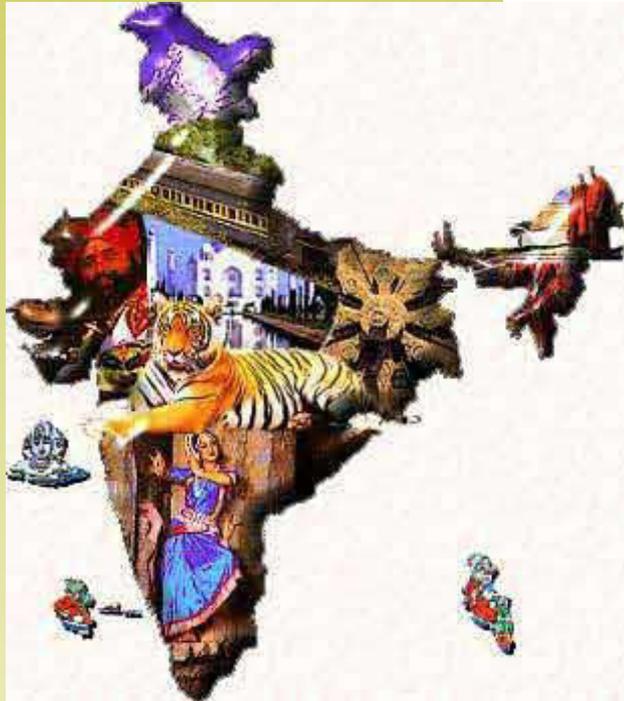


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## Classical dances of India

### Bharatnatyam

A dance that encompasses Bhav, Rag, Ras and Taal is 'Bharatanatyam'. Also called as 'Sadir', it was conventionally performed by Devadasis (girls offered to God in the temple) in Hindu Temples of South India. Thus, also known as 'Dasiattam'. Developed in the Tanjore and other regions of South India prominently Tamil Nadu, this could possibly be the Oldest Classical Dance form of India (around 2000 years old). It follows the convention of Natya Shastra in true spirit. Abhinaya Darpan and Sangeet Ratnakar guide the technique and grammar of body movements.

The word meaning of Bharatnatyam

- Bha: Bhava which means emotions
- Ra: Rag meaning musical notes.
- Ta: Taal meaning the Rhythm.
- Natyam: The Sanskrit word for Drama.

The evidence of Bharatanatyam

- Silappatikaram (where its existence was mentioned in this ancient Tamil epic).
- Brihaddeshwara temple was a major center for Bharatnatyam since 1000CE.
- The Gopurams of Chidambaram display the poses of Bharatnatyam, chaaris, and Karanas that are carved in the stones.

The famous Bharatanatyam dancers are Yamini Krishnamurthy, Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai, Saroja Vaidyanathan, Janaki Rangarajan Etc.

## Kathak

The graceful dance of North India origin 'Kathaa' 'Kahe' so 'Kathak' 'Kahave', the one who tells stories is Kathakaar or Kathak. Also known as 'Natwari Nrutya'. Kathak is one of the most charming dance forms of India. The themes of Kathak revolve around Stories of Ramayan, Mahabharat, and Krishna. Apart from this, Kathak encompasses presentations on manifold subjects. Raslila of Braj is quite akin to Kathak. A Solo Dance form but group compositions on themes with perfect synchronization steals the heart.

The four main Gharanas, or schools of kathak dance

- These are the Jaipur, Lucknow, Raigarh and the Benares gharanas.
- These schools are named according to the geographical area in which they developed.
- Each has a slight difference in interpretation and repertoire and can be recognized from their presentations.

The Sequence of Kathak dance

1. Starts with Vandana ( Worshipping God).
2. Uthaaan.
3. That.
4. Aamad (sequence of That Aamad Uthaaan may be different in different gharanas).
5. Salaami.
6. Toda Tukdas.
7. Tihai.
8. Paran.
9. Gatnikas.
10. Gatbhaav (Story)
11. Ladi-Tatkaar(Footwork)
12. End with a Bhajan, Thumri, Tarana or Ashtapadi, Kajri, Chaiti, Chaturang etc.

The revival of Kathak dance forms

- The value of this dance form diminished during the Moghul period but still, there were certain good technical changes like inclusion of Thumri in Kathak.

