

CHAPTER - 1

JOURNEY OF DANCE

FROM TEMPLE TO THEATRE

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1:1 The Origin of Dance

India has a very rich cultural heritage. It has classical dance styles which are very scientific in nature. The history reveals that in the ancient books and scriptures of India like 'Natyashastra', 'Abhinaya Darpana', 'Sangeet Ratnakar', 'Abhinaya Chandrika' etc. there are details about the origin of dance. In the Natyashastra, Bharata Muni starts with the salutation to Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva. In the first chapter he has mentioned about the origin of dance.

According to Natyashastra:

प्रणम्य शिरसा देवौ पितामहमश्वरौ ।

नाट्यशास्त्रं प्रवक्ष्यामि ब्रह्मणा यदुदाहृतम् ॥¹

The *shloka* means ‘I offer my reverence to the grandfather of the world, Lord Brahma and the great Lord Shiva and advance to present the *Natya Shastra* which is the science of gesticulation and dance which was originally bestowed by Brahma.’²

In the Treta Yug, there was a lot of decline in the virtues and righteousness. There was a lot of unhappiness, anger and jealousy, resulting into very poor standard of life. Therefore, Indra, together with other *Devas*, appealed and requested Brahma to create a new Veda. Among other things, they requested Lord Brahma, “We desire to have a recreation activity which can be heard and seen by all the *varnas* (castes). “ Listening to this appeal Brahma went into deep and intense meditation using *Yogic* power and recalled the four Vedas. He designed and created the fifth Veda, by assembling elements from all the four Vedas and named it as “*Natya Veda*”.³

Brahma said, “I have created the fifth Veda, which will serve as a guide in all human activities of future generations including righteousness and virtue, production of wealth and fame. It will also guide them in all their actions and will demonstrate all types of arts and crafts. I have taken the *Pathyam* (recitals) from the Rig Veda, *Gitam* (music) from the Sama Veda, *Abhinaya* (the art of expressions and gestures) from the Yajur Veda and *Rasa* (Aesthetic enjoyment and sentiments) from Atharva Veda”. In this manner the *Natya Veda* was created, which had its origin in the Vedas and Upvedas.⁴

After creating the *Natya Veda*, Brahma instructed Indra to put it into practical use among the *Devas*, to perform the drama. Lord Brahma said, “To put this *Natya Veda* into practice, one needs the skills, education and hard work,” Listening to this Indra bowed before Brahma and replied, “*Devas* have no ability to handle this new Veda”. He proposed that it may be given to the sages, as they are well versed in the Vedas and perfect in observance of the holy vows. At the request of Sakra, Brahma presented “*Natya Veda* to Bharata Muni and commanded him that he, accompanied with his hundred sons, must put this art into practice.⁵

After getting the *Natya Veda* from the creator Brahma, Bharata engaged his hundred sons in the roles which suited them. His idea was to see that it becomes useful for people. The three *vrittis*, *Bharati vritti* (verbal utterances), *Sattvati vritti* (splendid conception of mind) and *Arabhati vritti* (Vigorous and energetic physical activity, giving importance to picturesque, costumes and sets) were included by Bharata in his presentation of the Drama. After seeing this Brahma asked Bharat, to add the fourth *Vritti*, which is the *Kaishiki Vritti*.⁶ To this Bharata said (As mentioned in *Natyashastra*):

दृष्टा मया भगवतो नीलकण्ठस्य नृत्यतः ।

कैशिकी श्लक्ष्णनैपथ्या शृङ्गाररससम्भवा ॥

अशक्या पुरुषैः सा तु प्रयोक्तुं स्त्रीजनादृते ।⁷

Bharat said, “He has seen the *Kaisiki vritti* in the performance of Lord Nilakantha, while he was dancing with appropriate and gentle and soft gestures. The dance was suitable for the emotion of love. It requires beautiful costumes, tender and graceful

movements and *Bhava* (permanent moods). It is not possible to perform this without the help of women. So Brahma mentally created the *Apsaras* who were proficient and accomplished in dance, to beautify and enrich the dramatic art.⁸

Bharata after being convinced that his *Bhava Natya* has been perfected; he went to Brahma along with his sons Svati and Narada and said that they were ready to demonstrate the play. Brahma said that the festival of flag of Mahendra is most appropriate to stage the play. The *Devas* were commemorating their victory by hoisting the flag of Indra, after defeating the *Asuras*. The play also depicted the victory of *Devas* and defeat of the *Asuras*. Brahma and other *Devas* were delighted on seeing performance and happily gave gifts to the actors. But the *Asuras* were displeased on seeing their own defeat. Under the leadership of Viropaksha, *Asuras* started their protest and said, “We don’t like this dramatic performance” and they said they will not allow the performance to continue.⁹

The evil *vighnas* accompanied by the *Asuras* adopted fraudulent power of *Maya* to paralyse the actors so that they could not speak or move. They also lost their memory power. Indra rose up angrily on seeing this, with the *Jarjara* (banners) he powdered *vighnas* and *asurars* hovering around the stage to death. The *Devatas* were extremely delighted on seeing the destruction of *Asuras* and *Vighnas*. Indra gifted the *Jarjara* to Bharat, for the protection of the actors from all the *vighnas*. Though the play continued as the festival of Indra gathered momentum, the *Asuras* tried to create problems for the artists. Hence, Bharata requested Brahma to protect themselves from the *Vighnas* and *Asuras*. So Bharata requested Brahma to teach him how to protect themselves from the obstacles and evil forces.¹⁰

So, Brahma asked Vishwakarma to erect a hall endowed with all the good characteristics. Vishwakarma immediately executed the order. When the hall was ready, Brahma went to see the theatre in the company of Mahendra and few other *Devas*. After inspecting the play house, Brahma allotted to each *Deva*, some part of the pavilion to be protected. In this manner the *Devas* were assigned different parts of the theatre and Brahma himself occupied the centre of the stage. Flowers are therefore, regularly scattered on the stage before the performance starts. Brahma then pacified the *Asuras* too and asked them the reason for their spoiling the dramatic display. Brahma calmed the *Asuras* by

saying that he has created the play for both, the *Devas* and *Asuras*. Brahma said that the *Natya* reflects all the three worlds and all the good and bad actions. Thus, he explained the concept of *Natya* to the *Asuras* and pacified them. Brahma also explained the rules of *Poorvaranga* and commanded that the *Poorvaranga* may be started in the new building.¹¹

The stage was ready, the *Devas* took their respective places and the *Poorvaranga* was performed. Then the subject of “*Amritamanthan*” was selected by Brahma for the play. Brahma requested Lord Shiva to witness the show. The play was performed in the presence of Lord Shiva and his *Bhutaganas*. Lord Shiva was very happy and delighted on seeing the performance and was reminded of his own dances, which were full of *Angaharas* and *Karanas*. He said to Brahma to include the *Angaharas* and *Karanas* in the play and commanded Tandu to teach *Angaharas*, *Karanas* and *Rechakas* to Bharata Muni. As Tandu was the Guru of Bharata Muni, the dance came to be known as ‘*Tandava*’. There are two kinds of usages of the term ‘*Tandava*’ namely ‘*Vadata prayoga*’ which has to be performed by the greater force by the men and ‘*Sukumara prayoga*’, which can be performed by the lesser force by the women. In post Bharata period, the term ‘*Tandava*’ was used for vigorous dance performed by men and *lasya* was associated with the graceful movements of women. This is how dance originated according the *Natya Shastra*.¹²

In *Abhinaya Darpana* written by Nandikeshwara, the author starts with the *shlokas* of how dance originated.

नाय्यवेदं ददौ पूर्वं भरताय चतुर्मुखः ।

ततश्च भरतः सार्धं गन्धर्वाप्सरसां गणैः ॥ २ ॥

नाट्यं नृत्तं तथा नृत्यमग्रे शम्भोः प्रयुक्तवान् ।

प्रयोगदुद्धतं स्मृत्वा स्वप्रयुक्तं ततो हरः ॥ ३ ॥

तण्डुना स्वगणाग्रण्या भरताय न्यदीदिशत् ।

लास्यमस्याग्रतः प्रीत्वा पार्वत्या समदीदिशत् ॥ ४ ॥

बुद्ध्वाऽथ ताण्डवं ताण्डोर्मर्त्येभ्यो मुनयोऽवदन् ।

पार्वती त्वनुशास्ति स्म लास्यं बाणात्मजामुषाम् ॥ ५ ॥

तया द्वारवतीगोप्यस्ताभिः सौराष्ट्रयोषितः ।

ताभिस्तु तत्तद्देशीयास्तदशिष्यन्त योषितः ॥ ६ ॥¹³

“In the very beginning Brahma presented the *Natyaveda* to Bharata. Bharata along with groups of the *Gandharvas* and *Apsaras* performed *Natya*, *Nritta* and *nritya* before Shiva. Then Shiva having recalled his own grand performance (dance) led Bharata to be directed in that art by his followers (*gana*). And before this, due to his love for Bharata, he gave to the latter, instructions in *Lasya* through Parvati. Getting trained in Tandava from Tandu, sages passed on this art to the mortals. Parvati on the other hand enlightened Usha, the daughter of Bana in *lasya*. Usha taught this art to the milk-maids of Dwarka, and they passed on the knowledge of this art to women of Saurashtra, who in turn taught it to women of other countries. In this way this (art) was traditionally handed down, and has come to stay in the world.”¹⁴

Similar stories are found in other books like *Abhinaya Chandrika* written by Maheshvara Mahapatra. It is believed by scholars like Dhiren Pattnaik that it was written in the 17th century.

नृत्यविद्या महत्पुण्या सर्वज्ञान-विभूषिता।

यत् प्रसिद्धं पुराकाले शङ्करात् शङ्करात्मजः ।१४।

तत् समीपात्तु संप्राप्तं रम्भा देवाङ्गना ततः।

नृत्यज्ञानकलायुक्तो महान् वै भरतो मुनिः ।१५।

गर्गाचार्यस्ततो ज्ञात्वा विकटस्तत् समीपतः।

विकटान्नृत्यशिक्षार्थी कुमाराचार्य उत्तमः।१६।

रन्तिदेवनृपस्तस्मात् ततस्तु ज्ञानसंग्रही।

अट्टहासो महान् प्राज्ञः उद्गन्तुविशारदः।१७।¹⁵

According to Abhinaya Chandrika the art of Dance was created by Shiva. Shiva taught this art of dance to Ganesh. The celestial dancer Rambha of Heaven and Bharata Muni of *Mrityulok* learnt this dance from Ganesh. Bharata taught his art to Gangacharya. Gangacharya taught this art of dance to Vikata. Vikata taught to Kumaracharya, and he taught to Ratideva. From Ratideva, Attahasya Nritya Visharad took training in dance and this is how the art of dance originated.

Reference:

- 1) *Dr. Unni, N, P. Natyasastra Volume II, NBBC Publishers and Distributors (P) LTD., Delhi, ISBN: 81-8315-244-9978-81-8315-244-0, Page 375 Shloka no. 1*
- 2) *Natya Shastra of Bharatamuni, Translated into English by a Board of Scholars, Sri SatGuru Publications, Indological and Oriental Publishers, ISBN: 81-7030-134-3 Page 1*
- 3) *Dr. Unni, N, P. Natyasastra Volume II, NBBC Publishers and Distributors (P) LTD., Dehli, ISBN: 81-8315-244-9978-81-8315-244-0, Page 380*
- 4) *Natya Shastra of Bharatamuni, Translated into English by a Board of Scholars, Sri SatGuru Publications, Indological and Oriental Publishers, ISBN: 81-7030-134-3 Page 2*
- 5) *Ibid.*
- 6) *Natya Shastra of Bharatamuni, Translated into English by a Board of Scholars, Sri SatGuru Publications, Indological and Oriental Publishers, ISBN: 81-7030-134-3 Page 3*
- 7) *Dr. Unni, N, P. Natyasastra Volume II, NBBC Publishers and Distributors (P) LTD., Delhi, ISBN: 81-8315-244-9978-81-8315-244-0, Page 385 shloka no. 45, 46*
- 8) *Natya Shastra of Bharatamuni, Translated into English by a Board of Scholars, Sri SatGuru Publications, Indological and Oriental Publishers, ISBN: 81-7030-134-3 Page 4*
- 9) *Ibid., Page 5*
- 10) *Ibid., Page 6*

11) *Ibid.*, Page 7

12) *Ibid.*, Page 8

13) *Dr. Ghosh, Man, Mohan. Nandi Keshwara Abhinayadarpanam, Dr. Man Mohan Ghosh, Third edition, page 77 shloka 2, 3,4,5,6*

14) *Ibid.*, page 36, 37

15) *Mahapatra, Maheshvara. Editor: Das, Maya. General Editors: Sarangi, A, C. and Kulshreshtha, Sushma. Abhinaya Chandrika and Odissi dance, Eastern book linkers, ISBN: 817854010X page: 3 shloka 14,15,16,17*

1.2 THE UPS AND DOWNS IN THE JOURNEY OF THE ART FORM OF DANCE

Dance is as old as universe. All the objects of universe move in perfect rhythm. Dance is the lovely language of *angas* (limbs) and emotions. All the emotions like happiness, sadness etc. are as old as the human beings. The history of dance is also as old as that of the universes. The experts in the field of human physiology, psychology and development of human beings do acknowledge the contribution of dance in all these areas. As per William Bunt, in the initial phase of mankind, dance was the only form of expression of all emotions. The human anxiety and emotions found its expressions in the movement of hands, various forms of faces, wrists, legs and other limbs. Therefore releasing the expressions in a balanced way has opened up the doors for development which in turn tranquilizes and soothes the minds of the human beings.

