

Indian Dance

CHAPTER

5

The **Rig Veda** mentions dance (**nrti**) and danseuse (**nrtu**) and compares the brilliant dawn (**usas**) to a brightly arrived danseuse. In the **Brahmanas, Jaiminiya** and **Kausitaki** dance and music are mentioned together. The Epics are full of references to dances on earth and heaven. **Natya Shastra** composed by **Bharat Muni in 1st century AD** is considered by many as the **Fifth Veda**. This treatise talks about Dance in its complete detail.

- In India, the art of dancing may be traced back to the Harappan culture. The discovery of the bronze statue of a **dancing girl** testifies to the fact that some women in Harappa performed dances.
- Gradually dances came to be divided as **folk and classical**. The classical form of dance was performed in temples as well as in royal courts. The dance in temples had a religious objective whereas in courts it was used purely for entertainment.
- Folk dances evolved from the lives of common people and were performed in unison. In Assam people celebrate most of the harvesting season through Bihu. Similarly Garba of Gujarat, Bhangra and Gidda of Punjab, Bamboo dance of Mizoram, Koli, the fisherman's dance of Maharashtra, Dhumal of Kashmir, and Chhau of Bengal are unique examples of performing arts that gave expression to the joys and sorrows of the masses.

As far as the analytical study of this art form is concerned, the Natyashastra of Bharata is a primary source of information and it mentions the following salient aspects related to dance: **Tandava and Lasya**.

- i. Tandava is a dance performed with higher power and strength.

- ii. Lasya is a much more gentler dance than Tandava.

The theory classifies human emotions into nine types (Navarasa)- **1. Bhava** (emotions) – Shringara (love); **2. Veer** (vigour); **3. Rudra** (anger); **4. Bhay** (fear); **5. Ghrana** (disgust); **6. Hasya** (comic); **7. Karun** (pathetic); **8. Vishmaya** (wondrous); and **9. Shaant** (peace).

According to Abhinaya Darpan, dance is considered as having three aspects: **Natya, Nritya** and **Nritta**.

Natya highlights the dramatic element and most dance forms do not give emphasis to this aspect today with the exception of dance-drama forms like Kathakali.

Nritya is essentially expressional, performed specifically to convey the meaning of a theme or idea.

Nritta is pure dance where body movements do not express any mood (Bhava), nor do they convey any meaning.

5.1 - Classical Dance Form

Sangeet Natak Academy (India's National Academy) recognizes only eight classical dances of India, however, the **Ministry of Culture also considers Chhau Dance as a classical dance of India**, making the total number of classical dances in India as nine. These are: **Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Odissi, Kathakali, Sattriya, Manipuri, Mohiniyattam and Chhau**.

8 Classical Dance forms of India

Kathak

- Traditionally regarded to have originated from the travelling bards of North India referred as Kathakars or storytellers.
- The Vaishnavite cult which swept North India in the 15th century and the resultant bhakti movement contributed to a whole new range of lyrics and musical forms. The **Radha-Krishna theme** proved immensely popular alongwith the works of Mirabai, Surdas, Nandadas and Krishnadas.
- The roots of this dance form trace back to Sanskrit Hindu text on performing arts called '**Natya Shastra**'.
- Under the Muslims there was a greater stress on nritya and bhava giving the dance graceful, expressive and sensuous dimensions.
- The nineteenth century saw the golden age of Kathak under the patronage of Wajid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Oudh. He established the Lucknow gharanawith its strong accent on bhava, the expression of moods and emotions.

Sattriya

- **Sangeet Natak Akademi designated Sattriya as a classical dance in the year 2000.**
- Sattriya dances are devotional in nature as they were intended for propagation of **neo-Vaishnavism**. Its highlights are intense emotional fervour.
- It was introduced in Assam by the great Vaishnava saint and reformer of Assam, Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva in the 15th century A.D.
- In Assam, the Vaishnava saint Shankaradeva established Sattriya dance in its contemporary form in the 15th century A.D.
- The name of the art form comes from the Vaishnava monasteries known as 'Sattras,' where it was originally practiced. It is mentioned in sage Bharat Muni's ancient treatise '**Natya Shastra**.'

Mohiniyattam

- It originated in the state of Kerala. The dance is performed by women in honor of the **Hindu god Vishnu** in his incarnation as the enchantress Mohini.
- Mohiniyattam is exclusively danced by women. It is also softer than the very vigorous Kathakali.
- The dance projects the essence of feminine grace. It is also noted for the Shringara (erotic) depictions of divine love. Traditionally, the dance was performed solo, but in the 21st century it may also be performed in groups.
- Some scholars trace Mohiniyattam to the second or third century A.D. (to the era of the great Tamil epic, Silappadikaaram), whereas others maintain that it was created in the middle of the eighteenth century in the court of **Maharaja Svati Tirunal of Travancore**.

