

Performing Arts

- Gradually, the classical forms of Art evolved for the glory of temple and palace, reaching their zenith around India around 2nd C.E. onwards and under the powerful Gupta empire, when canons of perfection were laid down in detailed treatise - the *Natyashastra* and the *Kamasutra* - which are still followed to this day.
- Along the entire Himalayan region, from Kashmir to Darjeeling, folk dancers link arms and sway gracefully in undulating movements, celebrate the sowing of the wheat crop; few can resist the infectious beat of the *dholak*, the two-sided drum, and pairs of dancers take turns to execute complex acrobatic movements in the centre of a circle of abandoned dancers.
- Women perform the *Giddha*, also characterised by its spontaneous energy. Rajasthani women, their faces covered with flowing veils, are swirls of colour as they pirouette in the Ghoomar dance, while their counterparts in Gujarat perform the famous Garba, dancing in a circle with batons. Their men perform the Dandiya Ras, a more vigorous version of the same dance, leaping and crouching in twirling patterns.
- In the fishing communities of Maharashtra, men and women link arms and dance together and the women climb on to the men's shoulders to form pyramids. The women's Lavani dance from this area is notable for its unabashed sensuality.
- Several forms of dance-drama or folk theatre, such as the Nautanki of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the Bhavai of Gujarat, the irreverent Tamasha of Maharashtra, the Bengali Jatra, the spectacular Yakshagana of Karnataka and Theyyam of Kerala, all of which narrate legends of local heroes, kings and deities.
- Martial art forms throughout the country have been stylized to quasi dance forms, notable among which are the martial dances of the North-eastern hill tribes, the Lazim dances of Maharashtra, the Kalaripayattu of Kerala, and the highly stylized masked Chhau dances of Orissa, West Bengal and Bihar.
- There are seven major classical dance styles — Bharatnatyam from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, Kathakali, a classical dance-drama from Kerala, Manipuri from Manipur, Kathak from Uttar Pradesh, Odissi from Orissa, and Kuchipudi from Andhra Pradesh and Sattriya from Assam which has recently been included in the fold of Classical Dances.

TRADITIONAL THEATRE

FORMS OF TRADITIONAL THEATRE

Bhand Pather-

- theatre form of Kashmir
- unique combination of dance, music and acting,
- Satire, wit and parody are preferred for inducing laughter.
- Music is provided with surnai, nagaara and dhol.

Swang-

- It was mainly music-based,
- two important styles of Swang are from Rohtak and Haathras,
- Swang or Saang is a popular folk dance drama or folk theatre form in Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh

and Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh.

- Mimicry accompanied by song and dialogue.

Nautanki-

- associated with Uttar Pradesh,
- Popular centres of this traditional theatre form are Kanpur, Lucknow and Haathras.
- The meters used in the verses are: Doha, Chaubola, Chhappai, Behar-e-tabeel.

Raasleela-

- Rasa lila has been a popular theme in Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Manipuri and Kuchipudi items.
- Ras lila is a popular form of folk theatre in the regions of Mathura, Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh, especially during the festivals of Krishna Janmashtami and Holi, and amongst various followers of Gaudiya Vaishnavism in the region.
- Raas leela (Raax lila) is also observed as one of the National Festivals of Assam.
- During Raax lila, several thousand devotees visit the holy temples and Xatras of Assam every year.
- In the tradition of Vaishnavism of Manipur *Rasa Lila* is depicted within classic Manipuri dance, and revolves around the same story of the love between Krishna and the cowherd girls and tells the divine love story of Krishna, svayam bhagavan and Radha, his divine beloved.

Bhavai-

- traditional theatre form of Gujarat,
- centers of this form are Kutch and Kathiawar,
- Instruments used in Bhavai are: bhungal, tabla, flute, pakhaawaj, rabaab, sarangi, manjeera, etc, rare synthesis of devotional and romantic sentiments.
- A genre of folk dance popular in Rajasthan state in western India.

Jatra-

- Fairs in honour of gods, or religious rituals and ceremonies have within their framework musical plays, born and nurtured in Bengal.
- Krishna Jatra became popular due to Chaitanya's influence.
- Later, however, worldly love stories too, found a place in Jatra, musical. Dialogues

Maach-

- Traditional theatre form of Madhya Pradesh, songs is given prominence in between the dialogues.
- The tunes of this theatre form are known as rangat.

Bhaona-

- Presentation of the Ankia Naat of Assam, cultural glimpses of Assam, Bengal Orissa, Mathura and Brindavan can be seen.
 - The Sutradhaar, or narrator begins the story, first in Sanskrit and then in either Brajboli or Assamese.

Tamaasha-

- Traditional folk theatre form of Maharashtra. evolved from the folk forms such as Gondhal, Jagran and Kirtan,
- In Tamaasha the female actress is the chief exponent of dance movements in the play. She is known as Murki.

Dashavatar-

- Most developed theatre form of the Konkan and Goa regions, ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu-the god of preservation and creativity.
- The ten incarnations are Matsya (fish), Kurma (tortoise), Varaha (boar), Narsimha (lion- man), Vaman (dwarf), Parashuram, Rama, Krishna (or Balram), Buddha and Kalki.
- The Dashavatar performers wear masks of wood and papier mache.

Krishnattam-

- Folk theatre of Kerala, Krishnattam is a cycle of eight plays performed for eight consecutive days.
- The plays are Avataram, Kaliamandana, Rasa krida, kamasavadha, Swayamvaram, Bana Yudham, Vivida Vadham, and Swargarohana.

Mudiyettu-

- Traditional folk theatre form of Kerala is celebrated in the month of Vrischikam (November-December).
- usually performed only in the Kali temples of Kerala,
- The seven characters in Mudiyettu-Shiva, Narada, Darika, Danavendra, Bhadrakali, Kooli and Koimbidar (Nandikeshvara) are all heavily made-up.

Theyyam-

- folk theatre form of Kerala,
- 'Theyyam' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Daivam' meaning God.
- it is called God's dance,
- Theyyam is performed by various castes to appease and worship, colourful costume and awe-inspiring headgears (mudi) nearly 5 to 6 feet high made of arecanut splices, bamboos, leaf sheaths of arecanut and wooden planks and dyed into different strong colours using turmeric, wax and arac.

Koodiyaattam-

- Traditional theatre forms of Kerala, is based on Sanskrit theatre traditions,
- The characters of this theatre form are: Chakyaar or actor, aambiyar, the instrumentalists and Naangyaar, those taking on women's roles.
- The Sutradhar or narrator and the Vidushak or jesters are the protagonists.
- It is the Vidushak alone who delivers the dialogues.
- Emphasis on hand gestures and eye movements makes this dance and theatre form unique.

Yakshagaana-

- traditional theatre form of Karnataka,
- based on mythological stories and Puranas,
- Popular episodes are from the Mahabharata i.e. Draupadi swayamvar, Subhadra vivah, Abhimanyu vadh, Karna-Arjun yuddh and from Ramayana i.e. Raajyaabhishek, Lav-kush Yuddh, Baali-Sugreeva yuddha and Panchavati.

Therukoothu-

- folk drama of Tamil Nadu,
- Literally means "street play", performed at the time of annual temple festivals of Mariamman (Rain goddess) to achieve rich harvest.
- Extensive repertoire of Therukoothu there is a cycle of eight plays based on the life of Draupadi. Kattiakaran, the Sutradhara of the Therukoothu performance.
- Gives the gist of the play to the audience and Komali entertains the audience with his buffoonery.