We can trace the origin of dance historically from the sources such as references of dance in sculptures, paintings, literature, inscriptions, literature and from the writings of historians. Dance has existed since the beginning of mankind and an important part of lives of all mankind.

1:2:1 Dance in Pre-historic period

Dance existed in the prehistoric period, the drawings and paintings of human bodies in the caves and on the stones of the pre-historic periods as also the excavations of that period reveal the existence of dance even in that period. The existence of music and dance in India is 5000 years old according to the scholars. The earliest civilisations discovered in India were Mohan-jo-Daro and Harappa in the Indus Valley. From the extensive excavations that were carried out there, we find many evidences that dance and music existed in the Mohan-jo-Daro and Harappa period too. The finding of a bronze idol of a dancing young lady during the excavations carried out in the Mohan-jo- Daro and Harappa is the clear proof of the importance the dance had in the life of people in that period. The idol is of a naked female dancer with necklace around her neck and bangles worn in her left hand from wrist to just below the shoulder, resting the other hand on the waist. Because of the hand on the waist, slight bend of the torso, and the knee bend the

pose of the dancer looks like a *Tribhanga* pose. The pose of the dancer in that idol is a *Tribhanga* pose. The pose of the dancer is such that one would feel that she would just start dancing. This idol is believed to be dated approximately 3rd millennium B.C. There are evidences found such as seven-holed flute, drum and other musical instruments from these sites. According to the famous historian Fedis, Indians had the knowledge of dance and music before 5000 to 6000 years B.C. He came to this conclusion after studying many proofs and articles related to dance which have been found during the excavations at various sites in Lothal, Mirzapur, Patna, Kathiawad, Udayagiri, Mahabalipuram and other places. In the Bhimbetaka caves of Madhya Pradesh, many dancing sequences are found which prove that India had a very rich dance tradition in the past. The dances of Dravidians were scientific, spiritual, psychological, religious and beautiful, which were excellent and of a very high standard. The present day dances have elements of the Dravidian culture.¹

1:2:2 Dance in Vedic Period

It is believed by historian that around 2000 B.C., the Aryans introduced the four Vedas in the sub-continent of India, namely Rig Veda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvanaveda.²

It is considered that the whole of Indian knowledge, science, education, art, scriptures etc. have roots in the Vedas. There are many references of dance found in Vedas. In the two "*Ushas Sukta*" the Dawn has been personified and compared to a female dance. Usha is referred here as a dancer. It is one of the first examples where a dancing reference is used by a poet.³ From the poet's knowledge about dance and dancer; it is interpreted by scholars like Smt. Kapila Vatsyayan and Shri Puru Dadheech that a highly evolved form of dance might have existed during that time.

There is another example in Rigveda where both solo and group dance examples are mentioned. There are examples in Rigveda where dance was performed during many different occasions. Dance was performed on occasions like marriages, funerals, harvest festivals, sacrifices and community gatherings. On such occasions the inner music of the soul of people dancing, who followed any happy occurrence demanded expression in the

happy rhythmic movements of the body. Men and women of the community participated in this carnival of high spirits.⁴ Many scholars believe that the roots of *Natya kala* lie in the dialogues of the Vedas. These dialogues are called *Samvadsukta*. The *suktas* in the vedas like the dialogues between, Pururuva-Urvashi, Indradiit-Vamdev etc. were presented along with dance and singing at the time of performing *Yagnas*. In the Rig Veda, we find many references of classical dance. The dialogues between Indra and Marut, Yama and Yami and between Pururava and Urvasi are the examples of the beginnings of dramatic literature in Rig Veda. The Maruts are referred as *Nrtavah*. Maruts are said to dance in rhythm measured steps. The Maruts are referred as the leaders of a troupe of dancers. This dance of Marut is rhythmic. The Maruts are also referred as good singers. There is also important reference of *Asvins*, who dance in association with *Surya*.⁵

According to Rig Veda, dancing is one of the accomplishments of these gods. There are references in the Rig Veda where Indra is considered as one who made others to dance. There are references in the Vedas which prove that *rishes* were also well versed in the art of dancing. In Rig Veda words like “*Nrityamano Amrit*” are mentioned, it is interpreted by Sayanacharya, as getting nectar while dancing. We find social dances and rejoicing and there are references of dances which are attributed to the gods.⁶

In Samveda we find dissimilarity between the *desi* and *margi* styles. In the Samaveda, references to dancing, other than those already mentioned in the Rigveda, are few. This Veda contributes greatly to this art by revealing the concept of the *Margi* and *Desi* types of music and dancing. This is the first indented distinction between what was to be classical and popular in years to come.⁷

In the Yajurveda there are references of gestures which are used with the ritual practices. Ritual is invariably accompanied by gestures according to the Yajurveda. Hence, we can come to the conclusion that in it we find the seeds of *abhinaya* as it were to develop later. The ritual practices of the Yajurveda must have provided the actors and the dancers with unique gestures. These gestures were symbolic, beautiful, stylized and technical. The *mantras* of these rituals were sung to special rhythm and tone. The accompanying gestures to these rituals of the body denoted the meaning and significance of the verses.⁸

In Atharva Veda we find the concept of Apsaras. We find that the goddesses are accompanied with Gandharvas. We find the reference of the sound of drum and Apsaras dancing with Gandharvas. Here for the first time we see that celestial nymphs have started dancing. There are abundant references of *Gandharvas* and *Apsaras* dancing in Atharva Veda. Hence from all these references in the Vedic literature, we can easily think of a picture of the society where dancing and music is an important and integral part of man's life. People danced whether in joy or in sorrow, as a profession or as an important communal activity. So dance and music were very important parts of the social life. Men and women both danced in religious rituals and festivals.⁹

We find detailed narration of the dances in the supplementary books of the original Vedas like Brahmanas, Aaranyak, Upanishad and Shad Vedang. In the book titled "Kaushitakee Brahman" we find a detailed list of various forms of arts. In one of the verses, we find that singing, playing instruments and dances are considered as "Shilp" - (*Trividho shilpam Nrityam, Geetam, Vaaditryam cha*). In Brahmanas we find many evidences that dancing and music flourished in those times and gesture language became more stylized and symbolic. In Upanishads we find reference of word like *Nritya* and *nata*. In Chandogya Upanishad we find the art called *Devajñana Vidya* mentioned several times. This art included the classical arts of music, dancing, mythology and perfume making. In "Grhya Sutras" too there are many evidences that music and dance played a very important role at every stage of domestic life. In "Asvalayana Grhya Sutra", there is a reference of dance by three or four women in the marriage ceremony. In the Panini's grammar, there is a whole *sutra* for the rules of an actor. In the Kamasutra written by Vatsyayana, too there are references that dance had an important role in the society.¹⁰

In this very post Vedic era, the caste system found its firm footings and the tradition of patriarchal profession started. It also saw the rise of many tribes which were solely dependent on the performance of dance and music for their livelihood. In "Taittiriya Brahmanas" we find the mention of various caste names like "*Ayogava, Magadha (bhat), Sut, Abhineta, Shailoosh (Gayak or singer)*" etc. In the "Purush Sukta" of "Vajasaneya Samhita" pertaining to the Yajurveda, it is directed that the "*Sut*" and "*Shailoosh*" should be invited to perform at the time of *Yagna*. (*Nritya sootam geetaay shailoosham*).¹¹

During the Vedic period the dances developed and performed were folk in nature. In the post Vedic period we find that the tradition of professional dancers started. The Classical dance was not fully developed during this era, but a need was felt to train the dancers and actors. A requirement to write a book was also felt in this period. Books like ‘Nat-sutra’ were written in this period. In the earlier period of ‘Treta Yug’, Bharat Muni formed the ‘Natya Shastra’. Therefore it is believed by scholars that the tradition of Classical Dance started in the last part of Post Vedic Period.¹²

1:2:3 Dances in the Ramayana Era

According to scholars and available evidences, “Ramayana” by Valmiki Muni is said to be written in B.C. 1600. According to the information and evidences in Ramayana, the culture and civilization was fully developed during the period of Ramayana. We find several references of dance in Ramayana. During the Ramayan period the king and the subject both were knowledgeable in all the three aspects of music viz, singing, playing instruments and dancing.¹³

In Ramayana we find the reference of *Apsaras* who take the role of dancers. Dancing was an important art taught to the children of Kings. Rama and Ravana both were proficient in dance and music. During the Ramayana period, Actors and Actresses were the important part of the society. There is the reference of the word ‘*ganika*’, who was an important part of the society. There are references where people of the town dance in joy as well as sorrow. People of this era took training in various arts like singing, musical instruments and dancing. Classical dance and folk dance both had important place in the lives of people in this period. Words like ‘*natakasala, nata, nartaka, nupura, lasya, gayika, sailusa, panivadaka, tālapacara, gandharva-tattva, nritya, gita, kinkini, nritya, angahara, tāla, laya, margi, rasa nataka* and *ganika* are mentioned in Ramayana. The distinction of the category of *nat, nartaka*, and *ganika* signifies that there was a separate category of art of drama and art of dance.¹⁴

We find references of *Apsaras* dancing at many occasions like Rama’s *rajyabhiseka*. When Bharata enters Ayodhya after his father’s death, the city is grieving and devoid of dance and music. There is a reference in the Ramayana of *nata* and *nartaka*,

when Vashishta says, “In such a city neither the actor (*nata*) nor the dancer (*nartaka*) is happy and satisfied”.¹⁵

In "Kiskindhakanda", there are many references of dancing. There is the reference of '*Pampa Tāla*'. In "Kiskindhakanda" there are references of trees, breeze, bee and peacock dancing. The thunder of clouds is compared to the sound of *mridanga*. In the "Sundarkanda" also we find many references of dance. Ravana, Mandodari and other ladies living in his palace were also proficient in the arts of dancing and singing. The respected ladies in that period were expert in the arts of dancing and singing. They exhibited their art during occasions like crowning ceremony of King, birthday celebrations, marriage functions, religious celebrations etc. There were drama-schools attached to the palace. These were the place of learning and exhibiting the art of music, dance and drama. When Rama returns to Ayodhya, people dance in joy. There are references that dramaticians and singers/musicians accompanied the soldiers when they moved to the battle fields to fight a war during the Ramayan period.¹⁶

In the Ramayana we see the references of real beginning of both the classical and the folk forms of dancing. During the Ramayan period dancing was both worship and entertainment, meant for the professional dancer and the lay-man. The social, ritualistic and classical tendencies which we noticed in the Vedic literature have their first blossoming in this great epic called Ramayana.¹⁷

Thus in the Ramayana period the character of classical dance was set and clear.

1:2:4 Dances during the Mahabharata Period

In the Mahabharata period the art of dance developed further adding high technical skill and became a very important part of the lives of people. People enjoyed and practised the art of dance. There are examples of both solo and group dance in Mahabharata. There are references of professional dramatician and dancers in Mahabharata. These professional artists performed at auspicious occasions. It is believed that Veda Vyas wrote “Mahabharata” in the period B. C. 1,100. There are numerous referenecs of solo and group dance found in Mahabharata.¹⁸

We find words related to dance mentioned in Mahabharata like '*nartanshala*, *natya*, *Gandharvas*, *Apsaras*, *vaditra*, *vadya*, *gita*, and *nritya*. We see that in Mahabharata, many principal characters are masters in some or the other art forms. Training in the arts of music and dance was important part of education of princes. Arjuna is associated with *Apsaras* many times in Mahabharata. In *Vana parva*, Arjuna is entertained by music and dance by the *Apsaras* of Indra's court. Arjuna learns *gita*, *vadhya* and *nritya* from Urvashi. In *Virata parva*, when he disguised as Brhannala he teaches dance to Uttara, the daughter of king Virat. Here there is a reference of '*Nartanshala*' which is a special hall for the training of dance.¹⁹

Shree Krishna, who is the *Sutradhar* in Mahabharata, has been named as "*Natvar*"(best in actors). There are many references of him, performing the dance form known as *Ras* in the company of *Gopies*. The great grandson of Krishna was Pradhyumna. Pradhyumna's wife was Usha. Usha had learnt the "*Lasya*" dance from Goddess Parvati and she in turn taught it to the young ladies of Dwarika.²⁰

Thus we come across clear evidences of all round development of dance during the Mahabharata era as a highly developed art form.