Kathakali

- Basic components and distinct features of this form of classical dance can be traced back to ancient Sanskrit Hindu text- '**Natya Shastra**'. Kathakali also derives its textual sanction from Balarama Bharatamand Hastalakshana Deepika.
- Dance-drama art form called '**Krishnanattam**' and **Ramanattam** based on Mahabharata and Ramayana are precursor of 'Kathakali'.

Bharatanatyam

- Bharatanatyam is an ekaharya dance genre in which a single dancer performs multiple characters in a single performance.
- Transitional leg, hip, and arm movements are used in the dance. Emotions are expressed through expressive eye movements and hand gestures.
- A vocalist, a mridangam player, a violinist or veena player, a flautist, and a cymbal player make up the accompanying ensemble. The **Nattuvanar** is the one who leads the dance recitation.
- **Alarippu, Jatiswaran, Shabda, Varna, Pada, Thillana, and Sloka** are the seven primary sections of the dance in its traditional form.

Kuchipudi

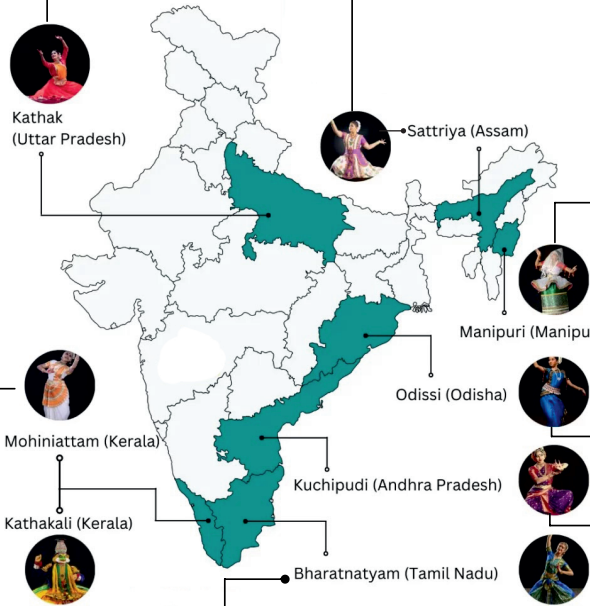
- In 17th century, present Kuchipudi style was conceived by **Siddhendra Yogi** a talented Vaishnava poet.
- Siddhendra Yogi first developed a unique and particular style based on the **Natyashastra, Bharatamuniand Nandikeshwara's Abhinaya Darpana**.
- It also had its roots in **Yakshagana**.
- Kuchipudi largely developed as a Hindu god Krishna-oriented Vaishnavism tradition, and it is most closely related to Bhagavata Mela.

Manipuri

- Manipuri dance is one among major classical dance forms of India, especially noted for themes based on **Vaishnavism** and spectacular execution of '**Ras Lila**', dance dramas based on love between Radha and Krishna. Other themes included.
- The legendary origins of Manipuri dance can be traced back to Shiva and Parvati's celestial dance in **Manipur's valleys with the help of the native Gandharvas**.
- In this art form associate with Shaktism, Shaivism and on the sylvan deities called Umang Lai during Manipuri festival '**Lai Haraoba**'.

Odissi

- Odissi is a highly stylised dance and to some extent is based on the classical **Natya Shastra** and the **Abhinaya Darpana**.
- Its originated in the Hindu temples of the eastern coastal state of Odisha in India. Its theoretical base trace back to 'Natya Shastra' of Bharatamuni.
- Some of the earliest evidence of Odissi dance may be found in the caves of **Udayagiri-Khandagiri**. The 'Odra nritya' referenced in Natya Shastra is the source of the dance form's name.
- The Maharis' were the main practitioners, and the Jain ruler Kheravela was a sponsor.
- The Mahari system fell out of favor with the arrival of Vaishnavism in the region.
- To keep the art form alive, young boys were recruited and costumed as females. The name '**Gotipuas**' was given to them.
- The royal courts continued to practice a variation of this technique known as '**Nartala**'.



1. Features of Bharatnatyam

1. The repertoire of Bharatnatyam is extensive; however, a performance follows a regular pattern. At first, there is an invocation song.
2. Then the next dance item is the alarippu, literally meaning – to adorn with flowers. It is an abstract piece combining pure dance with the recitation of sound syllables.
3. The next item, the Jatiswaram is a short pure dance piece performed to the accompaniment of musical notes of any raga of Carnatic music. Jatiswaram has no sahitya or words, but is composed of adavus which are pure dance sequences – nritya. They form the basis of training in Bharatnatyam dance.
4. As a solo dance, Bharatnatyam leans heavily on the abhinaya or mime aspect of dance – the nritya, where the dancer expresses the sahitya through movement and mime.