- The period of Nawab Wajidali Shah was a golden age for Kathak. He himself was a great artist and extensively promoted Kathak.
- The King of Raigarh Raja Chakradhar Singh who himself was a Kathak dancer gave birth to Raigarh Gharana of Kathak—greatest contribution to Kathak.
- Achhan Maharaj, Shambhu Maharaj, Gopi Krishna, Pandit Birju Maharaj, Pandit Rajendra Ganagani ji, Sitara Devi, Rohini Bhate, Maya Rao, Mandvi Singh, Shama Bhate, Shovana Narayana and many more artists gave their priceless contribution in Kathak .
- Kathak Kendra Delhi, a constituent Body of Sangeet Natak Akademi and many other governments and private institutes all over the world strive hard continuously for the training and promotion of Kathak.

### Odissi

The long-established dance form in the serene surroundings of Shri Jagannath Temple in Odisha is famous as 'Odissi'. It has its mention in the oldest Sanskrit Text – Natya Shastra as Audramagdhi. In ancient days this dance form filled with Bhakti ras was a part of worship to God at Jagannath temples. Thus we find many sculptures in dance position inside the temple.

It has a combination of Lasya and Tandav. Graceful and mesmerizing, it appears like waves of the ocean. Odissi is famous for its presentations on poet Jayadev's fabulous work.

Two styles of traditional Odissi

1. Maharis (Devadasis or Temple Girls).
2. Gotipua ( Performed by Boys).

The sequence

1. Managalacharan (Worshipping Lord Jagannath or other gods, goddesses).
2. This will be followed by Pushpanjali (Offering of flowers) and salutation to mother earth. This also includes Trikhandi Pranam- Devas, Gurus, and Rasikas.
3. The next comes the Batu Nrutya—Fast dance pure dance which we call it as Nritta which is then followed by Nritya which include, Abhinay- Expressions on some devotional poems or songs.

4. The verses may be in Sanskrit or Odia language. Ashtapadis—Dashavtar, Ardhanari etc. Are quite famous.
5. Then comes the Dance Drama in sequence. The themes generally relate to the Hindu gods and goddesses. Modern day expressive theme presentations go beyond the horizon.

The revival of Odissi dance forms

- Kelucharan Mahapatra, Gangadhar Pradhan, Pankaj Charan Das etc. revived this dance form in the late forties and early fifties.
- Sanjukta Panigrahi, Sonal Mansingh, Kumkum Mohanty, Anita Babu, Sujata Mohapatra etc. contributed to the upliftment and popularization of Odissi.
- Recently, the Odissi has now been included in the syllabus of IIT Bhubaneswar's B.Tech syllabus since 2015. It became the first national technical institute to introduce any Indian Classical Dance form in their syllabus.

### Kuchipudi

The Kuchipudi was originated from the place named 'Kuchipudi' in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh around 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, Kuchipudi Dance form is a long-established dance-drama style.

Tirtha Narayana Yati and his disciple Siddhendra Yogi organized and founded the modern version of Kuchipudi which we see today. Kuchipudi gradually developed as a solo dance form and today we can see both male and female performing it. Kuchipudi are themes related to Vaishnavism, Lord Krishna, Rukmini, Satyabhama and other myths. Kuchipudi also holds certain specialties of Bharatnatyam and Odissi as well.

The famous dancers in Kuchipudi

1. Raja-Radha Reddy.
2. Yamini Reddy.
3. Vaijayanti Kashi.
4. Uma Rama Rao etc.

### Kathakali

Dazzling classical dance of Kerala is Kathakali. 'Katha'= Story or tale, 'Kali'= Performance and Art. Its roots are in ancient 'Kutiyattam' (Classical Sanskrit Dance Drama) and 'Krishnattam' (Dance-Drama depicting Stories of Hindu God Krishna). Movements in Kathakali are influenced by ancient martial arts and athletic tradition. It is basically a Dance-Drama. Kathakali was traditionally a male-dominated dance and now females are too welcomed in this dance form. Kathakali is also famous for its huge elaborate costumes, amazing make-up style, face masks, and ornaments.

Unlike other Classical Dances, Kathakali art form developed in the courts and theaters of Hindu principalities. The traditional performances were used to be as long from Dusk to dawn. Modern day presentations are short as per the time limit of the program. The Kerala Kalamandalam is the main center for Kathakali Artists. Kathakali has similarities with other dance forms like that of the Japanese 'Noh' and 'Kabuki' dance forms have similarities with Kathakali.

The famous artists of Kathakali

1. Kalamandalam Krishna Prasad.
2. Kalamandalam Kesavan Namboodiri.
3. Kalamandalam Gopi etc.

### Mohiniattam

Another graceful Classical Dance of Kerala, Mohiniattam is Lasya inspired dance with soft, calm and gentle movements. Characterized as Feminine, usually done by women. The word 'Mohini' is related to the charming women avatar of Lord Vishnu – to end the evil powers. Mohiniattam also connotes, beautiful dancing women. The graceful and most beautiful, Mohiniattam is mesmerizing. The text 'Hastha Lakshanadeepika' is followed (for hand gestures and facial expressions) that has an elaborate description of mudras.