1:2:5 Dances during the early periods of Jain and Buddha Religions

It is believed by historians that Mahavir Swamy was born in the year B.C. 599 and Gautam Buddha was born in the year B.C. 563. There was a rise of the religions like Buddhism and Jainism in the country from the 8th century B.C. to the 2nd century B.C. As a result there were many social and religious changes in the life of people of that period. These religions influenced the lives of people for 500 years. There are references of a highly technical form of dancing in the Buddhist literature and Buddhist canons. But during this period the attitude of people towards dancing was that it is a temptation which should be resisted.²¹

Many references are found in the *Jatakas*. There is a reference of a dancing peacock in the *Jataka* no. 32. There are references of a monk who was a *Nata*; there are *Jatakas* with references of *Nata* and *Nataka*. There are references of dramatic festivities in the *Jatakas*. In the other *Jatakas* we have repeated mentions of the arts as a part of the

royal entertainment. Thus the *Khantivadi Jataka* mentions four branches of music and dance together constituting a part of royal entertainment that is, *gita*, *vadya*, *Nritta*, and *natya*.²²

There are references of female dancers in *Jataka* as accomplished dancers. According to the "*Panchagaruka Jatak*", 16,000 dancers performed on the occasion of crowning of Bodhisatva. In the '*Mahavastu*' we find that dancing is an important feature of the court of king Suddhodana. People from royal family, prince and princess were trained in the art forms like dance and music. They also gave public performances of their art. Siddhartha, the prince, was a master of all these arts. It is said that Indrapani Shakya was not ready to give her daughter in marriage to Gautam till he had not mastered one of the arts. Name of courtesans who were accomplished dancers, like Amrapali, Kuvalya and Salavati are mentioned in the Buddhist legends. These dancers preserved the art of classical dancing in that period. Among the seventy nine arts mentioned in the Buddhist book '*Lalitavistara*', four deal with dance and music. There is a mention of names of many musical instruments in '*Lalitavistara*', like *vina*, *venu*, *nakula* and many more. Drama was used during this period for the propagation of Buddhism. From all the references in Buddhist texts we come to a conclusion that, though initially in this period dancers were forbidden from taking part in the dance performances, in the later years, the arts of dance, music and drama were widely practised and used for the propagation of Buddhism. The professional actors and dancers were respected in the society.²³

There are references that dance was an important part of the education system in that period in South India after the rule of Satavahanas. After the Satavahanas, there was the rule of Ikshvakus. They were called *Sriparyateeyas*. They helped the foundation of the Buddhist University. This Buddhist University was one of the biggest in the South at Nagarjunakonda. This was not only a religious and educational institution but also a center which encouraged arts and culture. Thus during the Buddhist period, dance was a highly developed skill, dancers were respected, there were professional dancers, and dance as an art form was used to propagate Buddhism.²⁴

Initially Jainism forbade people from taking part in the performances of dance and drama. However, Jainism too propagated their religion with the help of the art forms

like dance, music and drama. In the books of Jainism too we find at many places description of music and dance. In one of the most important books titled "*Raypraseniya Sutt*" it is written that "Suryabhadev" had performed 32 types of dances while praying to Mahavir Swamy. From the names of these dances, it appears that they are dance dramas. In these 32 types of dance dramas, there is *abhinaya*, *nritya*, *natya* and *Nritta*. There are dance dramas in these based on the movement of Sun and Moon and dance choreographies representing planets. There are mentions of other dances, where words like *dhruva*, *vilambita* are used to name these dances. The names of the dance give some clue about the type of dance that existed, but the description is not enough to recreate the dances.²⁵

In the other Jain literature like "*Samavaayanga Sutra*", "*Aupapattika Sutra*", "*Kalpasutra Commentaries*" and "*Kalika Puran*" there is description of various types of arts, and the art form of dance is one of them. There is a mention of staging of dance based drama about the life of Mahavir Swamy in the book "*Rayapraseniya*". Some books like '*Kalpasuta*' mention that Jain Saints were not allowed to view drama. But the followers of Jainism have written many books on the subject of dance and music of which the books named "*Sangit-Samayasaar*" by "*Parshvadev*", "*Sangitopanishad*" by "*Sudhakalasha*" and "*Sangeet Mandan*" by "*Mandan*". Thus Actors, female dancers, musicians were important part of the society.²⁶

Chanakya, who was the Principal Minister of first Maurya king, Samrat Chandragupta belonged to this period. Chanakya has mentioned in his book on economics that, king should provide protection and encouragement to artists. In his book he has also mentioned rules for the public performances by the artists. We also find many references in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, about the importance of artists like dancers, dramaticians and musicians in the royal court.²⁷

During this period, as Sikander attacked India, Yunani artists came to India and there was an exchange of arts. Indians were introduced to Yunani art forms of music, dance and drama. Thus we see that during the initial period of 500 to 600 years of Jainism and Buddhism, music and dancing were interwoven in the life of the common people as well as in royal courts. Dance was performed on all the important and auspicious functions. In those days' dramaticians, dancers, prostitutes and other professionals got

support, protection, training and encouragement from kings and respect from society. The tradition of court singers and dancers began in this period. We can very well know the popularity of the dance in India from the references found of the Jain and Buddhist period.²⁸

1:2:6 Dances during the Pre-Medieval Age

With reference to the Indian History the period of 1000 years between 1st and 10th century after Christ is known as Pre-Middle Age. In the Pre-middle Age period large number of dynasties came into existence and vanished from the scene. Many kings of this era were highly knowledgeable in various forms of art like music and dance and they encouraged these arts. Art forms like dance and music prospered during their regime.²⁹

The “*Vaishnav cult*” rose during this period. It was an important phenomenon which had an impact on various arts, literature and culture of the Indians. Vaishnav religion came into existence over a period of 1000 years ranging from 500 B.C. to 600 A. D. The principle on which Vaishnav religion is based, has its roots in its Puranas. In the subsequent era, worship of Vishnu, in the form of Rama and Krishna, and Shiva spread across India. Music, dance, drama and other forms of art were means for worshipping the Gods. These arts developed during the rule of the Kings who were influenced by Vaishnava religion. These art forms were also used for the propagation of the Vaishnava religion. The historical chronological order of it is mentioned below.³⁰

1:2:7 Dance in Shunga Era

Shunga Empire was established after the fall of Mauryan Empire. The Shunga Empire is of a Magadha dynasty which ruled over North-Central and Eastern India, and some parts of the North West (which are now in Pakistan). The Shung Era is believed to be established by Pushyamitra Shunga in 2nd century from 185 to 73 B.C. The last King was Devabhuti, who ruled between 83 and 73 B.C.³¹

The Shunga rulers were culturally more oriented to Hindu religion. During the period of Shung, there was not much development in the area of arts. But they were patrons of art and knowledge and they also contributed for the various arts. The Chief of

Army (Senapati) Pushyamitra Shung became the king in 184 B. C. The great Sanskrit scholar Patanjali belonged to this period who wrote, the famous work “*Mahabhashya*” and “*Ashtadhyayi*”. There are many references of actors, dancers, stages and drama in the “*Mahabhashya*”. In “*Mahabhashya*” he has mentioned the origin of the word “*Nritya*”. He has also mentioned the grades of male and female dancers in the same work. It is also mentioned that the faces of the actors were coated as per the requirement of the play. Hence, we can say that this is the reference of makeup. We also find reference to the staging of two dramas named “*Kans Vadh*” and “*Bali Vadh*”. The word “*Sarvakeshi*” is mentioned for actors and musicians in the same work. From this it can be said that the art of dance was fully established in the Shung Era. We also come to know that the status of the female actors had deteriorated in this period and were considered to be means of enjoyment for everyone.³²

The Bharhut stupa at Madhya Pradesh from the Mauryan times has railings which were reconstructed during Shunga period. The decorations on these railings are depicted with figures of *Yakshas* and *Yakshis* in dance postures. The statuettes and terracotta plaques from Shunga period were discovered at Chandraketugarh in West Bengal, which have dance postures like *Ayatmandala*, and man playing *mridanga*.³³

1:2:8 Dance in Kanishka Period

The period of Samrat Kanishka is believed to be from 78 A.D. to 120 A.D. The king himself was very fond of music. Hence, he encouraged good musicians. In this period, there was assembly of musicians from within and outside the country like Afghanistan, China etc. This tradition also continued in the following periods. There is a reference of many theaters where dance, drama and music events were held. Music is developed more in this period than the earlier periods. The text “*Budha Charit*”, which contains descriptions of highly developed music, was written in this period by Ashwaghosh who was a Buddhist philosopher, preacher and a scholar of music.³⁴ We find the first evidence of the technical language of dance in ‘*Buddha Charit*’ written by Asvaghosa. It was not in a very refined stage. But this was a beginning of a stylized dance of the later days. The poet has given various descriptions of facial expressions. The poet has also mentioned a few *hasta mudras*, and a long list of musical instruments. There is a

reference of musical instruments like *Turya*, *Mridanga*, *Vina*, *Vamsi*, *Venu* etc. in the text. The dance of this period was based more on *Bhava*, more movements of eyes and eyebrows, gestures and imagination. During this period there were many *Nrityagruha* (Theatres), which proves that dance was encouraged in this period.³⁵

Samrat Kanishka encouraged Gandhara School and Mathura school of Hindu art. He embraced both Persian and Buddhism attributes, but he favoured Buddhism more, which had an influence on the arts. This can be proven on seeing various books related to Kushan Empire. The book “*Shilappadikaram*” was written by a poet Ilangoan of Southern India in this period. The main *nayika* (Heroine) of the epic is a dancer. This epic has many references of dance and music.³⁶ The biggest contribution of this period was the assemble of musicians from within and outside the country and evolvement of technical language of dance.

1:2:9 Dance references in the Nag Era

The Nag dynasty ruled parts of North and Central India during the 3rd and the 4th century, after the fall of Kushan Empire. Its capital was located at Padmavati, which is in Madhya Pradesh. The religion followed was Hinduism. The common languages used during this period were Sanskrit and Prakrit. Some scholars and historians believe the Sanskrit text “*Natyashastra*” was written by “*Bharat Muni*” in this period. Dance and music were used as a means of worship in this era. There are references in the ancient literature which state that ladies in the Nag Era were expert dancers. There were groups of dancers and prostitutes for the pleasure of Kings in this period. The tradition of appointing Devdasi for the Gods in the temples is also believed to have started in this era. The kings gave protection and encouragement to the arts of dance and music in this era.³⁷

1:2:10 Status of Dance in Gupta Periods

The Gupta dynasty was established in the 4th Century. The period between 320 A. D. to 600 A. D. is considered as the Gupta period in Indian history. In the Gupta period there was a great development in the various arts, culture, literature, and science. Therefore Gupta period is considered as Golden Period of Indian history. The great kings who ruled during Gupta dynasty in this period were Chandragupta 1st, Samudragupta and

Chandragupta 2nd. Gupta period was the period of renaissance of Hindu religion. Several *Natya Mandaps* are seen in this period. The Gupta Kings strived hard for the development of Indian arts, literature and culture. Chandragupta 1st was a great patron of arts. His rule started in the 320 A. D after the fall of Khushan dynasty. From the architecture, paintings and the references of dance, it is believed that arts were appreciated during his time but did not develop much as, Chandragupta 1st spent major time in wars and to create a strong kingdom. He was, therefore, not able to devote time for the development of various arts. After Chandraguta I, Samudragupta, ruled till he died in the year 335 A. D. From the coins of this period, where Samudragupta is engraved on them playing *Veena*, scholars believe that Samudragupta himself was expert in playing the "*Veena*". He was a great patron of music. Good music with various ragas and folk music developed during his rule. Many theatres were constructed in the time of Samudragupta, as he was fond of dramas in which dance and music were important elements. The men and women both used to take part in the dramas. It was ensured that the Indian culture and values were not deprecated or hurt during the performances of folk music and songs. Indian culture and values were given importance during this time. It was firmly believed in that period that a good character was essential for good art to develop. After the death of Samudragupta in 375 A. D. his son Chandragupta 2nd inherited the throne, who acquired the title "*Vikramaditya*". As the kingdom was already strong during his period, he fully devoted his time for the development and progress of arts, literature and culture. All the arts reached to a great height during this period. That is why his period is known as Golden era of Indian history. People were very knowledgeable in the arts in this period.³⁸

People of this period were very religious. Hence, there was construction of many temples. Temple architecture of this period also proves that people were very religious. Vishnu temple of Tigwa, Parvati temple of Nachna-kuthaar, Shiva temple of Bhumra, Dashavtara temple at Deogarh in Jhansi, Temple of Bheetargaanv, Dhamekha Stupa, Mukund Dara Temple of Kota, the Buddhist shrine of Bodhgaya, Buddhist shrine at Sanchi and the temple of Udaygiri; There are beautiful sculptures on the walls and stupas of these temples. From the relics of Sanchi many facts can be known of the life of the people of that time. Scholars interpret from these sculptures that the people represented here were alive to the joys of the world and they believed in the divinity that ruled their

lives. Music and dance naturally played an important part in the lives of people. Music and dance are the means of enjoyment and as a form of devotion. Dancing is associated here with both the gods and the humans. Some dances depicted in the scenes cannot be identified as classical dances; there are others which are certainly classical dances. There are many dance scenes in the stupa which depict social dances of many types. The temples also had the sculptures of Lord Rama and Krishna depicting the episodes of Ramayana and Mahabharata, as well as stories of Buddha. Therefore, these sculptures in the different temples translated the stories from different texts into sculptures in stone. Thus these dancing figures and sculptures in the temples of Gupta period are the proofs of presence of classical dance and also social dances in Gupta period.³⁹

People of this period had a great understanding of various art forms. In the book “The essence of Indian Music”, the author has mentioned that the level of understanding of art and literature even in the ordinary person was so high that even present day progressive and educated people in higher strata of the society cannot match them in this aspect. Dr. Bilyork Vana has also written that the number of scholars which existed in the field of music and art in this period was far more than that in other periods.⁴⁰

Many scholars believe that the world renowned Sanskrit writer of plays and epics, poet Kalidas belonged to this era. We observe from his dramas and poems like “*Meghadoot*”, “*Raghuvamsha*”, and “*Shakuntal*”, that the art of drama, dance and music was fully developed and very popular. Dance was an important element in his dance dramas, and dancer an important character in his dance dramas. The dancers in main roles like “*Malvika*” in his play “*Malavikagnimitram*” and “*Urvashi*” in “*Vikramorvasheeyam*”, confirm the importance of dance in those times. There is an important character of a dancer “*Sanumati*” in his play “*Abhigyanashaakuntalam*”. Sanumati’s “*Udabhrantaka Nritya*” creates a unique interest in the audience. The numerous references of music and dance in the various works of Kalidas show the importance of music and dance in the lives of people during his period. Kalidas’s works also mention names of many musical instruments like *Veena*, *Pushkar*, *Vamshi* and *Shankha*.⁴¹ Vatsyayana wrote ‘*Kamasutra*’ in this period. In ‘*Kamasutra*’ sixty four types of arts are mentioned, which include dance, playing musical instruments and singing.⁴²