5. Shabdham follows the Jatiswaram in a Bharatnatyam dance performance. The accompanying song is generally in adoration of the Supreme Being.
6. After the shabdham, the dancer performs the varnam. The varnam which is the most important composition of the Bharatnatyam repertoire encompasses both nritya and nritya and epitomizes the essence of this classical dance form.
7. After the strenuous varnam, the dancer performs a number of abhinaya items expressing a variety of moods.
8. A Bharatnatyam performance ends with a Tillana which has its origin in the tarana of Hindustani music. It is a vibrant dance performed to the accompaniment of musical syllables with a few lines of sahitya.
9. The accompanying orchestra consists of a vocalist, a Mridangam player, violinist or veena player, a flautist and a cymbal player.

2. Features of Kuchipudi

- Kuchipudi is known for its impressive, quick footwork, dramatic characterisation, expressive eye movements and spirited narrative.
- This dance is a combination of **Tandava** (the majestic, masculine) and **Lasya** (lyrical graceful and feminine energy). A distinctive feature of this dance is the execution on a brass plate and moving the plate to the accompaniment of Carnatic music.



- The Kuchipudi performer apart from being a dancer and actor has to be skilled in **Sanskrit and Telugu languages**, music and manuscripts of the performance.
- The Kuchipudi dancers wear light make-up and ornaments like the **Rakudi** (head ornament), **Chandra Vanki** (arm band), **Adda Bhasa** and **Kasina Sara** (necklace).
- The ornaments are made of light wood called **Boorugu**.
- **The typical musical instruments in Kuchipudi are Mridangam, cymbals, veena, flute and the tambura.**
- The ensemble of a Kuchipudi performance includes a **Sutradhara** or **Nattuvanar** who is the conductor of the entire performance. He recites the musical syllables and uses cymbals to produce rhythmic beat.





3. Features of Kathakali

1. Kathakali is a blend of dance, music and acting and dramatizes stories, which are mostly adapted from the Indian epics.
2. The dance form combines four aspects of abhinaya – Angika, Aharya, Vachika, Satvika and the Nritta, Nriya and Natya are combined perfectly.
3. The dancer expresses himself through codified hastamudras and facial expressions, closely following the verses (padams) that are sung.
4. The body movements and choreography of this dance draws inspiration from various martial arts of Kerala.
5. The attakkathas or stories are selected from the epics and myths and are written in a highly Sanskritised verse form in Malayalam. Many Malayalam writers have also contributed to the vast repertoire of Kathakali literature.
6. Kathakali dance is chiefly interpretative.
7. The characters in a Kathakali performance are broadly divided into satvika, rajasika and tamasika.
8. Kalasams are pure dance sequences where the actor is at great liberty to express him and display his skills. The leaps, quick turns, jumps and the rhythmic co-ordination make kalasams, a joy to watch.
9. Kathakali music follows the traditional sopana sangeet of Kerala. In present, Kathakali music also uses Carnatic ragas—the raga and tala conforming to the bhava, rasa and dance patterns (nritta and natya).
10. The orchestra which is also used in other traditional performing arts of Kerala, normally comprises the Chenda, Maddalam, Chengila, Ilthalam, Idakka and Shankhu.

4. Features of Mohiniyattam

- Mohiniyattam lays emphasis on acting. The dancer identifies herself with the character and sentiments existing in the compositions like the **Padams and Pada Varnams** which give ample opportunity for facial expressions.
- The hand gestures, 24 in number, are mainly adopted from Hastalakshana Deepika, a text followed by Kathakali. Few are also borrowed from **Natya Shastra, Abhinaya Darpana and Balarambharatam**.



- The gestures and facial expressions are closer to the natural (gramya) and the realistic (lokadharmi) than to the dramatic or rigidly conventional (natyadharmi).

- Vocal music of this performance art incorporates different rhythms and lyrics of many of the compositions performed in this dance form are in **Manipravala that is a mix of Sanskrit and Malayalam language** while the music style is Carnatic.

- **Instruments played during a Mohiniattam performance usually comprises of Kuzhitalam or cymbals; Veena; Idakka, an hourglass-shaped drum; Mridangam, a barrel-shaped drum with two heads; and flute.**

- Imminent 20th-century exponents of Mohiniattam apart from Vallathol Narayana Menon were Kalamandalam Kalyanikutty Amma, Thankamony, Krishna Panicker and Mukundraja.

- Present day exponents include Sunanda Nair; Smitha Rajan, granddaughter of Kalyanikutty Amma; Radha Dutta; Vijayalakshmi; Gopika Varma and Jayaprabha Menon among others.

5. Features Kathak

- The weight of the body is equally distributed along the horizontal and vertical axis. The technique is built by the use of an intricate system of foot-work.

- As in Bharatnatyam, Odissi and Manipuri, Kathak also builds its pure dance sequences by combining units of movement.
- The cadences are called differently by the names **tukra, tora, and parana**– all indicative of the nature of rhythmic patterns used.



- As Kathak is popular both in Hindu and Muslim communities the costumes of this dance form are made in line with traditions of the respective communities.

There are two types of Hindu costumes for female dancers. While the **first one includes a sari worn in a unique fashion complimented with a choli or blouse** that covers the upper body and a scarf or urhni worn in some places, the **other costume includes a long-embroidered skirt** with a contrasting choli and a transparent urhni.