The sequence of Mohiniyattam

1. Invocation.
2. Jatiswaram.
3. Varnam.

4. Shlokam.
5. Shabdam
6. Padam.
7. Tillana.

The revival of Mohiniyattam

- In 1930, Nationalist Malayalam poet Vallathol Narayan Menon helped to repeal the ban on temple dancing in Kerala as well as established the Kerala Kalamandalam dance school and gave encouragement for its training and practice.
- Mukundraj, Krishna Panicker, Thankamony as well as Guru and Dancer Kalamandalam Kalyanikutty Amma gave their heroic contribution in reviving the traditional art form.

### Manipuri

The Manipuri dance form named after its region of origin, 'Manipur' is also known as 'Jogai'. It was traditionally performed as a dance – drama on devotional songs, Manipuri showcases the love between Radha- Krishna through Raaslila. Manipuri is a combination of two culture- Indian and South-East Asian. The Manipuri dance form is categorized as Tandav or Lasya.

The beautifully soft and graceful dance form, Manipuri has significant movements of hands and upper body. A curvy body structure with a pleasant smile, decorative, shiny costumes, and ornaments, Manipuri is indeed a mesmerizing dance form. Another uniqueness of this dance form is that, while Ghunghroos (Bells) glorify the classical dances of India, they are not worn in Manipuri.

The Manipuri Raslila: Three styles

1. Tal Rasak: It is accompanied by clapping.
2. Danda Rasak: The synchronous beat of two sticks where dancers position creates geometric patterns.
3. Mandal Rasak: The Gopis make a circle while Krishna attains the center.

Different types of Manipuri Dance Styles

1. Raas.
2. Nata-Sankirtan.
3. Pung Cholam.
4. Dholam Cholam.
5. Kartal Cholam.
6. Thang ta ( a Martial art of Manipuri) etc.

The revival and recent developments of Manipuri dance

- There are several private institutes as well as few Government aided centers that provide training in Manipuri Dance.
- The prominent among them is, Jawaharlal Nehru Manipuri Dance Academy, Imphal which is the constituent body of Sangeet Natak Akademi, Delhi.

Manipuri dancers

1. Guru Bipin Sinha.
2. Nirmala Mehta.
3. Savita Mehta.
4. Yumlembam Gambhini Devi.
5. Darshana Jhaveri and many others.

### Sattriya

Sattriya is the traditional dance –drama of Assam. Sattriya was recognized in 2000 as Classical Dance by Sangeet Natak Akademi. It is influenced by Vaishnavism and the modern form of Sattriya is attributed to the 15<sup>th</sup> century Bhakti Movement Scholar and Saint Srimanta Sankaradev. Since 15<sup>th</sup> Century, Sattriya grew as a part of Vaishnav Bhakti Movement in Hindu Monasteries called ‘Sattras’. Sattras are the dance community halls (namghar) of monastery temples. Today it is popular worldwide.

The revival of Sattriya dance

- Conventionally, it was only performed by ‘Bhokots’/‘Monks’ as a part of their daily rituals not before the idol but before the copy of Bhagvat Purana placed in the eastern corner of dance community hall (namghar).
- After the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this dance form moved from the den of Assam’s Monasteries to the modern day stage.
- Sattriya received patronage outside Assam and Outside India too.
- Sattriya Kendra Guwahati is a constituent body of Sangeet Natak Akademi established for preserving, promoting and providing training to young aspirants of Sattriya.
- Today Sattriya performances are a part of Major Dance Festivals in India and Abroad.

The famous Artists of Sattriya

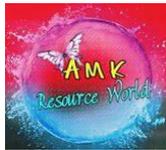
1. Guru Indira P.P Bora.
2. Late Pradip Chaliha.
3. Jatin Goswami.
4. Anita Sarma etc.

### Chhau Dance

The Chhau is a blend of folk, tribal and martial arts. ‘Chhau’ – is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Chaaya’, meaning Shadow, image or mask. Also, Chhau is defined by Sitakanta Mahapatra to be derived from Chhauni ( Military Camp) in Odia language. Traditionally performed by Males – Male troupes.

The Chhau has three different types originating from three different regions. Every type has its own unique feature, pattern, and style of performing and ornamentation as well.

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