Many great authors belonged to this period like Vishakhadatta, Shudraka, Harisena, Bhasa, Bharavi, Bhatti, Magha, Dandin, Bhatrihari, Ishwar Krishna, and Vyas, who have written many famous works.⁴³

The Indian music was popular in foreign countries like Arabia, Spain etc. and also in some European countries in this period. According to a Buddhist monk Fa-Hein who visited India during the regime of Chandragupta 2nd, music and dance were at its pinnacle of glory during the regime of the Guptas. We find references of dance in Gupta period in the works of foreigners. We find references of the Dance in Gupta period in the book “*Shahnama*” written by Persian poet Firdaus. From his book we can come to a conclusion that Indian dance and dancers were popular in other countries like Bahram. He has mentioned in this book that Bahram Gur had invited 10,000 female singers and dancers from India in the 5th Century A.D. to entertain his subjects. Many small kingdoms of Vakaatak, Satyahan, Pallav and Chalukya dynasties rose up in South India during the 4th to 6th century A.D. of this era. During the time of Pallav kings artists were encouraged. During the period of Pallava kings the arts like sculpture, painting, music and dance developed very well. It is believed by scholars that in the 6th century dance and music entered the temples. The beautiful idols carved and prepared at the places like Kanjeevaram, Devavannur, Mandagaapatto, Kuppam and Mahaallapuram depict various positions and mudras of dance, which prove that dance was highly developed during that period. In this period, music was performed in the courtyard of temple. Visiting artists were allowed to perform here. Dance and music were performed together in temple courtyard, which was called *ghatanibandhan*. There are references that princely court was also used as performing space.⁴⁴

During the period of King Mahendra Varman, in 7th Century A.D., music and dance were at its peak. His book named “*Bharatkosh*” is considered second best after the book “*Natyashastra*”. The idols in the temple of “*Kudumiyamalai*” are the evidence of the love of Pallava King Mahendra Varman for dance. Mahendra Varman built temples like “*Kudumiyamali*” which has idols which shows his love for dance.⁴⁵ The Gupta period was the classic period for the development of various arts like dance and music, literature and culture.

1:2:11 Status of Dance in the Harshavardhan Period

Harshavardhana was one of the great Indian emperors of the 7th Century. His period is believed to be between 606 to 647 A. D. During his rule his kingdom extended from North India to the Narmada River in the Central India. There was peace, prosperity and stability in his kingdom. He was a lover of arts and encouraged artists and scholars in his kingdom. He also encouraged artists from other countries. He was also play writer who wrote good plays. Some of the dramas written by him like "*Nagaanand*", "*Priyadarshika*" and "*Ratnavali*" are very popular even today. He was also a good singer. He encouraged singers and musicians. His sister Rajshri also was a lover of music. She arranged musical festivals at different places. Various arts, including music and dance, were developed and encouraged in his period. Even common people also used to take great interest in music and dance. Dance and music was an important part of all dramas in this era. Shree Umesh Joshi has written in his book "*Bharatiya Sangeet ka Itihas*" (The History of Indian Music) that music and dance were principal elements in the dramas of this period. There was no scene without a dance in the dramas. There were writers like Bana Bhatt in the court of king Harshavardhana. Bana Bhatt was a very well-known Sanskrit prose writer and poet. He was Asthana Kavi in the court of King Harshavardhana. In the works of Bana there is detailed description of the technique of dancing. Principal works of Bana Bhatt are "*Kadambari*", "*Harshacharita*" and "*Candikasataka*". In "*Kadambari*" we find the reference of music. In "*Harshacharita*", we find reference of a dance, dancers with singers and players of the instruments, etc. In '*Harshacharita*' we also find reference of five type of gothis : kavyagosthi, galpagosthi, gitagosthi, nrityagosthi and vadyagosthi.⁴⁶ Therefore we can say that art forms like dance, music and drama were very important part of the lives of people during the rule of king Harshavardhana. There are references of dancing in these gothis. There are also words like tandava nrtya, arabhati nrtya, rasakamandala, padahamsakas and Shringara bhava mentioned. The mention of these highly technical words, signify the presence of a developed dance style during this period. There is also a reference of couple dancing of brother and sister. From this we can conclude that social dancing prevailed during this period. Thus we see that the progress of dance and music was very good in the period of "Harshavardhan".⁴⁷

1:2:12 Status of Dance in Rajput Period

The period of 500 years, starting from 647 A. D. to 1000 A. D. is believed to be Rajput period by historians. In the book '*Itehas ki Dairy*' by scholar Azmat, he has mentioned that, apart from being good in the military skills, Rajputs were also lovers of dance, music and other arts. They encouraged the art forms like dance and music. We find references of court singers appointed in the courts of the kings.⁴⁸

After the reign of Harshavardhana the kingdom was divided into small parts during this period. These small independent kingdoms were not united and kept on fighting among themselves. The kings of these small independent kingdoms were called Rajputs. All these kingdoms together were known as Rajputana. The differences and constant small wars between the kingdoms affected the development of arts. The development of arts was side lined. There was development only in few external aspects of the arts. The art was also influenced by the political situation. Artists like dancers and musicians got divided like kingdom in groups. And, therefore, dance and music developed in different ways according to different groups. The development of dance and music was not unified like earlier times but, according to the groups. Al-Baruni was a Persian Muslim scholar. According to him the women-folk of the time was educated and they could read Sanskrit and were well versed with music, dance and other art forms. "The *Gharana* system in music which is found in the Indian music today originated from this era. According to Al Baruni the artistries were not ready to share their knowledge outside their caste. So they did not write many books or texts regarding the same. They kept the knowledge to themselves and passed it on to their family only, to the next generations. Therefore, though music knowledge was passed on to future generations, lot of it was lost as it was not texted or written in a book. Art became limited to a family. According to the famous historian Alcard Pole, Rajput music could not develop because of the narrow mindedness of the artists. They were jealous of each other and were busy in competing with each other so, music could not develop. Another drawback in this period was that arts like music were limited to royal families. As a result the overall development of music did not take place. Only the outward aspect was practised and developed. The moral tradition of classical music was made a mockery of. Music became extinct in the masses.

As a result, the royal music came to be disliked by the masses and they started giving more emphasis to folk music.⁴⁹

1:2:13 Overview of the Dance during the Hindu Dynasties

The period between 2nd century B. C. to 9th-10th century A. D., we treat as the period of Hindu kings. The second part is from 10-11th century A. D. to 18th century which we know as the period of Muslim kings. The *Natya Shastra* of Bharat Muni had great impression on the art of the period of Hindu kings. All the artists followed the rules of *Natyashastra*. Bharat Muni had imagined "Drama" ("*Natya*") as unified representation of different art forms like music, dance and drama. The poses of '*Chari*' or other aspects of dance, found in the sculptures and idols of temples built in this period are according to the rules of *Natyashastra*. The poets and play writers like Kalidas, Bana Bhatt also followed rules of *Natyashastra* while creating their plays. Thus Bharat Muni had influenced and kept bonded together the Indian music, dance and drama for nearly 1500 years. We can infer from this that classical dances were having one form all across the country. There were no different types of dance forms during this period.⁵⁰

The period of Hindu kings was also the period of freedom for women. The expertise in various fine arts was the principal ornament of the ladies. As a result, the ladies, right from the royal families to the common ones, used to train themselves in various arts like music, dance, drama etc. and achieve expertise. These ladies used to perform in public functions as well. One of the traits of a civilized and cultured citizen in that period was to achieve proficiency in one of the arts, literature and music. The sub-castes of the drama actors, dancers and musicians were also in best of the positions in this era and in great demand for the performances to please the citizens and teach them these arts. They were proficient in different art forms and work of sculptures. Even though the religious books have termed them as "*Varnasankar Shudra*", they were accorded high status in the society and even courts of the kings. Many of them were very knowledgeable. "*Kohal*", "*Dattil*", "*Vishaakhil*", "*Badarayan*", "*Nandikeshvar*" and others from the class of such actors, have written many high quality "*Lakshan Granths*".⁵¹

The folk dances which were also known as "*Desinrutta*" (indigenous dance) also developed along with classical dances in this period. People from royal families and classical artists also used to take interest in this form of dance. The period of Hindu kings was the period of progress and development of Indian dance. Just as the language, dresses, culture, thinking and behaviours were common all over India, there was also uniformity in the traditions of music and dances.⁵²

The period of Hindu Kings was more or less the period of prosperity. However, there were many attacks from Shaks, Huns and other foreign powers, the authority of the center diminished and got diluted which resulted into springing up of small kingdoms. All these small kingdoms though gave shelter to and encouraged various arts, the situation of various art forms started getting affected due to the instability of various kingdoms. Many kings themselves were artists of high caliber. We can fairly conclude that during the rule of Hindu kings, river of various art forms like dance and music flowed through uninterrupted without any obstacles.⁵³

1:2:14 Dances at the time of Invasions by Muslims (Post Medieval Age)

India was constantly attacked by Muslim invaders who came from North West. As India was divided into small kingdoms, which were not united, they were not able to defend themselves against these attacks. The period from 10-11th century A. D. to 18th century A. D. which we know as the period of Muslim kings, was an unbalanced period in the history of India, which influenced all the aspects of people's life like social, economical, political and cultural. It had a great influence also on the arts like dance and music of India. All the arts were affected and there was a major decline in people's creativity and imagination.⁵⁴

Muslims attacked India between the period of 1000 A. D. to 1290 A. D. Mahmood Ghazni attacked India from the year 1001 to 1030 A.D. He looted India during this period. Initially the Muslims entered India as dacoits and looted its wealth but slowly established their footings in India. The period of Muslim invasion was a new era in the history of Indian Dance and Music. Great harm was caused to Indian Arts like music and dance. The spiritual aspect of Indian Arts was diminished. After attacking India, Muslim

kings started staying in India and they had brought with them artists. Muslim kings like Kutub-uddin Aibak and Sayyad Lodhi attacked India and they set up their kingdoms in the Northern part of India. Indian artists were respected and honoured less compared to the artists who came with Muslim kings. Sometimes dancers were treated by kings, Nawabs and rich people only as entertainers. Indian Dance was encouraged by few Indian rulers like the kings of Jaipur, Alwar and Banaras. Few Nawabs of Mughal dynasty too encouraged Indian Dance. They also destroyed completely vast literature on Indian music. Therefore, the Indian music could not reach its height and its path was lost.⁵⁵

In this period though too much damage was caused to Indian arts due to invasions, it also gave new direction to arts and gave rise to the new traditions of arts.

1:2:15 Khilji Period

Alla-Uddin-Khilji, (1296-1320) was a powerful Muslim ruler, who was fond of music. In the end of 13th Century, Indian music was influenced by Muslim music. The great musicologist Amir Khusro belonged to the period of Alla-Uddin-Khilji, Khusro is believed to be born in 1253 A.D. Khusro spent time in the courts of ten different Muslim rulers. These courts were different culturally. Khusro learnt and collected experiences from all these ten different places. Khusro created a new system of musicology. It was known as '*Indraprastha Mata*' or '*Chaturdandi Sampradaya*'. He also introduced '*Tarana*' to Indian music. Khilji won some of the South Indian states. He bought experts of music like Gopal Nayaka to North. Gopal Nayaka served a court musician in the court of Alla-Uddin-Khilji. During the period of Khilji Indian music got divided into North Indian music and South Indian music. South Indian music was called Karnataka Sangeetam. It is believed by historians that there would be competitions between Khusro and Gopal Nayaka.⁵⁶

1:2:16 Tughlak and Lodi Period

There was not much development in arts like dance in this period. According to the book '*The Indian music of Muslim Period*', historian Kel Dasty, there was very little development in music in this period. The period of Tughlak dynasty was from 1320 A.D

to 1412 A.D. The period of Lodhi dynasty was from 1414 A.D. TO 1526 A.D. *Natya* was in practice during this period with themes relating to religion. Muhammed Tughlak of Tughlak dynasty was interested in the arts like music, and he had shown interest in their development. During this period, there was a deep influence of foreign culture in Indian society. The views of people became narrow in this period. Due to the *burqa* system in ladies, they did not take part in dance and music performances. In this period there was partition between urban and rural music and the urban arts and rural arts got divided.⁵⁷

The famous writer Garliobins has similarly written in his book "Indian Music" (page 45) about Lodi dynasty that Sikandar Lodi was a good ruler and administrator. He did not have much knowledge of music. But he encouraged musicians. Therefore Indian music made some progress during his regime. Due to influence of Muslim culture on music, more Ghazals and Khayal were sung in this period. The biggest achievement in music of the Lodi period is the writing of the book named "*Sangeetraj*" by the Rana Kumbha of Chitaud in the year 1450 A. D. It has five volumes containing 16,000 verses. The chapters are-"*Pathya Ratnakosh*", "*Geet Ratnakosh*", "*Vadya Ratnakosh*", "*Nrutya Ratnakosh*" and "*Ras Ratnakosh*". The "*Nrutya Ratnakosh*" has four sections and each section has four tests. The tests discusses subjects like intricacies of "*Antargat*", "*Anga*", "*Pratyanga*" and "*Upanga*", as also "*Aharya Abhinaya*", "*Sthanaka*", "*Chari*", "*Desi Chari*", "*Mandal*", "*Karan*", "*Angahaar*", "*Desi Karan*", "*Bhramari*", "*Vrutti*", "*Kalaas*", "*Lasya*" etc. Though we see clear influence of the "*Natya Shastra*" and "*Sangeet Ratnakar*" in the writings of "*Nrutya Ratnakosh*" originality of the writer is also seen.⁵⁸