- A Kathak performance may include a dozen classical instruments depending more on the effect and depth required for a particular performance. Such as- the tabla that harmonizes well with the rhythmic foot movements of the dancer and often imitates sound of such footwork movements or vice-versa to create a brilliant jugalbandi.
- A manjira that is hand cymbals and sarangi or harmonium are also used most often. **The metrical cycle (tala) of 16, 10, 14 beats provide the foundation on which the whole edifice of dance is built.**

6. Features of Odissi

1. This dance form includes themes from Vaishnavism and others associated with Hindu gods and goddesses like Shiva, Surya and Shakti.
2. It is based on themes of Gita Govinda of Jayadeva. It is a profound example of the nayaka-nayikabhava and surpasses other poems in its poetic and stylistic content. The devotion of the poet for Krishna permeates through the work.
3. Its performance collection includes an invocation, nrita, nritya, natya, and moksha.
4. Odissi closely follows the tenets laid down by the Natya Shastra. Facial expressions, hand gestures and body movements are used to suggest a certain feeling, an emotion or one of the nine rasas.
5. Hand gestures play an important role both in nritta where they are used only as decorative embellishments and in nritya where they are used for communication.
6. The torso movement is very important and is a unique feature of the Odissi style.
7. The opening item is Mangalacharan where the dancer slowly enters the stage with flowers in her hands and makes an offering to mother earth.
8. This is followed by an invocation to the deity of the dancer's choice. Generally, Ganesha is called upon to grant an auspicious beginning.
9. The next item is called Batu. After the very basic exposition of nritta in Batu, comes the flowering and ornamentation of music and movements in Pallavi.
10. Odissi dance pays great importance to Lord Jagannath who is considered to be the god of the universe and is worshipped by the people of Orissa.
11. An Odissi orchestra essentially consists of a pakhawaj (Drums) player (usually the Guru himself), a singer, a flutist, a sitar or violin player and a manjira player (Cymbals).



7. Features of Manipuri

- The central theme of this dance-form are the love stories of Krishna and Radha.
- The songs are sung in **Brajaboli, old Bengali, meitheli Sanskrit, Braj** and now in **Manipuri language** written by devotional poets like Chandidas, Vidyapati, Gyandas, Jaydev and others.
- There are primarily two classifications associated with Manipuri dance-



- (i) **Jagoi**: Predominant in **Ras Leela, this steam highlights the Lasya element** described in Bharata Muni's Natya Shastra. Here, the legs are generally bent and the knees are kept together. The feet

movements are not as loud and pronounced as in the other classical dances of India.

- (ii) **Cholam**: It represents the Tandava form of classical dance.
- Manipuri dances are performed thrice in autumn from August to November and once in spring sometime around March-April, all on full moon nights.
 - The dance-drama is performed through excellent **display of expressions, hand gestures and body language**. Acrobatic and vigorous dance movements are also displayed by Manipuri dancers in many other plays.
 - The costumes for Manipuri dancers, particularly for women are quite unique from other Indian classical dance forms.
 - A crown decorated with peacock feather adorns the dancer's head, which portrays the character of Lord Krishna. The costume of female dancers resembles that of a Manipuri bride, referred as Potloi costumes.
 - **The musical instrument generally used in this art form includes the Pung that is a barrel drum, cymbals or kartals, harmonium, flute, pena and sembong.**

7. Features of Sattriya

1. Sattriya dance tradition is governed by strictly laid down principles in respect of hastamudras, footworks, aharyas, music etc. It includes Nritya, Nritya and Natya components.
2. The Sattriya dance form can be placed under 2 categories; Paurashik Bhangji, which is the masculine style and 'Stri Bhangji', which is the feminine style.
3. Sattriya dance is usually based primarily on the stories of Krishna-Radha relations, or sometimes on the stories of Ram-Sita.
4. Sattriya Nrityais a genre of dance drama that tells mythical and religious stories through hand and face expressions. The basic dance unit and exercise of a Sattriya is called a Mati Akhara, equal 64 just like in Natya Shastra, are the foundational sets dancers learn during their training.
5. The Akharas are subdivided into Ora, Saata, Jhalak, Sitika, Pak, Jap, Lon and Khar. A performance integrates two styles, one masculine (Paurashik Bhangji, energetic and with jumps), and feminine (Stri Bhangji, Lasya or delicate)
6. Traditionally, Sattriyawas performed only by bhokots (male monks) in monasteries as a part of their daily rituals or to mark special festivals on mythological themes.
7. Today, in addition to this practice, Sattriya is also performed on stage by men and women who are not members of the sattras, on themes not merely mythological.
8. It has two distinctly separate streams – the Bhaona-related repertoire starting from the Gayan-Bhayanar Nach to the Kharmanar Nach, secondly the dance numbers which are independent, such as Chali, Rajagharia Chali, Jhumura, Nadu Bhangji etc. Among them the Chali is characterized by gracefulness and elegance, while the Jhumura is marked by vigor and majestic beauty.
9. There are various musical instruments used in this dance, some of which include Khol (drum), Bahi (flute), Violin, Tanpura, Harmonium and Shankha (Conch Shell). The songs are composition of shankaradeva known as 'Borgeets'.

