

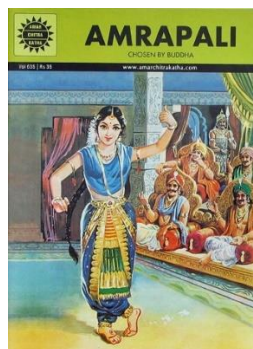
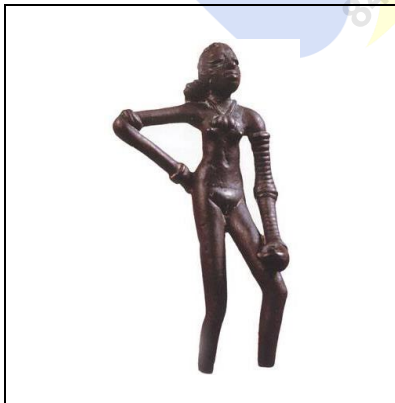
Prelims Master Program (2023-24) – Ancient, Medieval, Art and Culture
Handout 32: Classical Dances in India

- Classical dance of India has developed a type of dance-drama that is a form of a **total theater**.
 - The dancer acts out a story almost exclusively through **gestures**.
 - Most of the classical dances of India enact **stories from Hindu mythology**.
 - The tradition of dance has been **codified in the Natyashastra** and a performance is considered accomplished if it manages to evoke a rasa (emotion) among the audience by invoking a particular bhava (gesture or facial expression).
- **Constant Evolution:**
- **Classical Dances:**
 - The **Sangeet Natak Academy** recognizes eight dances as Classical: Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Odissi, Kathakali, Sattriya, Manipuri and Mohiniyattam.
 - Some scholars add Chhau, Yakshagana and Bhagavata Mela to the list.
 - Additionally, the Indian Ministry of Culture includes Chhau in its classical list.
 - These dances are traditionally regional, all of them include music and recitation in local language or Sanskrit, and they represent local ethos and yet a unity of core ideas in a diversity of styles, costumes and expression.



Brief Historical Sketch

There have been many changes in perspective and presentation of Indian Classical Dance - some intentional, others involuntary. This is an ongoing process, with each new generation of dancers and musicians adding to an already rich tapestry of tradition.

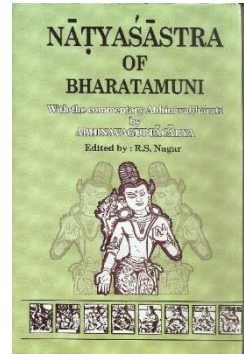


"sutanuka by name, a devadasi.
The excellent among young
artist, Devadinna by name,
rupadaksha, loved her."

		
Bharhut Dance	Bhaja cave woman playing table.	Ajanta and Bagh Paintings
		
Aurangabad cave	Dancing Shiva in Ellora	Chittore Stambha
		
Karnas, Brihadeshwara, Tanjore	Karnas, Chidambaram Temple	Lingaraja Temple, Odisha
		
Dance sculpture, Konark Sun Temple	Dancing figures Lakshman Temple, Khajuraho	Halebidu
		
Nataraja	Krishna	Ganapati

Some important Sanskrit Texts in Ancient and Early Medieval Era:

- Bharatmuni's Natyashastra
- Someshwara's Manasollas
- Bhojaraja's Shringaraprakash
- Sarangadeva's Sangit Ratnakar
- Abhinavgupta's commentary on Natyashastra
- Nandikeshwara's Abhinaya Darpana



Shift in the form of worship took place in medieval time with no more dance sculptures on the walls of temples. Nonetheless, as bhakti movement rose high, **sculpture was compensated by paintings:**

- Kalpasutra Jaina painting
- Chaura Panchashika style: Madhu Malati, Mrigavati, Laur Chanda
- Mughal paintings: Akbariana, Tarikh-e-Khanadan-e-Timuria etc
- Rajasthani and Pahari styles



Modern Dance?

18-19th c Decline

Stripped of their association with the temple and the court, classical dance traditions in India went through a period of unprecedented change in the 18th-20th centuries. There was a complete decline and degeneration in the 19th century.

- Indian courts patronage was gone.
- Ban on dance-forms due to Victorian notions of modesty and Missionaries activities.
- British education system didn't recognize the arts as a subject in curriculum.



Due to this, tradition was isolated from public sphere but continued in homes. The art of dance did not die but got diluted and degenerated (e.g. Nautchgirls in north, Sadir in south)

20th c Revival

In the early 20th century, national pride in glories of indigenous arts and culture helped development and popularity of Indian classical arts. Classical artforms were very much part of the nationalist struggle when India was trying to rediscover its lost identity.

Thus, today's classical dance forms are reconstruction of fragments from antiquity - but changed. Essentially, it is an expression of modern sensibilities. Today dancers are pushing the classical forms to their farthest limits – Exploring dance for creating visual geometry, trying abstract works, fusing different styles. They share the international stage today with dance forms from all over the world.

Classical Dance: Basic Terminology

Nritta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pure, abstract rhythmic dance movements. It is a string of highly stylized and symbolic poses. Basic elements: Tala, Laya Without bhava/ meaning/ story/ narrative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally, comes first in the performance. It consists of chari, rechika, Angaharas, Karanas, Bhramaris, Nrittahastas etc.
Nritya/ Abhinaya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gesticulations (for bhava) Consists of hand/face/footwork and abhinaya, i.e. body movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relates to Bhava/Rasa Explanatory aspect: hand gestures and facial expressions convey the meaning of the lyrics.
Natya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is the most comprehensive form which includes rhythmic movement + spoken words + acting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combined bhava, rasa and abhinaya Combination of literature, music and drama

Nritta: Law of methods and movements

- The focus is not on muscle form but on bone structure and joints:** knee, hips, shoulders, neck - from where movements emerge. **Bharata discusses** each part of the human body, and the possibility of movements.
- Bharata indicates basic positions and movements:
 - Basic stance: sthana** (samasthana, vishamsthana, mandalasthana).
 - Samasthana** is the most important element of nritta. Indian dance seeks perfect point or moment of balance along vertical meridian (**brahmasutra**)
 - Chari-karana-khanda-Mandala**
 - Combination of primary movements: **charis** (footwork), to cover space
 - Karanas (combination of movements)
 - It's the most primary unit.
 - 108 primary karanas given in Natyashastra
 - Then its combination is called **Khanda**.
 - 3/4 sections of khandas together constitute a full-circle called **Mandala**.
 - Other terms - rechika, bhramari, gat, pindibandha etc (Pindibandha - group combinations, while bhedyaka is a solo dance)

Nritya/Abhinaya: Miming aspect: Nritya portion depends mostly on hand and face gestures while footwork was very important in nritta. However, All great dancers display a **perfect blend of all three** in each of their performances.