1:2:17 Dance during the rule of Akbar (Mugal Period)

The rule of Akbar was from 1550 A.D. to 1605 A.D. Raja Surendra Mohan Tagore, has written in his book titled "Universal History of Music", music made good progress during the period of Akbar and it was encouraged by him. The Mughal rulers like Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan were lovers of arts; hence they appreciated and encouraged arts like music and dance. During the regime of these kings arts progressed and developed. The medieval period of Indian history, especially that of Akbar (1556-1605 A. D.), Jahangir (1605-1627 A. D.) and Shahjahan (1627-1657), is considered as the golden age of Post Medieval period. The level of music was very high in the period of

Akbar and he himself was very knowledgeable in music. In the 16th century, Tansen, who was in the court of Akbar, enriched the *Dhrupad* style of singing. Tansen was a pupil of Harisdas Swami. The "*Dhruvpad*" and "*Khayal*" in the area of music, developed during this period. According to 'Ain-e-Akbari', there were musicians from different nations in the court of Akbar. The number of musicians was 36 which included musicians like Tansen and Baz Bahadur. During his period, poet saints like Vidhyapati, Mirabai and Surdas flourished. The *kritis* (written works) of these saint poets created a religious atmosphere. Pt. Pundrik Vithal wrote treatise on music by the name of '*Sadraga Chandrodya*', '*Raga Mala*', '*Raga Manjari*', '*Nartan Nirnaya*' during the period of Akbar's rule. In his reign, Literature and other arts like sculpture, painting and other similar arts also developed and blossomed. Music performances were organised on auspicious occasions in this period. Artists were respected in this period. Jahangir was also a lover of music, literature and other arts. According to the book "*Bharatiya Sangeet ka Itahas*" by Joshi U., there were many poets, musicians and dancers in his court. During his period many songs based on *Shringara Rasa* were written. During his period Hindi songs and Ghazals were written and poetry was composed in Urdu, Hindi and Persian languages. Some important treatise of music like "*Raag-Vibodha*" by Pt. Somnath, '*Hridya-Parkasha*' by Hridya Narayan, '*Sangita Darpana*' by Damodar were written in his period. According to the book "*Bharatiya Sangeet ka Itahas*" by Joshi U., during the period of Shah Jahan also artists were appreciated and encouraged. Shah Jahan was a good singer; he loved Urdu and Hindi poetry, Bhajans, Dhrupad music and Khayal. Concerts and competitions were organised by him. Many forms of dances prevailed during this period. Music was not limited only to the higher class; it also reached the lower class.⁵⁹

The famous painting styles that is Mughal and Rajput style of painting, developed in this period of Mughal kings. Many world famous monuments and buildings came up in this period depicting the art of sculpture. The art of Dance was also encouraged and so it was developed in this period. Kathak dance style was influenced by Muslim culture and music. Kathak dance style adopted some aspects of Muslim dance and music. The aim of dance became more materialistic in this period and its purpose was degraded due to lustful Mughals. There were also few positive changes in this period. Some aspects of the practical form of "Kathak" witnessed today came into being during this period. Dance was degraded

and looked down upon. The famous dance expert Shri Puru Dadheech mentions in his book "*Kathak Nritya Siksha, Part II*" that during this very Mugal period "Kathak" dance again made historical attempts to revisit the forgotten path of philosophy and self-realisation. According to him during the Mugal period itself, by the Vaishnav Gurus in Vrajbhoomi the worshipping of Lord Krishna got ascendance. Many devout poets and artists got shelter and protection here. A big group of Kathak dancers was serving in the temples as per the tradition. They did not prefer to entertain the kings. We see so many references to the dances performed by Lord Krishna and Radha in the writings of many poets from Surdas to all other Krishna devotee poets. They have used in their writings the technical terms of Kathak dances. It proves that performance of Kathak dances in the temples was very common in those days. Dance and dancers were respected in the society and people appreciated dance performances. That is the reason that many poets have involuntarily used technical words of Kathak dance in their description of the dances of their Lord Krishna. The "*Ras Leela*" also came into existence during this period through Kathak dance which was reincarnated in its traditional form. A Kathak dancer Shri Vallabh has been credited with its invention.⁶⁰

During the last phase of Mugal period, the Nawabi kingdom came into being in "Avadha" with its capital being Faizabad in the beginning which was later on shifted to Lucknow. Here in the court of Nawab Aasafuddaula (1775-1798 A. D.) the "Lucknow Gharana" of Kathak dance style started which was at its peak during the period of Nawab Vajid Ali Shah (1847-1856 A. D.).⁶¹

1:2:18 Overall View of Dance during the Islamic Rule

During the 900 years of Islamic rule, Indian arts like dance and music were very much affected and influenced. The status of Dance was reduced to as a medium of entertainment. From the temples, dance performance was shifted into the courts of kings to entertain them. Indian music was influenced a lot by Iranian music. A lot of literature of music and arts was destroyed. Dance was also influenced by Muslim rule; the *Devadasis* who danced in front of the idols of Gods in temples were made to dance in the courts of kings. So many words were introduced in the items of Bharatanatayam dance to please the kings like "*salamura*". Dance items were composed with a purpose of

salutation to the kings. There were changes also in the costume of dancers. The costumes of Kathak dance style were influenced by the dresses of Muslim culture. Dances were composed based on '*Shringara rasa*' on the theme of Krishna and Radha. The Indian vocabulary of dance was replaced by many Urdu words. According to Islam enjoying music and dance was forbidden, hence, it was not encouraged by Muslim Kings. Though singers and instrumentalists used to play in the courts of Kings, they did not give same honour to dance, due to the fear of Muslim religious leaders and Sufi saints. Kings used to arrange performances of dancers privately. There is not a single name of a dancer mentioned in "Ain-e-Akbari" or "Tuzuk e Jahangiri" in the list of court artists. On the other hand they mention that more than 500 female dancers used to get their wages from the Government funds. The biased approach to art of dance had many consequences. Northern India was more influenced by the Muslim culture. Almost all the Hindu kings were having allegiance to the Muslim rulers; hence their approach to the dance also underwent a change in tune with the Muslim rulers. In this way the tradition of Indian dances became extinct from Punjab, Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Gujarat and was substituted by dances for the purpose of entertainment. The classical ancient dances did survive this onslaught in Southern India and North-East region but they were also influenced by the Muslims. Many items in the "Kuchipudi" and "Bharatanatyam" dances begin or end with *Salami* (salutation) and the items composed during that time were based more on *Shringara rasa*.⁶²

There was satisfactory progress of different styles of dances in other regions of India during this period. Development of various arts was at its highest in the Vijay Nagar kingdom under Raja Krishnadeva Ray (1507-1530 A. D.) in Southern India. Shree Vasudev Upadhyay, in his "History of Vijay Nagar Samraajya" has written that there was lot of propaganda of dance in the Vijay Nagar Kingdom. Krishna Dev had even built a town for the dancers known as "*Ganika Nagar*". Land was donated to them for dancing in the temples. Aged dancers used to take even their 10 year old daughters to dance in temples. They used to stay in temples as "*Dev Dasi*". The dancers in those days were not looked down like the prostitutes in the present time. The king had built two dance schools for the spread of dances and he had allotted two villages to the dancers. The pillars of the Dance Schools were decorated with the different poses of dances carved on them. The

court (*Mandapam*) had paintings of all the postures of dances as described in "*Natya Shastra*". An idol of young dancer in gold was put up in the centre of the *Mandap* as per the specific order of Krushna Dev Rai. Unfortunately, the Mandap now exists only as a part of history. It is worth noting that today's dance form known as "Bharatanatyam" was having wide spread in the kingdom of "Vijay Nagar" which was then known as "*Dasi Attam*". Similarly, the "*Kuchipudi*" and "*Yakshagan*" styles of dance in Andhra Pradesh and "*Kathakali*" style of dance in Kerala were at the peak of their glory. In the eastern part in Orissa, the "Odissi" style of dance was the centre of attraction for the tourists. In Bengal there was prevalence of the "*Kirtan Nrutya*" (dance performed while singing devotional songs) of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and "*Jatra Nrutya*". One of the disciples of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu named Shankar Dev in Assam started the tradition of "*Ankiya Naat*" and "*Shatriya Nrutya*" dance styles. The "*Ras Nrutya*" was also performed in the "*Govind Dev*" temples in Manipur. Thus we see that the modern dance styles in India went through many changes and influence during the Mughal period; but it must be remembered that the Mughal kings did not play any major role whatsoever in their development.⁶³

1:2:19 Dances at the time of European Culture

When the British and Various European sects arrived in India for acquiring power, during the 17th century, it had its impact on the dances of India. There were many changes in the role of dance forms. The Indian kings lost their power, so they could not support various artists like dancers and musicians. Kings could not support *Devadasis*. People became judgmental about *Devadasis*. *Devadasis* became poor and could not support themselves. During the rule of Chola Kings, girls were offered to the temples for various religious reasons, who were known as *Devadasis*. But during the British period, a girl child was offered to the temple to escape poverty, and as a last resort for the poor families. During the Chola period, the girls from upper class became *Devadasis*. But in the British period, girls from the lower caste became *Devadasis*. These dancers who were called *Devadasis* were looked down upon. During the British period, *Devadasis* were not respected by the society, as they were respected during the period of Chola kings.⁶⁴

Kathak dance also was present in this period but in a different form. It was termed as '*Natch*'. The level of Kathak dance deteriorated in the British period. The pure form

of Kathak survived in some of the Brahmin families, and also it was protected by the dancers who danced in the temples on religious occasions. There were many male Kathak dancers during this period. It can be said from the views of scholars that it was due to the 'Natch girls' and Male dancers who performed Kathak, and few traditional artists who preserved it that it survived in the British period, when dancers were not respected and looked down upon by society. In North India the credit of propagating Kathak in other countries goes to Madam Menaka. She choreographed many dance dramas in Kathak dance style, and performed it in European countries and propagated Kathak dance style. She established her institute 'Nrityalayam' in Pune, and thus was instrumental in uplifting and propagating Indian Classical dance.⁶⁵

The main motive of Britishers was to capture and collect natural resources of India, collect wealth from India; they didn't have any interest in the Indian culture and tradition. British looked down upon Indian culture, so they didn't promote Indian arts. Educated Indians too thought that British culture and traditions were better than Indian culture and started looking down upon its own culture and arts. Because of this lots of dancers and musicians got discouraged, and dance and music went into the wrong hands. Attention of many Indian and foreign scholars was drawn to the development of Indian Music Literature in this period and they wrote many books of high quality and standard on music, like 'The Music of India' written by H.A.Popley and 'Music of Hindostan' by A. H. F. Strangways. Surendra Mohan Tagore wrote two books during this time, namely 'Universal History of Music' and 'Hindu Music from Various Authors'. Capt. N. A. Villard was the first foreign scholar who wrote "A Treatise on The Music of Hindustan" in 1834. The literature on music written by Pandit Bhatkhande like '*Sangeet Shastra*', '*Lakshy Sangeetam*' etc. also was penned during this period. Rabindranath Tagore too developed the new music called 'Rabindra Sangita' in Bengal. Many books were written on Indian music in various Indian languages like Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali and other vernacular languages in this period; the ancient books of music and dance were brought to light in this period.⁶⁶

For teaching and encouragement of Indian music, many schools came up during this period. Some British Officers contributed in building up of such schools. "*Gayana*

Samaj" was founded in Poona on 3rd October, 1874. A branch of this institute was opened in Madras on 18th August 1883. The Duke of Connaught, Sir Fredric Roberts and kings of Mysore, Travancore and Vijayanagar became its patrons. It is because of the institutions like "*Sangeet Samaj*" that the music came out of the private concerts of rich people to public performances and reached to common people. In this period music which was earlier confined to the family of *Ustads* and their heirs, now also reached to common people. During this time two great personalities 'Pandit Vishnu Digambar' and 'Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande' devoted their life, under unfavourable conditions, without resources for the promotion of Indian Music. Due to the efforts of Pandit Vishnu Aryan Bhatkhande and Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, it became possible to teach music to anyone in the schools of music. Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar founded "Gandharva Sangeet Mahavidyalaya" in Lahore in 1901 A.D. Over a period of time its branches were opened in other places also. Likewise, Pandit Bhatkhande established "Maharaja Sayajirao Sangeet Vidyalaya" in Baroda in 1916 A. D., "Madhav Sangeet Vidyalaya" in Gwalior in 1918 A. D. and Mary's College of Hindustani Music in Lucknow. "Prayag Sangeet Samiti" was established in Allahabad in 1926 A. D. Slowly, Schools of music were opened in other cities and the Music again found its due place in the cultured and educated families of the country.⁶⁷

The dance scholar Puru Dhadeech mentions in his book "*Kathak Nritya Siksha Part II*" that this period is a period of rebirth of cultural awakening. The Europeans introduced western music etc. along with them like the Muslims and were more interested in enjoying it; occasionally they also enjoyed and also appreciated Indian music and dances. There are references to Indian dance like, Prince of Wales witnessed an Indian dance performance when he visited Jaipur, during his visit to India in 1875, in 'Chandramahal' on 5th February to honour him. The *Desi* kings had taken with them their court musicians on the occasion of "Delhi-Darbar" which concluded on 1st January, 1903. Duke of Edinbarrow and the then Viceroy Lord Curzon, along with the members of their family attended the programmes of these artist held in 'Lal Kila' even after the midnight. The whole atmosphere in the 'Lal Kila' was made pleasant and enjoyable by the sound of music and dancing. Not only this, on the occasion of crowning ceremony held in England

in 1911 A.D. many artists from India, including late Ustad Yusuf Ali Khan, the Sitar player, were also invited to present their art in London.⁶⁸

British began losing control of Indians according to scholars in the early 20th century. Many leaders with progressive views believed that Indian Classical dance needed a change. So leaders and artists, social workers, and dancers worked very hard and led a revolution to revive Indian dances for a brighter future in this period. Great Personalities like Rabhindrath Tagore, E. Krishna Iyer, Rukmini Devi, Poet Vallathol Narayan Menon, Guru Gopinath, Uday Shankar, Anna Pavlova, Madam Menaka, Rita Devi, Mrinalini Sarabhai, Balasaraswati, Ram Gopal, Ragini Devi and many more led a revolution to revive Indian dance. The Indian classical dance styles got opportunities to develop and progress internationally in this period. When we look at the activities in the field of Indian dances, we find that most of the dancers, and actors in dramas and their teachers were associated with the temples, courts of kings and concerts of rich and wealthy. They were engaged in practising and presenting the traditional style of their art. A few, who were impressed and influenced by the new western "Ballet" style, used whole of their talent in creating Ballet dances on the same western tunes. Some of the dance groups which visited foreign countries presented their group performances, which was not based on any pure classical dance style. Still it was successful in attracting the attention of the art-lovers of the foreign countries and they started to take interest in learning them. At the same time it helped in creating a class of audience who evinced keen interest in Indian dances which benefited the artist who came up in the following period. Thus the renaissance period during the British rule also caused new awakening in the field of Indian dances.