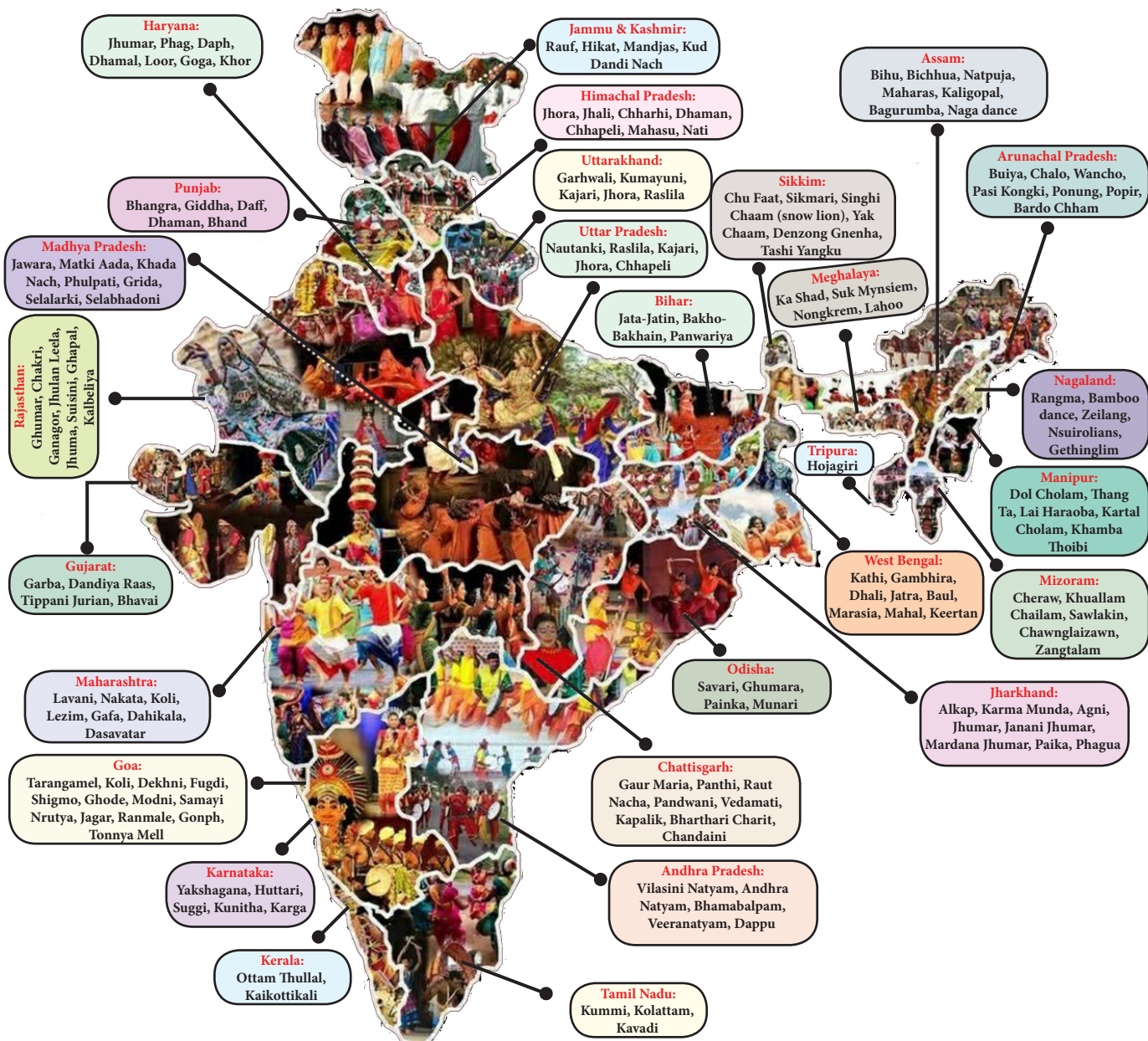


5.2 - Folk Dance

Indian folk and tribal dances range from simple, joyous **celebrations of the seasons of the harvest, or the birth of a child to ritualistic dances to propitiate demons and invoke spirits**. There are dances involving balancing tricks with pitchers full of water, or jugglery with knives.

- Other dances highlight activities like ploughing, threshing and fishing.
- The costumes are generally flamboyant with extensive use of jewelry by both the sexes.
- Some dances are performed exclusively by men and women, but most have them dancing together.
- The drum is the most common of the folk instruments that provide musical accompaniment to these dances.