Dance Types:

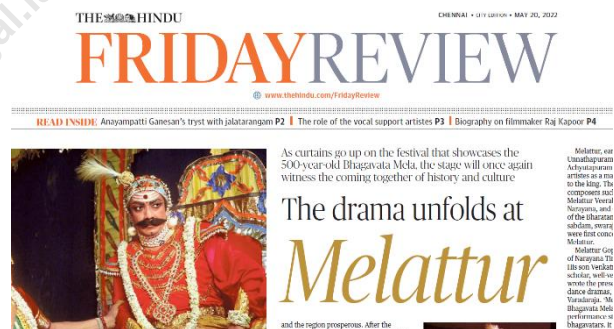
Tandava	Lasya
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masculine dance by Shiva: Vigorous, forceful and may be violent dance. • Natyashastra uses Tandava as a very generic term for dancing. Other books clearly state that Tandava from Tandu and Lasya from Parvati. • The types of Tandava: Ananda Tandava, Tripura Tandava, Sandhya Tandava, Samhara Tandava, Kali (Kalika) Tandava, Uma Tandava, Shiva Tandava, Krishna Tandava and Gauri Tandava. • In Kathak dance three types of Tandavas are generally used, they are, Krishna Tandava, Shiva Tandava and Ravana Tandava. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feminine dance by Parvati: Gentle, calm, graceful, manifests beauty, love and affection • Lasya is said to be the response to the male energy of the cosmic dance of Tandava. It comprises of delicate karanas, poses and body movements. • Sangeet Ratnakar defines Lasya as a dance form consisting of delicate movements that awaken erotic sentiments. • Lasya is the dance form said to be performed by Apsaras, the celestial nymphs in the Hindu mythology.

- Indian classical dance forms incorporate both tandava and lasya offering a balance of cosmic energies in their exposition.

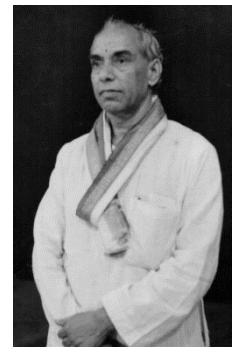
1) Bharatnatyam (TN)

(Ekaharya, Sadir, Dasiattam)

- It is a vast and comprehensive classical dance in India, the principles and technique of which are closely applied to three chief forms:
 - The lyrical solo Sadir-nautch
 - Bhagavata Mela dance-drama
 - Light Kuravanji ballet
- Historical Evolution:**
 - Tamil Bhakti Movement** after 6-7th century due to Alvars and Nayanars gave boost to cultural activity.
 - Chola Era:**
 - Chola temple sculptures depict dance movements.
 - Raja Rajeshwara Natakam was a forerunner of **Kuruvanji** (fine blend of folk and classical)
 - Post-Vijayanagara development:**
 - After the fall of the Vijayanagar empire in the battle of Talikota, several Bhagavatu families, natyacharyas, scholars, artistes, and composers fled for safety.
 - They **sought refuge in the Thanjavur court**. **King Achyutappa Nayak** (1577-1614) offered patronage to them, and they settled down in nearby villages of Melattur, Saliyamangalam, Sulamangalam, Theperumanallur and Oothukkadu. It is here that they continued to pursue their art.
 - Melattur Gopalakrishna Sastry, a disciple of Narayana Tirtha, composed natakas. His son **Venkatrama Sastry** was a great scholar, well-versed in music and dance. He wrote the present-day **Bhagavata Mela Natakams**, dedicating them to Lord Varadaraja. Thus, Melattur has a great tradition of Bhagavata Mela Natakam.
 - Tanjore Marathas:**
 - Due to its influence, dance songs in Tamilnadu Bharatnatyam are still mostly Telugu.
 - Tulaja II** (1728-36) invited Mahadeva Nattuvanar to Tanjore. He laid the foundations of modern Bharatnatyam.



- He presented the Varnam called Bhosala Tulaja Rajendra Raja and this dance was later known as **Sadir**.
 - During his time lived Tyagaraja-Dikshitar-Shyama Shastri, the Carnatic Trinity.
 - **Serfoji II** (1798-1832) employed the famous **Tanjore Quartet** (naalwar, the 4 brothers Ponniah, Chinnaiah, Sivanandam, Vadivelu)
 - The quartet's **format of presentation** (Alaripu, Jatiswaram, Sabdam, Varnam, Padam, Javali, Thilanna) is still followed.
- **British Era Decline**
 - With the rapid expansion of **foreign rule**, Indian courts and temples became emasculated institutions.
 - With diminishing patronage, devadasis moved to prostitution to make a living. What was, in their heads, a move to be independent, in reality, tainted their reputation.
 - The anti-nautch movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries aimed to abolish the tradition of Indian dancing girls. Opposition to temple dancer led by Dr. Muttulakshmi Reddy.
- **National Revival:** With the freedom movement motivating a rediscovery of Indian identity, dance became a focus of interest as a great legacy of the Indian people.
 - **E Krishna Iyer**
 - He was a founder of **Madras Music Academy** (1928) and played a pre-eminent role in the revival. The Academy re-named Sadir as Bharatanatyam.
 - **Rukmini Devi Arundale**
 - Rukmini Devi is credited with giving Bharatanatyam makeover from sensuous art form to more spiritual & devotional character.
 - She **set up Kalakshetra** in 1936 and succeeded in creating a haven for art interaction at an elitist level.
 - From Kuravanji Natakams to Bhagavatamela plays, she drew upon material from traditional sources and **repositioned them for the modern stage**, providing her own aesthetic touch.
 - Rukmini Devi **enhanced the presence of the male dancers** in what was a female-oriented dance form.
 - **Tanjore Balasaraswati**
 - She was reared in a traditional family soaked in dance and music.
 - Bala excelled in the depiction of shringar but was far removed from devadasi culture.