The revival period of Indian classical dances is discussed in the next chapter.

1:2:20 Art of Dancing in the Independent India

Since India became independent on 15th August, 1947, there is a great spread and development of the art of dancing. It is no more looked down upon. There are training schools for dances in almost every important city in India. The Secondary Education Boards in many states and universities have listed Dance as a subject in their syllabus. Thousands of students appear for its examination as well every year. In addition to that

many special schools and institutions are established to impart higher level professional training. There have been researches conducted in the field of dancing and introductory books on dancing have been published in Hindi, English and various vernacular languages.

Ballets are choreographed on modern themes. There has been a good positive change in the presentation of various styles of dancing. Present day dancers are more cautious and aware about their dressing, ornaments, facial make-up, group of musicians accompanying them, sound arrangements, lighting and other instruments as also the order of presentation and the time limit. Not only that, many forgotten aspects and elements of our dancing have again seen the light of the day in new forms because of their sincere efforts. Many dance styles like Odissi, Kuchipudi, Yakshagan, Chhau, Shatriya Nrutya, Vilasini Natyam etc. have found its presence on the stage and art lovers have welcomed them with lot of appreciation. Many classical dance festivals are arranged throughout the country. Also there are dance festivals organised in other countries, where Indian dancers get a platform to perform. At the same time due attention is also being paid to patronizing and development at all levels of the rich tradition of the folk dances. The presentation of folk dances of every region and states in the country on the occasion of the Republic Day, has proved to work like a lifesaving drug for the art.

The establishment of "Sangeet Natak Akademi" in 1952 by the then Ministry of Education, Government of India as the National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama, and was inaugurated by the first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad on the 28th January, 1953, followed by such academies at state level has boosted the development of music, dance and dramas to a great extent. These bodies have organised programmes for such arts, given financial assistance to the institutions engaged in this field and the artists, published books, conducted surveys, arranged competitions, arranged exhibitions, seminars, awarded scholarships to the students etc. It has also given awards and fellowships every year to the artists and honoured them. The Government of India also gives national awards to selected artists like *Padmashri*, *Padmavibhushan* etc. Our artists often travel to foreign countries to present their arts and there is considerable growth in

the number of programmes arranged. All this has resulted in bringing out new talent in the country. All this convince us that future of the art of dancing is very bright in India.⁶⁹

1:2:21 History of Bharatanatyam Dance

The history and roots of Bharatanatyam can be traced from the historical references found in literature, sculptures and inscriptions of various periods, especially studying the evidences of the dance form that existed in the South India. According to the dance critics like Sunil Kothari its origin can be traced in *Natyashastra*.⁷⁰

The northern parts of India were attacked frequently. So the bad effects of invasions were more on Northern parts of India like Punjab, Delhi, Kashmir and surrounding areas. South India was less affected by these attacks. As a result even after the degradation of the Indian dance and music from the North India, it remained less affected and more secured in Southern India. The same thing was true for Central and Eastern India. The small and big Hindu kingdoms which came into existence, during this period, supported and encouraged Indian culture and arts like dance and music; which led to their development. All the classical dance forms of today are influenced by this period.

1:2:21:1 Bharatanatyam in the period between 500 B.C. to 1000 A. D.

In this period we find references of dance associated with religion and rituals in the temple. We find the references of dance as a form of worship in the temple. We find the references of dance in Tamil texts like "*Silappadikaram*" and "*Manimekhalai*" of the 'Sangham' age (500 B.C.-500 A.D.) In the text of '*Shaivagamas*' too there is reference about dance. There is a reference of dancing girls in the service of gods mentioned in the text of 'Shaivagamas'. The mode of worship is also prescribed in the text. The temples were not only the place of worship, but they were also centers of art, culture and education. There were magnificent *Natyamandaps* (dancing hall) in these temples. *Devadasis* use to perform various rituals in the temple through dance. These *Devadasis* preserved this dance form. The present Bharatanatyam can be traced back to these dances of the *Devadasis*. From the various evidences of the sculptures and inscriptions, scholars believe that the technique of the movement that is followed in the Bharatanatyam dance style can be traced back to 5th Century. The "*Aradhamandali*" position or the "*Ayatamandala*" position, (the

legs are bent and knees turned out), was the position which was common to the classical dance style (*Margi* style) in the 5th Century. In the 10th century A.D., in the dance styles from Orissa to Gujarat and from Khajuraho to Thiruvananthapuram, this basic position is common. From the relics in every part of India, from about the 10th Century A.D., in sculptures of dance we find that basic position of the lower limbs is common.⁷¹ In the commentary on "*Silappadikaram*" written by 'Adyarkunallar' (20th Century A.D.), he has given information about some of the aspects of the art of dance. We find the word '*Kuthu*' in these Tamil works, which is used for dance. According to the scholars the word *Santi Kuttu* is used for classical dance and the word *Vinod Kuthu* is used for the popular forms. According to scholars the Aryan and Dravidian cultures must have merged with each other in classical dance forms like Bharatanatyam. The tradition of the "*Natyashastra*" and the tradition of dance which is mentioned in "*Shilappadikaram*" might have influenced each other.⁷²

1:2:21:2 Dance in the Period of Pandya and Pallava kings

The period of Pandya and Pallava dynasty is believed to start from 4th century and lasted till the late 9th century A.D. The Pandya rulers of Madurai and the Pallavas of Kanchi dominated the Tamil regions of the sub-continent during the 4th to 9th century A.D. They ruled in the southern India for about 500 years. The devotion to god and religious awareness gave rise to the *Bhakti* movement in this period. Many great saint poets like Nammaalwar, Periyalwar, Aandal and Naayanars like Maanikkavachakar, Appar and Sundarar belonged to this period. The Aalwars were the followers of Vishnu and Naayanars were the followers of Shiva.⁷³

Pallava kings were great art patrons. The Pallava kings built many grand temples. The Mandagapattu rock cut temple built by Mahendravarman, Kailasanathar Temple and Shore Temple Mahabalipuram built by King Rajsimha were built during this period. The ruler Narasimhavarman I who was also known as Kala Sumatra, of Pallava dynasty was a great lover of arts. During his period many monuments were built in Mahabalipuram or Mamallapuram. These temples had sculptures and several carvings of dancing figures in various poses. There are many dancing figures in the Shiva temple Kailashnatha at Kanchipuram. Image worship in this period was the means of devotion. The temples

promoted religious arts like dance and music. The sculptures during the Pallava period were influenced due to this approach. The temple carvings of this period have sculptures with dancing poses, which are based on mythological themes. The kings of this period were fond of music and they respected, honoured and encouraged the musicians. Many artists and musicians were encouraged by the kings. After the rule of Pandhya and Pallava Dynasties, the rule of Chola Dynasty followed.⁷⁴

1:2:21:3 Bharatanatyam in the period between 1000 A. D. to 1400 A.D.

The entry of music and dance into the temples had occurred from the 6th century A. D. during the reign of Raja Rajakesari of Chola dynasty. Many other rulers like kings of Chalukya dynasty who ruled Karnataka are known for their support to dance and music. Many other rulers in this period used dance as a medium to propagate religions like Jainism, Vaishnavism and Shaivism. There are many references of dancers and actors in the book “*Gaathasaptashathi*” written by Hala of the *Shatavahana* period. After 10th A.D. classical dance styles seem to have developed and preserved in South India. From the various references available, scholars believe that the Chola and the Pallava kings were great patrons of various art forms. During their rule all the art forms were developed and artists were respected and encouraged. The Chola and the Pallava kings were great patrons of the art forms of dance and music.⁷⁵

1:2:21:4 Dance during the rule of Chola kings

In 11th and 12th century during the rule of Chola kings, artists were encouraged and protected by the king. Chola rulers patronized arts. Chola kings contributed immensely in the development of literature and various art forms like dance and music. During the Chola rule all the movements in art, religion and literature reached its pinnacle. Majestic temples were built during the rule of Chola kings. Stunning and extraordinary sculptures made of stone and bronze belong to this period. Chola kings continued the temple building tradition of Pallava kings. All the arts were encouraged immensely during the period of King Rajaraja Chola and his Son Rajendra Chola I. A number of grand Shiva temples were built by Chola kings on the bank of river Kaveri in the end of 10th century like *Brihadeeshwara* temple of Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram. Dancers were

maintained in the temples during his rule. During the rule of Chola kings different ways were used to encourage the artists, for example by giving lands as gifts, this can be said from the inscriptions that are available of this period. From the inscriptions available, it is evident that there were many dance halls, and kings gifted land for the maintenance of the dance halls. There are evidences also that there were dance halls in the temple. The *Brihadeeswara* temple was built by King Rajendra Chola I in between 1003 to 1010 A.D. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is located on the bank of river Kaveri in Thanjavur, Tamilnadu. King Rajaraja Chola was a great patron of dance. He employed 400 dancers of that time to perform daily at the temple and they were protected and given shelter by the king. We find the *karanas* in the temple architecture of this period which are according to the *karanas* described in the fourth chapter of the *Natyashastra*. This is an adequate proof that people of this period had the knowledge and understanding of the techniques of dance. Dance during this period was based on the rules of the *Natyashastra*. Apart from *Brihadeeswara* temples, many other magnificent temples were built during the rule of Chola kings like the Temple of *Gangaikondacholapuram* and the *Airavatesvara* temple at Darasuram. The temple of *Gangaikondacholapuram* was built by King Rajendra Chola in 1030 A.D. The references in treaties like '*Shilappadikaram*' are a proof of importance of dance in this period. We also find references in the *keerthis* which were the documented archives by the King Rajaraja of his rule, which were in form of stone tablets and copper plates.⁷⁶ Chola kings contributed to the growth of vocal and instrumental music. Instruments like *Veena*, *Kudamula* and flute were used. *Devadasis* were good singers and they had knowledge of music. Dance performances and plays were enacted in the premises of the temples for common people. We find paintings on religious themes on the walls of temples like *Raja Rajeswara* temple and *Gangaikondacholapuram* temple. During the Chola rule in the Tamil region, arts, religion and literature developed highly.⁷⁷

1:2:21:5 Status of Dance in the Vijaynagar Kingdom (14th to 16th Century A.D.)

Pandhya rulers came to power again after the fall of the Chola Dynasty. There were invasions by Mughals and the advent of Vijaynagar Kingdom followed after the fall of Chola Dynasty. There was a great political instability during this period. It had an

unfavourable effect on the art and culture. Many art centers were damaged and looted. Art forms like dance and music suffered a setback during this period throughout Peninsular India. But with the advent of Vijaynagar kings culture started to revive. Vijaynagar Kings were religious and devout. They focused on reviving the culture. During the Vijaynagar kingdom period, a push was given to rebuild the past traditions and to return the glory of culture, tradition and art. Grand temples like *Arunachaleshwar* temple at Tiruvannamalai, *Vriddhagiriswaran* Temple at Vriddhachalam and *Virupaksha* Temple at Hampi built during this time. *Vriddhagiriswaran* temple at Vriddhachalam was built with beautiful figures of *Karanas*. The Vijaynagar kingdom collapsed by 1565 A.D.⁷⁸

1:2:21:6 Dance during the rule of Nayaks and Marathas (16th – 17th Century A.D.)