Folk Dance of India



IMPORTANT FOLK DANCES

Chhau Dance

- Etymologically the word Chhau is derived from Sanskrit "Chhaya" meaning shadow, image or mask.
- Chhau dance is a semi classical Indian dance with martial, tribal and folk origins from eastern India. It is a form of mask dance.
- The dance ranges from celebrating martial arts, acrobatics and athletics performed in festive themes of a folk dance, to a structured dance with religious themes found in Shaivism, Shaktism and Vaishnavism.



- It is found in three styles named after the location where they are performed: Mayurbhanj Chau of Odisha, Purulia Chau of Bengal, Seraikella Chau of Jharkhand.
- Natural themes such as Sarpa Nritya (serpent dance) or Mayur Nritya (peacock dance) are also performed
- Masks form an integral part of Chhau dance in Purulia and Seraikella styles.
- The popular Hindi film 'Barfi' has several scenes that features the Purulia Chhau in it.
- In 2010 the Chhau dance was inscribed in the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Raslila

- The **Raslila performed in this state is known as the Braj Raslila**, since it has originated from the **Braj area of Uttar Pradesh**.
- The story revolves around **Lord Krishna's** charming childhood, adolescence and the early youth of Krishna, where it explores the relationship of Lord Krishna with his consort Radha.

Ramlila

- Ramlila is considered as a traditional art form reputed in **folk culture of Uttar Pradesh**.
- It primarily deals with the life of Lord Rama in Ramayana, who is also another incarnation of Lord Vishnu.
- This dance form depicts the story of the exile of Lord Rama from Ayodhya, his success over Ravana and his interaction with Sita.

Khyal

- Khyal is a **folk arts form**, which is simultaneously popular in many Indian states and it started as a **prime dance form in Uttar Pradesh**.
- The performances of Khyal start with an invocation, which begins with hymns to the respected deities and various instruments like the nakkara or the dholak drum, cymbals and the harmonium give the music.

Nautanki

- Nautanki is a form of **street play or skit** that is popular in the northern side of India especially in the **states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh**.
- Nautanki performances are operas based on a popular folk theme derived from **romantic tales, mythologies, or biographies of local heroes**.

Swang (Saang)

- Swangisa popular Indian folk dance **drama practiced in Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh**.



- Swang flourished with song and it is considered as a rich performance with literary wealth. This dance drama is dialogue-oriented rather than movement oriented.
- It focuses on various mythological and social topics. Amateurs or new artists personify this folk drama and it is played either in the open or on the specially created platform.

Dadra

- This is a **popular dance form of Uttar Pradesh**. It has a unique style.
- The play back singers use to give support to the dancers on the stage.

Charkula Dance

- This is the the most spectacular dance performance, which is widely **performed in the Braj region of Uttar Pradesh**.
- It is a dramatic dance performance that is **visually attractive**. This dance form symbolises the **birth of Radha**.

Ghoomar Dance

- The Ghoomar dance is a very famous and a community dance of Rajasthan. It is performed on various **auspicious occasions like fairs & festivals by women**.

- The dance is chiefly performed by **veiled women who wear flowing dresses called ghaghara**.
- The dance typically involves performers pirouetting while moving in and out of a wide circle.
- The word ghoomna describes the twirling movement of the dancers and is the basis of the word ghoomar.
- This dance is also done by **women of Bhil tribe**.

Gowari Dance

- The most famous art form of the **Bhil tribe is the 'Gowari'**, which is a kind of dance drama.
- The **performers travel from village to village as a troupe for a month**, during which the nine functionaries follow a strict regimen.

Fire Dance

- The stirring fire dance is performed by the **'jasnathis' of Bikaner and Churu districts**.
- This dance is example of **Jasnathis's life style**. These devotional dances can be seen only in late nights.

Chari Dance

- It is a **dance form of the villagers and executes the happiness of them** when they go to search water and find it.
- The **women go many miles just to collect water to fulfill their daily needs**. While going they express their joy through the Chari dance.

Kathputli Dance

- It is the **dances of puppets**.



- Through the puppet shows all the real stories of great herons have been told from village to another.

Kalbeliya Dance

- The **Kalbeliyas, is snake-charmer from which a community Rajasthan**, performs the Kalbeliya dance.
- They **rely heavily on this dance performance for their living**.
- The **UNESCO has inscribed Kalbelia folk songs and dances in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010**.

Gair Dance

- Gair Dance is a folk dance of the **Bhil community of Rajasthan**, which is performed at the **festival of Holi**.

- There are several differences in the performance of men and women in this dance.

Bhawai dance

- This form is **very difficult and can only be performed by skilled artists**. This dance basically involves women dancers balancing 8 to 9 pitchers on their heads and dancing simultaneously.

Panihari Dance

- As water is a scare commodity in the parched desert lands of Rajasthan and women who fetch water from afar called Panihari.
- The overworked women created melodious numbers that often had water and rains as their theme. Soon Panihari songs became famous and common.
- Panihari slowly came to be a part of the rich folk dance and music culture of the state.