Some technical aspects:

- **Nritta:** The pure metre (**Alaripu**), the music and metre (**Jatiswaram**), the word, music and metre (**Shabdham**), and the elaboration and lofty expression of all these facets in the **varnam**, music without metre (**Padam** and **Javali**), and metre and melody in abstraction in the **Tillana** reveal the logical evolution of the dance and the pacing of the concert format.
- **Nritta Technique**
 - **Brahmasutra** (vertical median).
 - Samabhanga
 - Tribhanga
 - Ardhamandali
 - **Adavu** is the basic unit of dance movement (its like karana of Natyashastra).



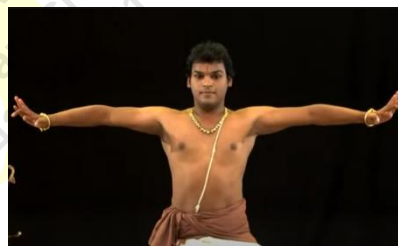
Styles of Bharatanatyam:

There are multiple styles of Bharatanatyam which originated from different regional preferences.

- **Melattur Style:** Developed by the devadasi traditions and Melattur Bhagavada mela.
- **Pandanalloor Style:** This style is attributed to Guru Meenakshisundaram Pillai who lived in the village called Pandanalloor in Thanjavore district. Her son-in-law Chokkalingam Pillai is known as the doyen guru of this style.
- **Vazhavoor style:** This style was popularized by Ramai Pillai from the village Vazuvoor in Thanjavoor district.
- **Kalakshetra style:** *This is the modern and latest style* which is a simplified form of Pandanalloor style. It was introduced by Rukmini Devi Arundale.



Bharatanatyam has evolved with cultural changes and the form is not strictly rooted in the style anymore.



(2) Kuchipudi (AP)

The growth of Kuchipudi after independence is an instance of a little-known local tradition - practiced by Brahmin performers of an Andhra Pradesh village - spreading to all parts of India, acquiring a large following, with its tone and presentation undergoing substantial changes in the process. The Kuchipudi scene today bristles with a majority of female exponents in what was once an all-male tradition.



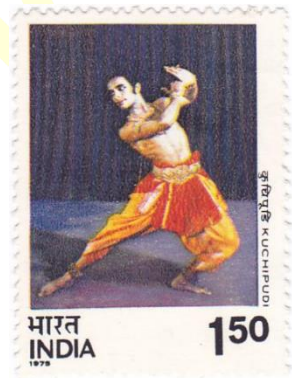
Early History:

1 st c	Amaravati Stupa carvings of group dancing (pindi-bandha).
13 th c	Nritta-ratnavali by Jayappa Senani, a reputed scholar and dancer who was Commander of the Elephant Forces of the Kakatiya ruler, Ganapati Deva, mentions Brahmana mela .
16 th c	Machupalli Kaifiat (1502) has the first documented mention of Kuchipudi dance.
17 th c	<p>Narayana Tirtha Yati wrote Parijatam for the Bhagavata Mela Natakam performers, who were in Melattur. His Sanskrit musical opera composition Krishna Leela Tarangini occupies prime place in the Kuchipudi repertoire. Its songs are popularly called as Tarangas.</p> <p>The art form was codified by the circa 17th c by his disciple saint-poet Siddhendra Yogi.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He was the author of Bhama Kalapam, Golla Kalapam and Parijat-apaharanam. His first (all-male) performers were recruited from Kuchipudi itself and eventually this operatic art-form was identified with the village. <p>The Nawab of Golkonda, Abdul Hasan Tani Shah (1672-78 CE) <u>granted Kuchipudi village to Bhagavatulu families</u> in appreciation of their art after witnessing their dance drama on a visit to Machilipatnam.</p>
Colonial era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the colonial rule, Hindu arts and traditions such as dance-drama were ridiculed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> British officials, under Victorian morality, stereotyped and dehumanized artists and accused them of prostitution. Christian Missionaries launched the "anti-dance movement" in 1892, to ban all such dance forms. In 1910, the Madras Presidency altogether banned temple dancing. Thus, Kuchipudi dance declined.
National Revival	<p>Due to the efforts of some Indians, from 1920s onwards, the classical Indian dances witnessed a period of renaissance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastri (1886–1956) was the influential figure who led the effort to save, reconstruct and revive Kuchipudi performance art.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cross flow of ideas with Bharatanatyam. ○ Solo Kuchipudi. ○ He also taught devadasis. ● Some Western dancers joined the Indians in preserving dance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The American dancer <u>Esther Sherman (Ragini Devi)</u> moved to India in 1930 and joined the movement to save and revive classical Indian dances. ○ Her daughter <u>Indrani Baijai (Indrani Rahman)</u> learnt and became a celebrated Kuchipudi dancer.
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Modern growth

- With the acquisition of a large following, Kuchipudi's **presentation** undergoing **substantial changes**.
 - The role of the actor in Kuchipudi originally included **spoken bits of dialogue and even sung passages**. Now it has changed to a largely dance oriented expertise.
 - **Caste barriers** have crumbled.
 - **Streevesham** by male actors carried much weight historically. However, the scene today bristles with a **majority of female exponents**. Even the male characters (Hiranyakashipu, Jarasandha, Bali, Bhasmasura) and divine characters (Rama, Krishna), now rendered by female dancers.
 - **The public performances of Kuchipudi by Indrani Rahman and Yamini Krishnamurti** outside of Andhra region, created wider enthusiasm and more interest through new students and the expansion of Kuchipudi as a creative performance art both within India and internationally.
 - Many teachers gravitated to **Chennai** in search of a place in the **vibrant film world**.
- In spite of its proliferation, Kuchipudi has been **comparatively less threatened** by change outside its parameters.