The period of Nayaks and Marathas was called The Golden Era. The Nayaks ruled over Madurai and Marathas ruled over Thanjavoor. The Nayaks and Marathas were huge patrons of art. They kept the traditions of dance and music alive, which continues even today. The Nayaks, Raghunatha and Vijay Raghav wrote treatises on music and dance. The *Bhagavata Mela* dance drama was started during the time of Achuttapa Nayak. The *Bhagavata Mela Natakam* was performed by male Brahmins on festive occasions like Narasimha Jayanti. The Nayaks were Vaishnavites. Few Nayak rulers were great musicologists. The themes of their compositions were based on Lord Krishna and his life stories. Vijay Raghav Nayak of Thanjavoor patronised the great composer Kshetrajnah who was born during the period around 1597 A.D., who composed many compositions of Lord Krishna. The *padams* composed by him, depicted human emotions like love for Lord Krishna. In his compositions Krishna was portrayed as a friend rather than as a God.⁷⁹

1:2:21:7 The status of dance during the rule of Marathas (1674 A.D. – 1855)

The Maratha rulers of Thanjavoor were great connoisseurs of art. The term ‘*Sadir*’ was used for a solo dance during this period. The *Kuruvanji* dance dramas were well known in the beginning of the 18th Century. During the annual festivals of certain temples *Kuruvanji* dance dramas were performed by *Devadasis* in Tamilnadu in a group. The Maratha rulers Shahaji, Tulaja II and Sarfoji II contributed immensely to the art form of dance known as *Sadir*. Shahaji was a great scholar and a linguist. He had composed

beautiful compositions. King Tulaja wrote a book called '*Sangeeta Saramritham*'. In this book, there is a chapter devoted to *Adavus*, which are the basic steps of Bharatanatyam. The names of the *Adavus* are described in Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu. During Maratha rule, Telugu became the official language in Tanjore though it was a Tamil speaking region.⁸⁰

Raja Sarfoji was another ruler who promoted art, culture and literature. His dance compositions are preserved and published by the "Saraswathi Mahal Library". The "Saraswathi Mahal Library" of Thanjavoor has preserved numerous volumes, palm scripts, manuscripts and books on art. It is known as one of the finest oriental research libraries. The famous Tanjore quartet Chinnaya Pillai, Ponnaiya Pillai, Shivanandam Pillai and Vadivelu Pillai, the sons of Nattuvanar Subbarayan were attached to the royal court of Raja Sarfoji as musicians, who codified and framed the structure of the *Adavus* and *Margam*, which is in use even today.⁸¹

1:2:21:8 Decline of the Devadasi System

The Maratha rule came to an end when Shivaji II died in 1855 A.D. The classical dance which was known as *Sadir*, of the *Devadasi* community, suffered a severe setback during the British rule from 1857. *Devadasis* did not get financial support or patronage amidst the political upheaval. Due to the lack of royal patronage, the *Devadasis* became victims of poverty and there was a decline in the moral values of some *Devadasis*. The society looked down upon dancers and the dance form too. The Britishers were against *Devadasi* system. In 1930, in Madras Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy who was from the *Dasi* community, with other social reformers, supported Government to put an end to the *Devadasi* system. The result of this was *Anti-Natch* movement and the proposal of a bill in the Council by Dr. Reddy, prohibiting the *Devadasi* ceremonies and performances in Hindu temples.⁸²

1:2:21:9 Renaissance Period

The Renaissance period of the art form started in 1928 by custodians of Art like E. Krishna Iyer, an advocate by profession and an eminent scholar with a flair for theatre and performing arts. He supported the art form of dance by arranging public performances

of Mylapore Gowri Amma, Balasaraswati, Rajalakshmi and Jeevaratnam, daughters of Devadasi Kalyani at Music Academy in Chennai. Smt. Rukmini Devi also became an asset to bring respectability to the Art form by starting her institute 'Kalakshetra' in Adyar. The dance form was renamed from *Sadir* to Bharatanatyam by E. Krishna Iyer and Smt. Rukmini Devi. Subsequently Bharatanatyam dance and other classical dances became popular and they were no longer looked down upon.⁸³

Bharatanatyam today as one of the classical dance styles of India has established a special place for itself in the world of performing arts.

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Chapter 1.3 REVIVAL

In India dance was affected by a lot of factors and circumstances like, invasions by outsiders, mingling of different cultures, the views of different rulers towards the art form and the economic and social condition of India. Indian dance went through many low and high phases during different periods in History depending on whether it was favoured or disfavoured in a particular era. Finally it ended as an art which was limited to a small number of people, who passed it on as hereditary art. On the whole the well planned stage technique of the old days of fabulous theatre arts was forgotten and there was a nationwide downswing in the art form of dance. There were only few families who preserved it.

The foreign invasions resulted in many political ups and downs and this political situation affected dance a lot. Slowly the art of dance deteriorated and was forgotten. Indian dance went through a downfall in the later part of 19th century and the first quarter of 20th century. Indian rulers started losing power and were impoverished because of the advent of East India Company, the French, the Dutch and other foreigners. As a result they were not able to support dance and other art forms.

So dance and other art forms lost the support and patronage from the kings and other nobles under the British rule. Britishers misinterpreted and misrepresented Indian dance as vulgar and immoral, hence status of Indian dance declined drastically. Dancers were neglected and the rich culture of dance decayed. The Indians who were educated in the British education system started shunning away from the art form. The rich and elite class people developed a mentality, where it was even forbidden to witness a dance show. These were the factors which resulted in the downfall of classical dance.

Some great reformers made great efforts for the revival and re-establishment of the art form of dance. The pioneers, art lovers, reformers, and dancers like Uday Shankar, Rabindranath Tagore, E. Krishna Iyer, Gauri Devi, Madam Menaka, Anna Pavlova, Rukmini Devi, Poet Vallathol, Ram Gopal, Mrinalini Sarabhai, Balasaraswati, Kalyani Sisters, Guru Gopinath, Ragini Devi, Sitara Devi, Damyanti Joshi, Vedanta Laxmi Narayana Sastri, Vedanta Satyanarayan Sharma, Kalicharan Patnaik, Kelucharan

Mahapatra, Shanta Rao, Indrani Rehman, Yamini Krishnamurti, Vyjayanthimala, M.K.Saroja, Hima Devi etc. made great efforts for the revival of Indian Dance.¹

The names of Uday Shankar (1900-1970), Rukmini Devi (1904-1986) and Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) are very important in the history of Revival of Indian Dance. Rabindranath Tagore established "Vishva Bharati" in 1925 and made dance an Integral part of the syllabus. Uday Shankar established "The Uday Shankar Indian Cultural Center" in 1928 in Almora and Rukmini Devi established "Kalakshetra" in 1936 at Adyar.² Contribution of all the great personalities who contributed for the revival of Indian Classical dance is mentioned below.

1:3:1 Shri Rabindranath Tagore

In 1917 Shri Rabindranath Tagore visited Sleet in Assam. He witnessed a beautiful performance of Manipuri dance during this visit. He was very impressed by this performance and because of his artistic foresight, he was able to recognize a great potential in the dance form of Manipuri, a basis for the revival of dance. He was fascinated by its melodic beauty, romantic themes, graceful movements and the distinctive costumes, so he brought dancers and teachers from this region back to his cultural center at Shantiniketan. These dancers and teachers imparted their knowledge to the pupils of his institute.³

Tagore created 'Bengali Music', which became popular as "Rabindra Sangeet" in India, and this served as a simplified classical music which was easier to understand for all. Tagore wrote a play for the dance drama 'The Dancing Girl'. In this play 'Gauri Devi' played the main role. This dance drama was a huge success. Gauri Devi was the daughter of famous painter Nandalal Bose. She became the first dancer from a non-professional background to dance on the stage. The melodious music of the dance-drama which had songs of Manipur became very successful. The Tagore troupe performed in different parts of world and made it popular among the appreciative audiences.⁴ Tagore understood potential of dance very well. For Tagore dance was poetry, music, and songs expressed through the medium of body. The Tagore dance style had no technique of its own. The Tagore dance style was an expression of words, feelings, emotions through the rhythm of body. Added to this style was the energetic Kathakali and the graceful Manipuri as well

as feminine '*Mohinattam*' of Kerala. The poet's tours in India and beyond helped him acquaint himself with Ceylonese (*Kandyan*), Javanese (*Serimpi*) and Bali (*Legong*) dances. Some of the aspects of these dances were also incorporated in the Tagore dance choreography. The folk dances (*Garba, Baul, Jari, Raybenshe*, etc) were, of course, other ingredients of Tagore dances.⁵ Later on Kathakali was also selected for training in Tagore's institute. In 1941 when Tagore witnessed demonstration of Bharatanatyam steps and *mudras* by Rukmini Devi Arundale, he understood the beauty and vastness of the form and later on Bharatanatyam was also added in training at his institute. Tagore selected parts from different dance forms and presented it artistically to the audiences. Thus he did the pioneering work in the upliftment of dance.⁶

The other great pioneer who made Indian dance famous in whole world was Uday Shankar. He was a genius in presentation, and creating beautiful dance pieces and dance ballets with finest orchestral accompaniments, have been instrumental in bringing to light the beauty of Indian dance, which was creative work based on the Manipuri and Kathakali dance styles primarily incorporating the expressive gesture language, delightful rhythms, varied and modern themes.⁷

1:3:2 Shri Uday Shankar

Shri Uday Shankar was born on 8th December, 1900 in Udaipur. Uday Shankar's father, Shri Shyam Shankar Chawdhary was an educational advisor of the Maharaja of Jhalawar state. Uday Shankar was named after the city of Udaipur, by his parents, who were originally from Narail which is now in Bangladesh, but they settled in Rajasthan. His Mother was Hemangini Devi, who came from the Zamindar family.⁸

His Father was a Sanskrit Scholar. He had to move frequently because of his work. Therefore, his studies also took place at different places. He spent much time in his maternal uncle's home with his mother. Uday Shankar's mother had no female issue and so she used to dress him up as a girl, with small sari and ornaments, and encouraged him to dance on music of gramophone records. So she was the motivation for his impulse of dance. He was also inspired and motivated by some other personalities like Matadin, who was one of the tenants at his maternal grandfather's place. Uday Shankar watched the

simple folk dances of Matadin on many occasions. Uday Shankar was also inspired in childhood by Kuki bai, who was the court dancer of Jhalawar state. She performed on the top of Majestic and stately elephant in royal processions. Uday Shankar was inspired by her dances and her movements and tried to imitate that in front of his mother. In 1918 he joined the J.J School of Arts.⁹

His Father moved to London. His father became an amateur impresario and he introduced Indian dance and music to Britain. In 1920 Uday Shankar was taken by his father to Europe and admitted in the Royal College of Art, London. He contributed much as a painter in the Hindu plays, Ballets and concerts produced by his father in some of the most important theaters of London. He also danced at a few charity performances that his father had organised in London.¹⁰

Just after his graduation the renowned Russian Ballerina, Anna Pavlova, selected Uday Shankar for her Ballet 'Radha Krishna'. Anna Pavlova had a lasting impact on his career. In 1923 in Manhattan Opera House of New York, the first performance of 'Radha Krishna Ballet' was held. Another dance drama that he performed with her as a partner was 'Hindu Marriage'. He became famous overnight. The American newspaper introduced him as an Indian Dancing wizard, and hence he decided to take dancing as his career. Madam Anna Pavlova made him realize the rich treasure of dances of his own country. He learnt many things from Anna Pavlova like punctuality, team work, discipline, showmanship, responsibility, stage craft, and observation and in return he taught her Indian dance movements. He struggled for some time and then in 1928 performed in Paris. His performance was very successful. He performed at various other places like Budapest, Turin, Geneva, Berlin etc. He was applauded everywhere he performed. But he performed on western music, except 'Radha Krishna'. He worked with Anna Pavlova for one and half year, after that he started his own dance company. Mr. Leonard Elmhurst and his wife helped him with the donation to start the Indian Culture Center at Almora. The Swiss Sculptress Alice Boner encouraged him. His real training in dance began when he witnessed a folk dance performance in Malbar with Miss Boner. He then started collecting musical instruments from India and dancers and formed his own company to show the rich treasures of Indian Dance to the world. He wanted to show the richness of Indian

Dance and art to all the people of the world. They performed in different Indian states as well as countries like America, Canada, and Europe etc.¹¹

During the time of Uday Shankar, India was greatly influenced by the western culture. The word ‘dance’ was enough to embarrass people. Not only the *Devadasis* or the *natch* girls were looked down upon, but dance and dancers also were looked down upon. Uday Shankar played a very important part in uplifting the position of dance and also in revival of Indian dance. He played a major role in bringing its glory back. Uday Shankar revived the theater of Indian Dancing by releasing it from the shackles of red light areas and rich zamindars and presenting its true beauty and grandeur to the world. Through his efforts India occupied a prominent place in map of cultural world. Dance festivals in India were a result of the great contribution of Uday Shankar and Rabindranath Tagore.¹²

He exhibited everything and varied themes through Indian dancing whether it was spring, Holi festivals, theme of destruction caused by Machines, famine, murder, massacres, riots, floods, sorrow, happiness or hard work. His steps were bold. He revolutionized art. He did not take training from any school. His art was completely his own. One of the critics Mr. S. Hurok said for Uday Shankar ‘Perhaps the showmanship on which we America take pride in ourselves is more universal than we think. At any rate Shankar had it.’¹³

He did not take any formal training in the classical dances of India. As he was exposed to Indian classical dance and folk dance from a very young age, dance came very naturally to him. He was later on exposed to Ballet during his stay in London. So he blended beautifully dance elements of all these forms and created his own distinct style. His dance productions were very human, all could recognize the characters portrayed in it and relate with it. The themes of his stories were not based on the Gods and Goddess or mythology. But his Shiva or Krishna was human struggler with their sufferings, dreams, disappointments, courage and faith. In his dance drama ‘Kartikaya Dance’, Kartikaya is a son of a common man, that everyone could relate to and not the son of Lord Shiva. The purpose of his dance was to work for better humanity. Shankar made everyone understand the greatness of ancient art through the modern art. With the help of West he exhibited the greatness and richness of East. He brought revolution in Indian dance and showed the true

spirit of Indian art and the richness of her culture through Modern art. Through the themes of his Dance dramas, Uday Shankar portrayed the theme related to common people, interpreted Indian life and portrayed it in such a way that people could relate to it. He showed the real India through his dance dramas. Uday Shankar gave dancing the prestige and respect. Uday Shankar made dance spiritually very creative and freed it from the stereo type classicism and traditional themes and also saved it from degenerating, vulgarizing and sensualizing. During those days only those who understood the grammar of traditional dance, could enjoy a traditional dance performance. Uday Shankar made dance simple and natural, and extended the field of appreciation of classical dance. Uday Shankar was a dancer, choreographer, music composer and a creative genius par excellence, so he could create dance dramas artistically with novel ideas. Uday Shankar choreographed many dance dramas which were revolutionary and modern compositions like 'Shiva-Parvati', 'Rhythm of Life', 'Labour and Machinery', 'Pramila Arjuna', 'Eternal Melody', 'Ramlila', 'Lord Buddha', 'Kartikeya', 'Indra' etc.¹⁴