Dumhal Dance

- It is performed on **set occasions and at set locations**. Generally, this dance is performed by only the men folk of Wattal, wearing long colourful robes and tall conical caps, which are usually studded with beads and shells.
- Apart from dancing, the performers also sing along songs in chorus, tuned with music by various drums.

Kud Dance

- It is a **typical community dance, performed in the middle mountain ranges of the Jammu region**. The Kud dance is performed during the rainy seasons and it exhibits swaying & sinuous movements.
- It is basically a ritual dance performed in **honor of the Lok Devas** and **men, women and children**, attired in their best, gather around a bonfire for this nightlong ritual.

Bhangra Dance

- Bhangra is one of most popular dances of India **performed during Baisakhi only by the men in Punjab**.
- Bhangra includes the drummer who usually stands in the centre of the circle in an open space surrounded by dancers. Giddha is female counter part of male Bhangra.

Jhummar Dance

- **Jhummar dance is a dance of ecstasy and a living testimony of the happiness of men, so performed only by men**.
- Jhummar is performed mostly during the melas, weddings and other major functions and celebrations.

Dhumall Dance

- It is a **male dance** and, likewise it is danced in a circle, where the drum is used as the accompanying instrument.

Giddha Dance

- Giddha dance is considered as originated from **West Punjab**.
- This dance form is derived from the ancient style of ring dancing.

Kikli Dance



- Kikli is more of a sport than a dance and is generally popular within the **young girls**.
- Usually, the dance is **performed in pairs**.

Wancho Dance

- **Wancho Dance belongs to a particular tribe of Arunachal Pradesh.**
- This dance is performed only in **special occasions like festivals and ceremonies**.

The Buiya Dance

- The Buiya dance of **Digaru Mishmis is performed on any festive occasion** which have the purpose for the prosperity and good health of the performer and his household.

Ponung Dance

- Ponung dance is the famous **folk dance of Adi tribal people**.
- This is the **women dance**.
- The purpose of this festival is seeking a **good harvest and welfare of the village community**.
- Tamasha
- It is among the major forms of **Maharashtra folk theater**.



- The **love songs called 'Lavanis' form the heart of this dance** form and are thus well-known.
- Tamasha is linked with two Maharashtra communities which are **Mahar and Kolhati**.

Lavani

- Lavani is a mixture of traditional dance and song, which is performed mainly to the beats of **'Dholak'**; an instrument like a drum.

- This folk dance is executed by beautiful **women** wearing sarees of nine-yards.
- The women whirl on the quivering beats of conventional music.

Koli

- Koli Folk Dance is another folk dance of **Maharashtra** which got its name from fisher folk of the state called 'Kolis'.
- The Kolis are known for **their lively dances and a separate identity**.

Povadas

- Povadas form a **part of Marathi ballads**, depicting the Marathi leader **Shri Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's life**.
- Through the Povadas, people remember **Shivaji**, a famous hero of his period.

Garba Dance

- This dance is performed by the womenfolk of Gujarat. This dance form has connection with Shakti-Puja and its origin is believed to be in the worship of goddess Jagdamba.
- At the time of Navaratri this dance is performed throughout nine nights where women dance in circular movement with rhythmic clapping.

Dandiya dance

- The most popular Dandiya dance is also known as the **'stick' dance**.
- This dance form **is always performed in a group in a circular movement to a measure steps**.
- The sticks used in this form are believed to be the **sword of Goddess Durga**.

Bhavai

- The Bhavai Dance is believed to be dance of emotions.
- The Bhavai drama is a continuous performance lasting the **whole night and staged in open grounds** before the audiences, as a source of entertainment.

Daskathia

- 'Daskathia' has originated from the **Ganjam District**. As, it got wide popularity; it spread to all other parts of Odisha.
- The word **'Dasa' means a devotee & 'Katha' refers to wooden pieces arranged in tune for the prayer of the devotee**.

Jumur or Jumu Nach

- This dance is called as **'Chah Baganar Jumur Nach'** that means Jumur dance of tea garden.
- This dance is very much prevalent in all tea garden surrounding areas & performed by girls and boys together to make the people relax while working.

Pandwani Dance

- Pandwani is an Indian folk Dance in ballad form **performed predominantly in Chhattisgarh.**



- It is also popular in the **neighbouring tribal areas of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.** It depicts the story of the Pandavas, the leading characters in the **epic Mahabharata.**
- Pandwani is narrated in a very lively form, almost constructing the scenes in the minds of the audience.

Bagurumba Dance

- It is a folk dance of the **Bodo community**, which is very rich in cultural wealth.
- It has many folk dances to boast about their culture, but among all the dances the best and the most attractive dance is the **Bagurumba dance.**

Dhepa Dhuliya Dance

- Dhepa Dhuliya Dance is another form of traditional folk art of **Darrang region of Odisha.**

- In this dance performance, **two to four performers play the Dhepadhol and it is specially to generate a unique sound, while beating it.**

Jawara

- It is a harvest dance popular in **Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh.** The peasants' community of the area performs this dance, to celebrate their joy and bliss.
- The women carry a basket full of Jawara crop on their heads while performing the dance.