Some Terms:

- **Daru-s:** Structured composition used in different situations to establish a character in the play. They form the prominent part of the musical text for Kuchipudi.
- **Presentation:** The dance-music relationship is less structured than in other dances and often a one-line repetitive musical backdrop provides a lilt, emphasizes a mood, and sees the dancer presenting an entire narrative sequence.
- **Dance:**
 - The movement **does not have one central stance** round which the technique revolves.

- The **Tarangam** (the dancer weaves intricate rhythm patterns with the feet planted on the rim of a brass plate) was started by **Lakshminarayana Sastry** as an audience-pleasing device.



Perini Shivatandavam

- Perini flourished centuries ago in the Telugu-speaking regions, reaching its peak during the **Kakatiya rule**.
- Perini was presented to soldiers as inspiration (before the war) and entertainment (after the war).
- The dance finds mention in the early medieval work **Bharataarnavam by Nandikeshwara**.
- **Nataraj Ramakrishna** (1923-2011) revived the lost art of Perini.



(3) Kathakali

It is the least understood of the classical performing art traditions of India.

Important Basics:

- It is not a solo dance (like Bharatnatyam) or a court dance (like Kathak) nor lyrical (like Manipuri). Instead, the most striking element in Kathakali is its **overwhelming dramatic quality**.
 - It revels in the **confrontation of opposites**, its heroes and anti-heroes from the Puranas and epics acting out their desires and antagonisms in unabashedly **exaggerated theatre**.
- Rendered in the **open temple courtyard**, its performance ritual notwithstanding, Kathakali has **little connection with temple ritual in the sanctum**.
 - Even while dealing with themes from mythology, the dance has a **strongly secular character**, its godly heroes and demoniac villains lying outside the realm of worship and devotion.
- It is considered as the most important **living link with Sanskrit plays of the bygone era**.
 - The coming of the Arabs, Dutch and Portuguese left some mark on Kathakali, but the fundamental spirit continues to be Indian in character.



History:

- Contemporary Kathakali is the **culmination of a long process of evolution and assimilation** of different theatrical dance forms. Kathakali evolved from the blend of all.
 - Kuttus (eg ancient Chakyar Koottu)
 - Attams (Kaliyattam, Kutiyattam, Krishnattam, Ramanattam)
 - Theyyams (various forms)
 - Mudi yettu
 - Various tullals (satirical recital dance forms)
- **17th -19th c developments:**
 - Kathakali actually **emerged as an independent**, highly formalistic, dance-drama form only in the 17th century. Two styles gave Kathakali its present form:
 - **Krishnattam** was already existing for a long time.
 - There was a profuse use of Sanskrit.
 - **Ramanattam** developed as a counterpoint to already existing Krishnattam.
 - Ramanattam used sanskritised Malayalam (Manipravala) in Kerala literature. It is admirably suited to the stage.
 - Raja of Kottakkara (Kollam/Quilon) patronized it.
 - **Patronage of kings of Travancore and Cochin** helped in further development.
 - Various Kathakali styles came up in this era: Kalluvazhi style, Kalladik kodan and Kaplingadan styles, Takazhi and Karipuzha styles.
 - **Enhanced literary activity** with many new **attakathas** (literary texts for Kathakali) being written.
 - **Themes** were no longer only Rama and Krishna but chosen from Mahabharata, Bhagavata Purana, Shiva Purana etc mythology with Keralite versions. Thus, its thematic content is derived from the myths and legends of the Hindu epics and the puranas.
- **Colonial era, nationalist revival, recent developments:**
 - As in the case of Bharatnatyam, it was the lean period with troupes disbanded due to diminishing royal patronage and disregard by the new political elites.
 - **Vallathol Narayana Menon**, a prominent Malayalam poet and editor of Keralodayam, and **Mukunda Raja** took charge. They started the **Kerala Kalamandalam** in 1930.
 - They gathered great Gurus, re-instilled poetry and literature and gave Kathakali the form in which we know it today.
 - Kathakali is deconstructed into micro units for its **rigorous and grueling training process**. From the 1930s, people like **Uday Shankar** and later **Rukmini Devi** found training in this medium the ideal preparation for dancers.
 - Down the years, performers specializing in **stree veshas** have gained distinction. But women managed to make inroads into the male preserves of Kathakali.



- **Vidushaka** has now completely disappeared from Kathakali.

Insight:

• **Dance:**

- Units of nritta portion are **Kalasams** - similar to tukra/toras of Kathak technique.
- These cadence patterns culminate into compositions known as **araddis**.

• **Music:**

- The accompanying **Sopanam** style of singing has acquired Carnatic shadings.



• **Space:**

- Dancing in restricted space, with singers in the back and percussionists on the right, the actor creates a feel of largeness and expanse. By climbing a **one-foot-tall stool**, he can become a heavenly being.
- Amidst heightening suspense, its epic characters reveal themselves in stages to the audience from behind a cloth curtain held by two persons. **Manipulating the curtain** via a special dramatic device with only face and hands revealing character is called **tiranokku**.

• **Abhinaya:**

- Abhinaya in Kathakali takes on a new dimension with every isolated facial muscle involved in elaborate expressional language.
- Hasta Abhinaya, Aharya abhinaya and stylized make-up emphasize character types.

Character Type (Principal characters for Abhinaya)	Aharya Abhinaya Tadi (beard), Mudi (headgear)
Heroes and Demi-gods E.g. Arjuna and Nala	Green make-up (pacha) with elongated eyes.
Anti-heroes and the villains, both human and demon. E.g. Duryodhana, Keechaka and Ravana	Red mustache/bearded (chuvanna tadi) and black faces.
Composites: Half-man half-lion in Narasimha (Prahlada Charitam), half-man half-bird in Hamsa (Nala Charitam) and Hanuman.	White-bearded (Veluppu Tadi) category.
Ordinary humans, such as women, rishis, brahmins, children, messengers etc.	Plain, flesh-coloured make up. Changes in minutae are in accordance with the characterization.
Stylized tribal people living in woods: E.g. Shiva disguised in the form of Kirata	Black-bearded (Karutta Tadi) group

Problems Today:

"This is an art for the connoisseur. When a four-hour play has to be condensed to less than half its duration to suit uninitiated audiences, what happens to an art whose soul is elaboration?" questions Guru Sadanam Balakrishnan. Confronted by dwindling audiences, lessening performance platforms and a precarious economic future, Kathakali faces a challenge today.

