic dance steps and are performed rhythmically but devoid of any expression or mood.
2. **Natya** - It means dramatic representations and refers to the story that is elaborated through the dance recital.
3. **Nritya** - It refers to the sentiment and the emotions evoked through dance. It includes the mime and the different methods of expression including mudras in the dance.

The Guru-Shishya paramapara forms the core of the Indian classical dance forms. The basic meaning is that each dance form is related to a Guru (teacher) and he/she transfers that knowledge of dance to a Shishya (Student).

The **8 basic technicalities** that are expressed in the classical dance are given below

Shringar (Love), Hasya (Humorous), Karuna (Sorrow), Raudra (Anger), Veer (Heroism), Bhayanak (Fear), Bibhats (Disgust), Adhbbhut (Wonder).

Various classical dances in India are **Bharatanatyam (Tamil Nadu), Kathak (Uttar Pradesh), Kuchipudi (Andhra Pradesh), Odissi (Odisha), Kathakali (Kerala), Sattriya (Assam), Manipuri (Manipur), Mohiniyattam (Kerala).**

## **Music**

The fundamental elements of Indian music are

1. **Shruti** - Commonly refers to musical pitch. It is the shortest interval of pitch that human ears can detect and a musical instrument or singer can produce. According to Natya Shastra, there are 22 shruti.
2. **Swara** - It refers to type of musical sound that is a single note, which define a relative position of a note, rather than a defined frequency. There are 7 swaras in the form of Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni. These 7 swaras are related to sounds of certain birds and animals.
3. **Raga** – A raga prescribes a set of rules for building a melody. It is characterized by a combination of notes picked out of the total 22 shruti. Ragas involves arrangement of swaras in different sequences. All the ragas are categorized in such a way that there will be in increasing and decreasing order of swaras. Following are some important ragas
  - i. Raga Bhairav – It is a morning raga.
  - ii. Raga Marwa – It is sung during late afternoon hours till sunset
  - iii. Raga Pahadi - It is an evening raga.
  - iv. Raga Yaman - It is an evening raga. It is sung from sunset till late evening.
  - v. Raga Jog – It is sung after midnight in the wee hours of morning.
  - vi. Raga Malhar - It is associated with rain.
  - vii. Raga Deepak - It is associated with fire.
4. **Tal** - Tal refers to the beat set for a particular composition (a measure of time). It is a sequence of beats performed by singers using hands and fingers at fixed time cycles. These rhythmical cycles vary from 3 to 128 beats. Tal is intricately related to Laya which refers to a repetitive nature of any activity.

## **Theatre**

Traditional theatre is a combination of acting, singing, dance, music, dialogue and narration. It started as a narrative form of art where recitations, dance and music played a central role in depicting the local history, societal ethos etc. It is based on spontaneous creativity emerging from circumstances.

Traditional theatre is often a key feature of cultural promotion. The main elements of theatre are

1. Plot
2. Character
3. Thought
4. Diction

5. Music

6. Spectacle

Following are the traditional art forms of India – **Bhavai (Gujarat and Rajasthan), Nautanki (Uttar Pradesh), Rasleela (Uttar Pradesh), Swang (Haryana and Punjab), Bhand Pather (Kashmir), Maach (Malwa in Uttar Pradesh), Anika Naat (Assam), Dashavatar (Konkan and Goa).**

The medieval period witnessed the emergence of regional language literatures. But it did not produce dramatic works comparable to ancient classics. Some innovations happened in religious drama due to socio-religious reform. Indian drama was a reborn during British colonial in 18th and 19th centuries. The impetus came from two sources - the rich heritage of Indian drama and the exposure to Western dramatic classics through English. Translations started appearing simultaneously of Sanskrit classics and Western classics. An unprecedented development in theatre was the rise of entertainment theatre. This arose in order to provide entertainment to the increasing population of big cities consequent upon industrialization. The new urban theatre is popularly known as Parsi theatre. This genre was an interesting mixture of Western naturalistic drama, opera and several local elements.

### **Drama**

Bharat's Natya Shastra was the earliest and most elaborate treatise on drama written anywhere in the world. India has the longest and richest traditions in theatre going back to at least 5000 years. The origin of drama in India is closely related to ancient rituals and seasonal festivities. The growth in drama took place with the introduction of garden in the 'curtain' in the Kushanas era. Traditionally, the theatre consisted of the auditorium, stage and the backstage which is behind the stage. Curtain separates the stage and backstage. The drama was performed without scenery and decorations. It was more of acting and gestures by the actors. Costume and make-up were regulated by a convention so that roles were immediately recognizable. Most type of drama had a hero, a heroine, a villain and a vidushaka as a comedian. Themes were mainly based on love. The drama generally opened with a benediction song followed by a prologue in the form of dialogue/discussion between the chief actor and his actress giving the title, nature and occasion of the play. Violence and death were forbidden to be performed in the stage. At the end of the play came a concluding verse – a virtual vote of thanks.