Bihu Dance

- The Bihu is considered as feature of **folk dance of Assam** and is enjoyed by all sections of society.



- It is the most popular & colorful folk dance of Assam.

Dollu Kunitha Dance

- Kunitha are considered as the **ritualistic dances of Karnataka**, of which the Dollu Kunitha is one of the ritualistic dances that is popular with the kurubas of **'Beereshvara Sampradaya'.**
- One of the popular dance forms of Karnataka, kunitha is accompanied by the beats of the drums, and singing of the dancers.

Other Indian Folk Dances

Maanch



- Maanch is a lyrical folk drama and a form of operatic ballet that is **very popular in Malwa in Madhya Pradesh.**
- "Maanch" means the **stage or place of performance and as an indigenous & distinct folk-form.**

Cheraw Dance



- Cheraw dance is also known as **'Bamboo dance'** as bamboos are used while performing the dance.
- This dance is one of the **most colourful and distinct dance of the Mizos.**

Pangi Dance

- Pangi dance of **Himachal Pradesh** is a fascinating dance form which is usually performed by the womenfolk.
- The performers stand in a **circle and execute the steps in a slow form.**



Gaur Maria Dance

- Gaur Maria dance is one of the important dances of **Bison Horn Marias of Abhujmaria plateau of Bastar in Madhya Pradesh.**
- This is a very beautiful and joyful dance and is basically performed as an invocation on the occasion of marriages.





IAS Prelims Previous Year Question

1. In the context of cultural history of India, a pose in dance and dramatics called 'Tribhanga' has been a favourite of Indian artists from ancient times till today. Which one of the following statements best describes this pose? [2013]
- (a) One leg is bent and the body is slightly but oppositely curved at waist and neck
- (b) Facial expressions, hand gestures and make-up are combined to symbolize certain epic or historic characters
- (c) Movements of body, face and hands are used to express oneself or to tell a story
- (d) A little smile, slightly curved waist and certain hand gestures are emphasized to express the feelings of love or eroticism.

ANSWER KEY

1. (a)



IAS Prelims Practice Questions

1. **Statement 1:** Nritya is the aspect of dance that focuses on pure dance movements without any mood or meaning.
Statement 2: In most dance forms, Nritya is performed to convey the meaning of a theme or idea. In light of the given statements, choose the correct alternative from the following:
- (a) Statement 1 is true, and Statement 2 is false.
(b) Statement 1 is false, and Statement 2 is true.
(c) Both Statements 1 and 2 are true.
(d) Both Statements 1 and 2 are false.
2. Match list 1 with list 2
- | List 1 | List 2 |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Bharatanatyam | North, West and Central India |
| Kathak | Andhra Pradesh |
| Mohiniyattam | Kerala |
| Kuchipudi | Tamil nadu |
- Choose the correct answer from the given options:
- (a) A – II, B– IV, C– I, D–III
(b) A – III, B– II, C–I, D–IV
(c) A – IV, B – I, C– III, D– II
(d) A – II, B– III, C– IV, D–I
3. Consider the following statement regarding Bharatnatyam?
- A. Alarippu, literally meaning – to adorn with flowers is an abstract piece combining pure dance with the recitation of sound syllables.
B. The accompanying orchestra consists of a vocalist, a Mridangam player, violinist or veena player, a flautist and a cymbal player.
C. Varnam is the most important composition of the Bharatnatyam repertoire encompasses both nritta and nritya and epitomizes the essence of this classical dance form.
D. The characters in a performance are broadly divided into satvika, rajasika and tamasika.
- Choose the correct answer from the given options:
(a) A, B and C (b) B, C, and D
(c) A and B only (d) B and D only
4. What is the nature of Sattriya dances, and for what purpose were they originally intended?
(a) Secular, for entertainment
(b) Devotional, for the propagation of neo-Vaishnavism
(c) Folk, for storytelling
(d) Ritualistic, for agricultural ceremonies
5. Which community or tribe is known to perform the Ghoomar dance?
(a) Gujarati women (b) Rajput women
(c) Bhil tribe women (d) Marwari women

ANSWER KEY

1. (b) 2. (c) 3. (a) 4. (b) 5. (c)



IAS Mains Previous Year Question

1. Discuss the Tandava dance as recorded in the early Indian inscriptions. (2013) (100 words) 5 marks



IAS Mains Practice Questions

1. "How does Manipuri dance distinguish itself from other classical dance forms in India, and what are the mythological and cultural origins that have shaped this unique dance tradition?"
2. "Discuss the cultural significance and traditional elements of DolluKunitha, a ritualistic dance form of Karnataka. Explore its roots in the cultural practices of the Kurubas of the 'Beereshvara Sampradaya.'