- The **daunting training routine** can be undertaken by very few and even Kalamandalam, with dwindling recruits each year, has problems in attracting new talent and quality teachers. **Kathakali jewellery**, so vital, is today made by only one or two families.
- What is disquieting is that even in the temple courtyard performances in Kerala, where Kathakali used to reign supreme, the **art form now has to share space along with several other performing traditions** and **cut short its programmes**. Lecture demonstrations seem to pay more than actual performances.
- Vallathol himself tried **new themes** like 'Killing of Hitler' and 'Gandhi's Victory' in Kathakali, though not very successfully. Kathakali today sees **no giants-in-the-making**.

To sustain at least what one has, the art form needs strong government support. We will otherwise lose it.

(4) Mohiniattam (Kerala)

The Dance of Enchantress:

Mohini Attam stands for enchantment rather than seduction and the stress is on dance as transformation.

- **Mohini's mythological story** is very popular in Kerala.
- **Style: Lasya genre.**
 - Kaishiki vritti
 - Ekaharya abhinaya form

Historical Sketch of Mohiniattam:

Its seeds are deep in Kerala. Although its repertoire has no temple connection or Kootambalam (temple-theatre) history, still it has a strong devotional element.

- **Lost Ancient Tradition**
 - Possibly the roots can be found in Silappadikaram.
 - Tali Nangyar (temple women) performed solo dance during Cholas.
 - However, by 16th c. nothing remained of it. The tradition was lost.
- **Early Modern Revival:**



- In Kerala, the Sanskritic culture of the Namboodiris and the martial tradition of the Nairs were assimilated into the art form, thanks to the social custom of Namboodiri alliances with Nair women.
- **Marthanda Varma** (1706-58) followed Vaishnavism and worshipped Padmanabha.
- **Swati Tirunal** (1813-46)
 - He modified Dasiattam
 - Two Tanjore quartet brothers brought Bharatanatyam influence.
- **British Era Stigmatization and Suppression:**
 - This dance was discouraged/banned by British due to **Victorian Morality** of sexual repressiveness.
 - Also, **American missionaries** criticized the seductive gestures, which were essential part of the dance.
 - Thus, by the beginning of the 20th century, the performing arts of Kerala faced near-extinction.
- **Revival due to the National Movement:**
 - **Nationalist Vallathol Narayan Menon** and **Mukund Raja** revived the Kerala dances. They founded **Kerala Kalamandalam** in 1930 to preserve the culture of Kerala. It has worked for the progress and popularity of performing artforms of Kathakali, Koodiyattom and Mohiniyattom. Still the solo female dance didn't meet the supposed standards of dignity.
 - In the present form, where it is exclusively performed by females, it is a recent creation.
- **Modern-era Conservatism:** Mohiniattam dancers have strong views on the dance, reflected in their styles. Kerala Kalamandalam, in splendid isolation, has not accepted any style barring its own, even rejecting Kalyanikuttyamma's approach.



Some details:

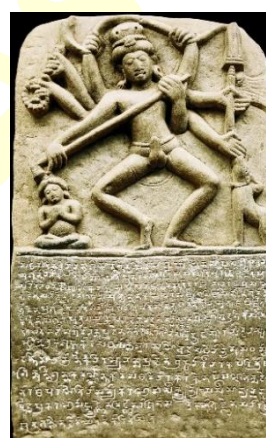
- **Music and Lyrics:** Neither it is very slow nor like the stylised ritualistic tradition the music of Mohiniattam suits the Sukumara roopa aspect of the dance.
 - **Sopanam** music is a Kerala way of singing ragas. Its speed slowly increases.
 - Words in **Manipravala**: mix of Malayalam, Sanskrit and Tamil.
- **Dance Movements:**
 - The **movement geometry** reflects indelible images from Kerala.
 - Torso **andolika** is a measured disciplined movement that responds to curves in music - very aesthetic.



(5) Odissi

Perhaps, this could be the oldest classical dance. The historicity of Odissi is irrefutable, for even the Natya Shastra mentions '**Odra Magadhi**'.

Earliest Architectural Evidence		
1 st c BCE	Hathigumpha Inscription	King is <u>Gandharva Veda-Buddha</u> .
4 th c CE	Asanpat	Earliest Nataraja figure in India.
6 th c CE	Kosaleswara temple, Bolangir	Earliest representation of a figure in Tribhanga .
7 th c CE	Parasuramesvara temple, BBSR	Strongly sculpted figure in Chauka .
11-13 th c CE	Lingraja Temple	Full of dancing figures.
11-13 th c CE	Mukteswar and Rajarani temples	Exquisite figures of alasyakanyas.
13 th c CE	Konarak Surya temple	Special Natya Mandap replete with life-size figures of dancers and instrumentalists.



Manuscripts: Odissi is a highly stylised dance and to some extent is based on the classical Natya Shastra and the Abhinaya Darpana of Nandikeshvara.

Shastric texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abhinaya Darpana Prakasha by Jadunatha Sinha Abhinaya Chandrika by Rajmani Patra Abhinaya Chandrika by Maheshwara Mahapatra.
Epics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oriya Mahabharat by Saral Das (15th century) Dandi Ramayana by Balaram Das (16th century) Niladri Mahodaya by Loknath Vidyadhara (17th century)
Madal Panji	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are temple chronicles at Puri. Drum chronicles of Puri temples.
Creative/Poetic Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poetry is drawn from Sanskrit or Odiya. Geetagoinda of Jaidev is the most important one.