**Painting**

The tradition of paintings has been carried on in the Indian subcontinent since the ancient times. With time, Indian classical paintings evolved to become a sort of blend of the various traditions influencing them. Indian paintings provide on aesthetic continuum that extends from the early civilization to the present day. In the beginning Indian painting was essentially religious in purpose. But as year passed, Indian painting became a fusion of various culture and traditions. During the colonial era, Western influences started to make an impact on Indian art. By the time of Independence in 1947, several schools of art in India provided access to modern techniques and ideas. Galleries were established to showcase these artists. Indian are got a boost with the economic liberalization of the country since early 1990s. Artists from various fields started bringing in varied style of work post liberalization. Indian art thus works not only within the confines to academic traditions but also outside it.

Classification of Indian paintings –

1. Mural Paintings - Murals are large works executed on the walls of solid structures directly.
2. Miniature Paintings - They are executed on a very small scale for the books or albums on perishable material such as paper and the cloth.

**Martial Arts**

India is famous for its martial art that have developed since ancient times. The term martial art refers to creativity exhibited by warriors while fighting against their opponents. These warriors use different gestures, postures and techniques to overcome their opponents. Nowadays these art forms are used in rituals, celebrations, in sports, means of physical fitness as a self-defence. Many of the arts are related to dance, yoga etc. Different martial arts forms of India are Kalaripayattu (Kerala), Silambam (Tamil Nadu), Gatka (Punjab), Musti Yuddha (Varanasi), Thang Ta (Manipur), Lathi (Punjab & Bengal), Mardani Khel (Maharashtra), Pari Khanda (Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha), Inbuan Wrestling (Mizoram), Thoda (Himachal Pradesh).

**Fair and Festivals**

People in India celebrate their religious and cultural occasions by organizing cultural activities in the form of fairs and festivals, Every Indian State and socio-cultural group has its unique traditions which reflect in their celebrations. People use folk music, dances and order forms of entertainment to enjoy these important occasions. Vibrant, fascinating and beautiful Indian fairs and festivals reflect the cultural strength and diversity of India. Indian festivals can be broadly divided into 3 categories,

namely national or political, religious and economic. Most Indian festivals are connected to seasons and economic activities. Fairs and festivals help in breaking the monotony of life. Cultural activities organized on these occasions invigorate everyone. Economic activities get a boost because artisans and craftsmen set up their stalls to sell their products at fairs. These occasions also give boost to tourism because they attract millions of tourists every year. The voice of Indian heritage and culture is carried by these celebrations beyond Indian boundaries. Festivals are secular as well as a religious in nature. Festivals such as Independence Day and Republic Day are examples of secular festivals. Holi, Diwali, Chhath and Onam etc are examples of religious festivals.

Major religious festivals celebrated in India are Holi, Maha Shivratri, Diwali, Navaratri, Vinayaka Chaturthi, Guru Purnima, Thai Pongal, Raksha Bandhan, Vasant Panchami, Karva Chauth, Baisakhi, Buddha Purnima, Janmashtami, Christmas, Ramzan, Muharram, Easter etc.

Important fairs of India are Kumbha Mela, Pushkar Mela, Kullu Mela, Rath Yatra of Puri, Holi Mohalla, Urs of Ajmer Sharif, Goa Carnival etc.

### **Indian Cinema**

The word **Cinema** is a short form of **cinematography**. It refers to the art of filmmaking.

Various era of Indian cinema - Following are the eras of Indian cinema –

#### **A. Early Indian Cinema (1898 to 1945) –**

- i. **Age of Silent Films** - The earliest films were silent films. The dialogues delivered by actors were not audible to viewers because technology was not advanced enough to record both visuals and audio simultaneously. The plot used to be told through writings using title cards. These silent films were not completely silent. They were accompanied by live sounds. A small orchestra used to play music during the films as per the nature of scene.
- ii. **Age of Talking Films or Talkies** - With the start of 1930s, a new era of talkies commenced in Indian cinema. Talkie was a sound film or a motion picture having synchronized sound. The first talkie in India was Alam Ara. This release set a new trend and regional talkies also started after Alam Ara.

**B. Golden era of Indian Cinema (1940 to 1960)** - In the late 1940s, Indian cinema picked up the new masala themed films depicting music, dance and romance. This era was led by directors like Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor, Bimal Roy and Mehboob Khan. They brought new depth to the themes prevalent in India. This era laid the foundation stone of Indian cinema inspiring generations of filmmakers. With the Independence of India in 1947, a statutory body was created by enacting the

Cinematograph Act in 1952 with the name of Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). It was placed under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

- C. Classic decades of Indian Cinema (1970s and 1980s)** - The films of this phase were characterized by a mixture of genre of romance and action. This phase was dominated by filmmakers like Ramesh Sippy, Hrishikesh Mukherjee and Vijay Anand. Ionic films like Zanjeer and Sholay became huge commercial success and went on to become trendsetters in Indian cinema. The term Bollywood was coined during the 1970s with the establishment of Conventions of Commercial Bollywood Films (CCBF).
- D. New Bollywood phase of Indian Cinema (1990s to Present)** - During the late 1980s, Indian cinema faced a face of stagnation because of increasing use of violence, issues related to quality of music and rise in cases of video theft. With the release of Yash Chopra's epic film Chandni, Indian cinema rejuvenated itself and an era of romance started. The beginning of the 21st century marked commencement of an era of technological evolution. The new technology, advancement in terms of animation, special effects, digital projectors, latest production techniques, etc., improved the quality of Indian films and increased its popularity among the masses.