Developments in Medieval Era:

- Emergence of Puri as the centre of **Mahari (Devdasi) dance** during the Ganga and Gajapati kings.
 - As Shaivite king Anantavarma Choda Ganga turned into Vaishnavite, **Jagannath Puri emerged as focal point for Vaishnavite Mahari dance of Orissa.**

- In 1499, King Prataprudradeva Gajapati passed an edict (inscribed on the walls of Puri), that only the **Geet Govind** would be sung in the ritual services (from morning Bhoga to night Bada Singar). Since then, the Gita Govinda has permeated the soul of Odishan people and dance.
- **Chaitanya Mahaprabhu** spent the last 24 years of his life in Puri.
 - His disciple and governor of Odisha **Ramanda Rai** himself taught abhinaya to Maharis and even had them enact Geet Govind.



- **Phase of Decline:**
 - Intermittent attacks by rulers like Sultan Firoz Shah (1360). Hussain Shah Sultan of Bengal (1510) and Kalapahad, the General of Suleiman Karnani, disrupted temple rituals.
 - With the decline of the Gangas, the degeneration of the Mahari began.
 - By the 18th century, the temple dancer had come to be associated with concubinage.
- **Gotipua: Medieval Rise and Fall**
 - With the Mahari decline, rose the Gotipua tradition. In this tradition, pre-puberty boys trained to dance in female attire.
 - The Gotipua **danced outside the temple** precincts during processions, jatras and festivals.
 - Gotipua **contained the basic vocabulary of movement and rhythm for Odissi in its new manifestation**, for all the gurus were trained in it.
 - These supple-bodied performers specialized in **Bandha Nritya**.
 - Bandha Nritya was a fully evolved tradition by the 17th c but reduced to a degenerated form by the 20th c.

20th century Reconstruction of Odissi:

Post 1940s, Odissi has **risen like the Phoenix** from being a skeletal remnant of history to reincarnate as one of the most sought-after classical forms.

- **Crucial 1940s**
 - Although Odissi dance embodies the Mahari and the Gotipua sensibilities, the contemporary Odissi had its real beginnings in Orissa Theatre, with which each of the main Gurus **Pankajcharan Das, Kelucharan Mohapatra, and Debaprasad Das** were involved. Dance and music institutions started coming up in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.
- **End of 50s:**
 - **Due to a supposed provocation by Rukmini Devi** in 1957, collective oath was taken by gurus, intellectuals, dance researchers and practitioners to rebuild Odissi,
 - Soon, an **entire dance vocabulary of movement and rhythm** was built, and rough edges were pruned. A **whole new repertoire format** of Mangalacharan, Batu Nritya, Pallavi, Abhinaya and Moksha was finalized by 1960s.

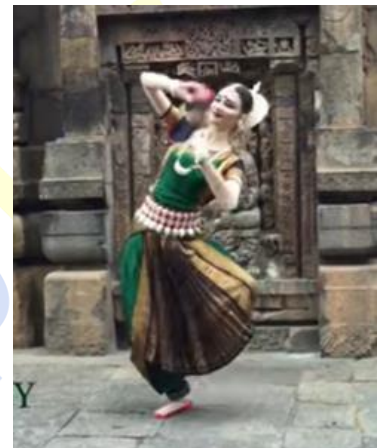
Contemporary developments:

- **More male dancers** have emerged from Debprasad school.
- **Kelucharan** blended martial vigour of Chhau with lyrical grace of Odishi Bhangis
- **Dance-drama genre** has become more popular than pure dance.
- Good experiments like by **Sonal Mansingh**.
- Of late it acquired a **large following abroad**.



Technique:

- Stylistically, a variety of gaits, pirouettes, jumps and postures were inspired by the sculptures. These **bhangis**, as they are called, are really units of movement ending in one particular stance.
- Three main postures: **Samapada, Tribhanga and Chuka**. These are the most important and central postures around which the whole dance revolves.
- **Movements:** Foot work and leg movement (called **Charis**) are similar to Bharatnatyam. Called charis. There are very many graceful charis.
- Dancers' skill is known from:
 - **Nayika portion:** **Shilpa-prakasha** mentions 16 types of **Alaskanyas**. Odissi dancer masters all of them.
 - **Ashtapadis** of Gita Govinda are must in Odissi recital. The rest depends on dancer's abhinaya.



(6) Kathak (UP, MP, RJ)

Salient features:

- Kathak came to stand for the stylised dance form. It evolved out of the **storyteller's art**.
- *Traditionally*, it is a solo dance.
- She is presented as a **narrator** and not as an actor.
- **Uniqueness:**
 - Only Indian classical dance style that combines **both Hindu and Islamic influences**, one giving it the mythological stories and the other its secular aspect.
 - Only Indian classical form with a **vast body of abstract dance**, enabling entire recitals to be sustained on the rhythmic content alone.



- Only Indian dance with **strict upright stance**.

Evolution: In its vintage classical manifestation is attributed to **male dancers/gurus**. But the **courtesans/tawaifs** and later, the somewhat infamous, **Nautch Girls** of the Raj, played a very invaluable role in preserving this tradition.

- **Ancient Bardic Narrative Tradition:**

- Ancient bards/storytellers dramatized narrations (katha) from mythology using poetry, word, music, mime and rhythm, simultaneously entertaining, informing and sermonizing.

- **Medieval Era:**

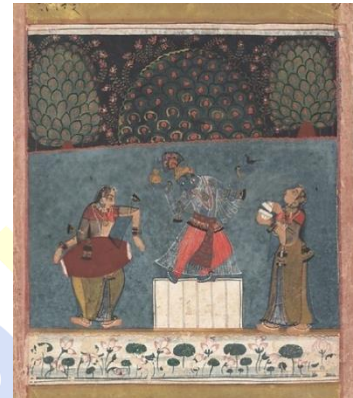
- **Bhakti Influence:**

- Ras Lila of Brindavan, the Ashtachap poets, the songs of Meera and of Swami Haridas. This influence was centred around Temples.

- **Light Music:**

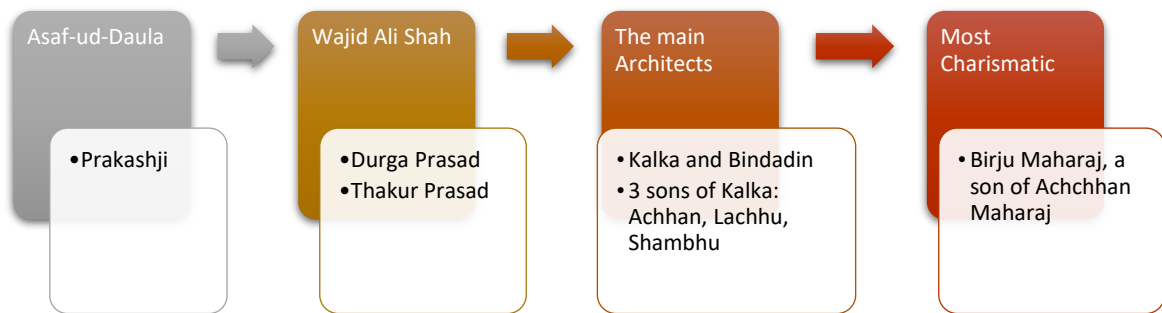
- Thumri and Ghazals, emerged originally in the Muslim courts of north India, emerged as the ideal for interpretative dance.
- Courtesans and female singers explored the coquetry and suggestiveness in Shringar ras of the lyrics.

- As a result of the interaction was the development of Kathak.



Early Modern History: Two original styles

Lucknow Gharana (The court of the Nawabs of Oudh)	Jaipur Gharana (Jaipur, Udaipur, Amer)
<p>Under flamboyant and indulgent Nawab Wajid Ali Shah Kathak had its richest flowering. The ruler was a fond dancer and musician.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructed grand Kaiser Bagh and special Parion Ka Khana, where courtesans and dancers were trained. • The court maintained special teachers to train harem. • Composed Rahas, a Kathak ballet with the ruler in the main role. It was a sumptuous musical opera-cum-dance production. • Wrote works like Banni and Najo <p>With this, the Lucknow School of Kathak, as it came to be known later, began to acquire an identity. The repertoire of thumris in this style carries the eroticism of the tawaif and the courtesan culture.</p>	<p>Bhakti Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old miniatures and Rajasthani paintings testify to the old connection between the dance and Bhaktiras. • It was the male dominated martial culture of Rajasthan. • Treatises of music were written in the spoken language of Rajasthani, and not Sanskrit. • Jaipur Court Patroange: Courtesans as reputed singers and dancers were part of court culture. Gunijan-khana, started by Sawai Jai Singh patronized artistes and gurus. • The Jaipur school prides itself on its brilliant layakari: its long Parans, the one-legged chakkars/pirouettes, Kavits and also Sangeet Ka Tukras.



Modern Kathak:

- **Colonial era decline, Nationalist era resurgence**
 - Kathak reached a low point when only the tawaif/Nautch figured as a visible remnant of the dance. The good dancers remained confined to the courts.
 - **The early 20th century** was a period of rediscovery for dance. The first woman to defy the social stigma attached to the dance was **Madame Menaka**.

Some Technical Terms:

- **Entry:** Traditional entry of gradually **Ganesh Vandana** is now revived. In the Lucknow court, **Amada** was earlier the normal entry.
- **Nritta Portion:**
 - Tora, tukda, parana, nagma, Kasak Masak, Lehra, Tihai, Parmelu, Chakkara
 - **Padhant:** bols are important for demonstration.
 - **Tattakara:** way of representing dancer's mastery over rhythmic patterns.
 - i. It is essentially an exploration of the tala, with the feet, indeed the entire body, becoming a percussion instrument. **Hence the observation, that the Kathak dancer dances a tala rather than to a tala.**
- **Abhinaya portion:** Stories of Krishna's childhood or Nayikabheda
 - **Gatabhav** (Without words): Gat palta, Gat Nikas
 - **Abhinaya proper**
- **Dadra, bhajan, thumri:** provide textual material for interpretation.
- **Tarana** is often introduced in conclusion.

Kathak today: It is spreading worldwide with the help of diaspora Various new experiments like *group Kathak dance*. **But, due to the performance on stage:**

- **The distance** between performer and audience has resulted in **erasing the subtleties**.
- **Not particularly well-informed audience** mistakes cleverly rehearsed rhythmic razzmatazz for improvised brilliance.
- **Delicate aspects** like Thaata and Gat have become minimal and speed and virtuosity that have taken over.

- Thumri singing for Kathak has become like Ghazal singing, and barring recent exceptions like Rohini Bhate (1924-2008), who insisted on music of the highest classicism for dance, **Kathak music rarely rises above perfunctory levels.**
- The **dancer's lessening connections with poetry and literature** have diminished fresh interpretative or thematic insights and abhinaya is the loser.

(7) Manipuri

History:

- **This dance originated in the valley of Manipur.**
 - Intricately woven in the lifestyle of people, it is an indispensable part of **religious worship**.
 - **Nata Sankirtana** is considered the most important ritual performance. In fact, the Meiteis call this a mahayagna.
 - Its contemporary vitality is the result of its being **integral to the life of community** at large.
- **Vaishnavite movement spread in 17th-19th c.**
 - **King Pamheiba** (Garib Nawaz, 1690-1751) came under the influence of the Ramanandi cult.
 - When the Ramanandi cult became popular in Manipur the style of singing called **Bangadesh Pala** or **Aribapala** became popular. It is the root of **Manipuri Sankirtana**. **Nata Sankirtana** as we know today is a further refinement of the Aribapala tradition.
 - **King Rajasri Bhagyachandra** (r. 1763-98) became a disciple of **Narottam Dasa** of Bengal. The origins of many of the traditions of music and dance of Sankirtana and of Rasa are attributed to the genius of this king.
 - **Maharaj Chandrakirti** (1850-86):
 - During his time, the Krishna worship became more popular. The singing of the Sankirtanas in the royal palace was firmly established.
 - There was expansion of the music repertoire, addition of new padavalis and a refinement of drumming.
- **20th century: Role of Tagore**
 - Due to its **geographical isolation**, there was less interaction with the rest of India's performing arts. So, Manipuri became known to the rest of India only when **Rabindranath Tagore** visited Sylhet in 1919.
 - He arranged to have the dance **taught in Santiniketan** by recruiting Gurus.
 - With Tagore's abiding interest, well-known impresario **Haren Ghosh** toured the country with a Manipuri troupe in 1930, putting the dance form on the all-India map.



- Three great gurus **Amubi Singh**, **Amudon Sharma**, and **Atomba Singh** were associated with the 20th c. Manipuri scene.

Repertoire:

- The first group: Pre-Vaishnava culture
 - Dance form rituals: **Lai Haroaba** and **Khaba Thoibi**.
 - **Thang ta** martial ritual dancers.
- The second group: Dance and music of the various **jatras** in Manipur.
 - E.g. **Rath Yatra**, the Holi Pala etc. Popular **Thabala Chonghi/Chongba** (dancing by moonlight) which is part of the **Yaosang festival dances**.
- The third group: Different types of **Sankirtana traditions**.
 - Includes both Ariba Pala and the Nata Sankirtana.
- A fourth group is for the **ballads** (both vocal as well as a miming aspect)
 - The most important part of Manipuri repertoire is recognised by the generic term **Jagoi**.
 - **Nupi Jagoi** (women's dance) is the graceful variety quite distinct from the tandava type of dancing.
 - **Nupa Jogai** is men's dance.
 - **Cholams**: the Kartala Cholan, the Mridang Cholan, and the spear dances.
 - E.g. Pung Cholan
 - The dance may be executed by a solo performer or by a hundred men.
 - The cholams are both lasya and tandava.



Technique: Though it shares the philosophy of Indian classical dance, it is **completely different in its visual representation**. In technique, Manipuri is a far cry from anything we know in the other styles of dance.

- **Lasya portion:** It has a flow, ease and a grace which contrasts from the precision of the South Indian styles. This is not a negation of precision, results from an **unusual treatment of the body**.
 - The vertical line of the body is never broken. In fact, the body merely curves itself into a figure of 8. The positions attained are thus relaxed and controlled rather than sculptural. A deliberate attempt at limiting space and restricting movement is made here. In the sphuritanga, although greater freedom is allowed, it is once again within the definite limits set by the dancer.
 - The dancer cannot lift her foot away from the ground above the level of the knee. The release from the ground is invariably characterized by a sweep of the ground, a gliding movement almost touching the floor.

- **Tandava portion:**

- It is known for its agility, verve and high leaps, whether executed by women in the role of the child Krishna or by men in the numerous male dances of the region.
- The **achongba** (jumping movements) are characteristic of the tandava portions of the dance.
- The dance has a highly complex technique of movement and tala.
- The dance is **not restricted to solo numbers**. Manipuri is perhaps the only classical style in which we find exquisite survivals of compositions, mentioned in classical Sanskrit literature. Group formations mentioned in the Natyasastra have been lost to other classical forms.

Modern challenges:

- Manipuri, still so closely linked with the temple, has **found the proscenium sensibility challenging**.
- A dance mainly based on group energy has now acquired a solo dimension. But unless rendered by seasoned dancers, the solo from the Raasa traditionally presented in the group backdrop, can seem limp.
- The full impact of Manipuri is often lost on uninitiated audiences. And the dance sadly does not enjoy the frequent platforms other classical dances attract.
- Barring pockets in the east of the country and in Mumbai, Manipuri is still largely confined to its own environs.

(8) Sattriya (Assam)

Role of Srimanta Shankardeva:

- The dance **originated in the 'Sattras'** established by Mahapurush Srimanta Shankardev in the 15th – 16th c.
- Shankardeva introduced this dance-form by **incorporating different elements** from various treatises, local folk dances with his own rare outlook.
 - Two earlier prevalent dance-forms: **Ojapali** and **Devadasi** (with many classical elements). They belonged to either Shakti or Vaishnava tradition. They were subsumed in Sattriya dance gradually.
- The early compositions were **written/directed by** Shankardeva, and by his principal disciple Madhavdeva.
- **Themes:**
 - The art was developed in the form **dance-dramas about legends from Bhagavata Purana**. (sometimes Rama and Sita and stories from Mahabharata and Ramayana).
 - Krishna's worship is to be done by kirtan and seva.



- **Important Terms:**

Mati Akharas	Grammar of Sattriya Dance: Basic steps and exercises. Basic foundation in the training of a Sattriya dancer.
Ankiya Nat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-act plays which combine the aesthetic and the religious. Sutradhar plays a prominent role in them. Sutradhar recites the story of the drama/Naat and thus manages the flow of the play.
Namghar	Community halls of Sattras where dance-dramas are performed.
Borgeets	Sattriya Nritya is accompanied by musical compositions in Brajavali called Borgeets.
Khol	A key musical instrument in Sattriya performance are khol. This is a two faced, asymmetrical drum.
Pat silk	Sattriya dance female costume made of Assam Pat silk (white or raw silk color with use of red, blue and yellow for specific dance numbers) and traditional Assamese jewellery.

Sattriya Dance forms:

- Sattriya repertoire includes nritya, nritya, and natya.
 - The three major parts are Geetor Naach, Slokar Naach and Ragor Naach. This dance covers three aspects: Nritya, Natya and Nritya.

Krishna <u>Nritya</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It portrays the activities of young Krishna. It is a pure dance.
Nadubhangi <u>Nritya</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It covers the stories of Krishna like Kaliya-mardan. In it, the pure dance is performed with songs in the Geetor Naach.

- Sattriya dance is governed strictly by principles of hasta-mudras, foot-work, aharyas, music etc. It has two repertoires: Bhavna related dance-dramas and pure dance numbers such as chalis like Rajghoriya chali.
- It integrates two styles, one masculine (**Paurashik Bhangi**, energetic and with jumps), and feminine (**Stri Bhangi**, Lasya).

Jhumura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a pure dance with masculine postures. It is known for vigour and majestic beauty. It was started by Sri Sri Madhavdev.
Chali Naach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is known for gracefulness and elegance. Connection with the dancing peacock. Under the guidance of Sri Sri Madhavdev, male dancers dressed as female performed this dance. Rojaghoria Chali: Due to royal influence a more elegant costume is used for this part than of the pure Chali Nach.