Shri Timir Baran of Calcutta was appointed as a music composer and conductor of his company. He was the music director in the first dance tour of the world.¹⁵ Madam Simkie, a French dancer from Paris joined him as his dance partner. Uday Shankar had a collection of 150 Indian instruments in his orchestra. He travelled and performed in different parts of the world, and was appreciated everywhere, thus spreading the richness of Indian dance and culture through is performances. He had studied the Rajput Painting and Mughal Painting styles at the British Museum and he made use of this knowledge in his dance dramas. In Paris, Miss Amala Nandi joined the troupe and took part in different performances. Miss Amala Nandi was there with her father Shri Akshay Kumar Nandi for the 'World Fair'. Later on Uday Shankar married Miss Amala Nandi. Uday Shankar established the 'Uday Shankar India Cultural Center' in 1938 at Simtola; 3 km form Almora, in Uttarakhand in Himalayas. In this center he invited different experts of different classical styles. He invited Kandappa Pillai for Bharatanatyam, Sankaran Namboodri for Kathakali, and Ambi Singh for Manipuri. Ustab Allauddin Khan was invited for music. He had a large group of dancers in this group including his brothers, but this group closed in 1942 due to the scarcity of funds. His group dispersed. In 1948 he made a Film 'Kalpana' based on his dance and shot at the Gemini studio in south, Madras.

He and his wife Amala danced in this film. At an International film festival, this film received a second prize. He would be worshiped by all future generations through this film. His dances were made permanent through this film. In 1960 he settled in Calcutta. In 1965, Uday Shankar established 'Uday Center for Dance', in Kolkatta. He also received the award of 'Padmavibhushan' from Indian Government. He died on 26th September 1974.¹⁶

Uday Shankar believed that an artist was a creator, who possessed the liberty to make use of his talents to infuse life in his creations, ignoring the codified principles. He believed that if we want to achieve cultural revival than we should not offer the finished products of art which deal with the subjects of past period. According to him cultural revival could be achieved through real contact of feelings and by breaking the rigid barrier between the audience and the artist. Uday Shankar was loved very much by all the people of the world. Americans wanted him to stay in America; But Uday Shankar did not want to leave his own country.¹⁷

Uday Shankar had to face a fire disaster, in which all the belongings, costumes, electric goods, musical instruments and all the other equipments burnt. This was the most difficult time of his career. At that time he got help from the country and abroad in the forms of cash, cheque and other items. Charity performances were organised by artists for him. And he got all this help because of his immense contribution to the field of dance. Uday Shankar died at the age of 77 in 1977. He faced many hurdles and obstacles during his life time but he gave respectability to dance, and new directions to the traditional dance forms. He made the whole world aware of the richness of Indian dances and was a pioneer of inventing a novel type of Indian Dancing.¹⁸

1:3:3 Shri E. Krishna Iyer

Shri E. Krishna Iyer (1897-1968) was another great pioneer who realized that for the national regeneration, welfare the upliftment of India's art and culture is as important as political freedom and economic improvement. As Rabindranath Tagore contributed in revival of Manipuri dance, E. Krishna Iyer has majorly contributed for the revival of Bharatanatyam and the Bhagawata Mela dance dramas in the South.¹⁹ E. Krishna Iyer was

a lawyer, freedom fighter, corporation councilor, amateur performer and reformer of dance and music, drama actor, saviour, rejuvenator of Bharatanatyam, Bhagavata Mela and folk dances of Tamilnadu, editor and author and he worked selflessly with full devotion for the revival and popularization of many of India's arts which were forgotten. He had taken training in Bharatanatyam and Bhagavata Mela Natakam from *Natyacharya* Melatur Natesa Iyer. From 1925 he fought a historic battle for seven years against the people who had unwise attitude towards dance and brought about a permanent and successful renaissance of the art of dance. Krishna Iyer made people aware of the great dance heritage and greatness of dance forms of India. Whenever he danced Bharatanatyam in any *Sabha*, he would talk about the greatness of the art form and criticize the anti-*Natch* social reformers who considered dance as immoral. Due to his propaganda many Anti-*Natch* leaders were converted into admirers of the art. E. Krishna Iyer was one of the founder Secretaries of the Music Akademi (1928) and he also started its journal. In 1931 he put Bharatanatyam performances of some of the professional *Devadasis* of the time on its platform. He faced a lot of opposition from the Anti-*Natch* party for his efforts to promote the art form of dance. He also persuaded respectable family ladies to learn the art of dance. He revived folk music and also more than thirty varieties of folk dances. He gave guidance and encouragement to the new talent. Ram Gopal, Balasaraswati, Kumari Kalanidhi, Varalakshmi, and Bhanumati were few dancers whom E. Krishna Iyer encouraged. E. Krishna Iyer's fields of activity were many and he achieved a substantial results in the upliftment and revival of Bharatanatyam dance form.²⁰

1:3:4 Guru Rukmini Devi

Another Great Personality who was encouraged by E. Krishna Iyer to learn dance and who worked for the revival of dance was Guru Rukmini Devi. She was born on 29th February 1904 in Madhurai in an Iyer family of Tanjavur. Her father was a Sanskrit scholar and a Theosophist and mother a scholar of Karnatic music. So Rukmini Devi was born to very educated parents, who had rich cultural background. In 1926, Rukmini Devi witnessed a Ballet performance of Ana Pavlova, and she was responsible for inspiring Rukmini Devi to learn Indian Dance. After watching a performance of the Pandanallur Jayalaxmi, student of Shri Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai, in 1932, Rukmini Devi decided to

take up dance seriously. The status of Dance was very low at that time, and she decided to take it out from its existing state of degradation. It became her mission in life to work for the upliftment of dance. She took training in Bharatanatyam from Mylapore Gauri Amma and Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai. Rukmini Devi and other dance reformists like E. Krishna Iyer, V. Raghwan named this noble form of art as Bharatanatyam. In 1936, with the help from many eminent personalities Rukmini Devi established Akademi of Dance at Adyar and later named it as 'Kalakshetra' in 1938. Under Rukmini Devi 'Kalakshetra' grew steadily and became a noted center for Bharatanatyam as well as other art forms. The classes were held in 'Kalakshetra' under trees in the beginning and later on as the students increased the art school was expanded. With the help of grants from the Government and donations from well-wishers and also by working very hard by staging the dance dramas Rukmini Devi collected funds for expanding 'Kalakshetra' and for its building. In 'Kalakshetra' Diploma courses were available in Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Karnatic vocal music, Karnatic Instrumental music, Painting, Crafts and Theatre Arts. Education was given as far as possible in "Guru Shishya Parampara" at 'Kalakshetra', and high standard was maintained. Rukmini Devi beautified the ancient dance form of Bharatanatyam which was called *Sadir* earlier and made it popular in the whole world. She studied various *Adavus* of the dance style and arranged the "Adavus" in a sequence which was based on the complexity of the movements. The sequence of the 'Adavus' which she designed is followed today mostly by all the teachers of Bharatanatyam dance style. She also introduced many variations of the 'Adavus', like the 'Mai Adavu', the 'Natta Adavu' and the 'Ta tai tai tat Adavu'. She enriched the *nritya* aspect of Bharatanatyam dance style by incorporating gestures from the Kathakali dance style and also by introducing numerous gestures while choreographing various dance dramas. She choreographed many dance dramas and presented it all over India and also in different countries. She revived the ancient art form of "Kuruvanji". She also improvised Bharatanatyam dance costumes. She reintroduced the *Bhakti* element in the Bharatanatyam dance style, and those aspects which looked sensual were pushed in the background, which resulted in the upliftment of the dance form and this is her greatest contribution.²¹

1:3:5 SHRI VALLATHOL NARAYAN MENON

Shri Vallathol Narayan Menon has contributed immensely for the classical dance by starting and establishing the 'Kalamandalam Dance Akademi' in Cheruthuruthy in Thrissur, Thrissur District. Vallathol's name is well known in South India and especially in his own state Kerala for his fine poetic writings and his immense contribution in the field of dance. Vallathol Narayan Menon was a poet, Indian Independence activist, social reformer and one of the pioneers in the field of dance. Poet Vallathol was born in Chenara, Tirur in Malappuram District. He was trained in Sanskrit Language under Sanskrit Scholar Variyam Parambil Kunjan Nair and his uncle Ramunni Menon. He also took training in Medical practice from his uncle. He also took training in Philosophy and Logic. He played a prominent role in the revival of Kathakali dance. He revived the dance form of Kathakali and made it famous in the whole world. He founded 'Kerala Kalamandalam' a center of training in dance and other art forms in 1930.²²

'Kerala Kalamandalam' gave new life to the three major dance forms of Kerala i.e. Kathakali, Kudiattam and Mohiniattam. These art forms were on the verge of extinction due to the anti-*natch* attitude of the people influenced by the Britishers. So, in 1927 Vallathol Narayan Menon and Mukunda Raja formed a society called 'Kerala Kalamandalam'. They collected funds from the society for the same. They also conducted a lottery to raise funds. 'Kerala Kalamandalam' was first established in Kunakulam, Kakkad. Later it was shifted to the village of Cheruthuruthy near Shoranur in 1933. The Maharaja of Cochin donated land and building for 'Kerala Kalamandalam'. Training was given in traditional *Gurukula Sampradaya* style in 'Kerala Kalamandalam'.²³

1:3:6 Shri Ram Gopal

Shri Ram Gopal was one of the early pioneers in the dance renaissance of India. He was known to be a born dancer. He made a deep study of the techniques of Bharatanatyam, Kathakali and Kathak. He presented solo and group performances in India and abroad. He presented the dance styles in their pure forms as well as creative dance and thus contributed in preserving the dance forms and presenting them in the world of International dance. Thus he increased the value of Indian classical dances in the world.

He performed outstanding ballets like 'Dharini'. 'Dharini' was a ballet in three acts, which was choreographed in Bharatanatyam dance style. The Ballet was based on the subject of ancient atmosphere of the old temples of South India. Ram Gopal played the role of a boy attendant in the temple. Ram Gopal performed other brilliant solo dance items like 'Natanam Adinar', 'Sandhya Nritya' which were based on the Dance of Shiva, in Bharatanatyam dance style and 'Garuda Dance' in Kathakali dance style which depicted the sacred eagle of Lord Vishnu. He performed all these dances with pure and perfect technique. Ram Gopal lived in England for many years. He performed successfully in many leading theatres of England. He also performed in many other countries like the Far East, Japan, Philippines, America, Scandinavia, France, Switzerland and Britain. Thus he created an awareness of the greatness of Indian Classical and folk dances among thousands of people all over the world. He presented productions and items in the four main classical styles of India, Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kathakali and Manipuri in their pure forms. And his productions have brought highest honours to him and to Indian classical dances.²⁴

1:3:7 Smt. Mrinalini Sarabhai

Another foremost pioneer who was responsible for making dance popular was Smt. Mrinalini Sarabhai. She was born on 11 May 1918 in Kerala, India. Her father, Dr. Subbarama Swaminathan, was a renowned barrister at the Madras High Court and principal of the Madras Law College. Her mother Ammu Swaminathan was a social worker, freedom fighter, and former parliament member. She learned the Dalcroze method, a Western technique of dance movements in Switzerland. Later she went to 'Shanti Niketan' for further studies. Mrinalini Sarabhai was inspired to take training in dance because of her education at the 'Shanti Niketan'. She took training for some time at the 'American Akademi of Dramatic Arts'. Later she came to India and learned the south Indian classical dance form, Bharatanatyam, from Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai, Ellapa Pillai and Chokalingam Pillai. She took training in the classical dance style Kathakali from the Guru Thakazhi Kunchu Kurup, and Mohiniattam from Kalyanikutty Amma. All of her dance instructors were renowned masters in their own fields, and thus she received the best training. She

was the first woman to learn Kathakali dance style. When Bharatanatyam shifted from temple to stage, Mrinalini Sarabhai represented India in many countries abroad and thus made Bharatanatyam popular all over the world. She was trained in the Pandanallur Bharatanatyam dance style. She worked with the noted dancer Ram Gopal, and together they performed in many shows all over India and abroad. After her marriage, to the father of Indian Space Programmer (Physicist), Vikram Sarabhai, she came to Ahmedabad. She saw that there was little knowledge about classical dance in Gujarat. So, she started giving performances and she set up 'Darpana' in Ahmedabad, to teach and propagate classical dance. 'Darpana' became a centre of classical dance, folk dance, tribal dance, contemporary dance and other arts like theatre, puppetry and music. Apart from imparting education in different art forms the academy also used art as a means to bringing positive social changes by influencing the general public and the policy makers. The academy uses different art forms to educate, empower and raise awareness about the different social issues facing the society. The organization also works towards issues related to women empowerment and addresses other social issues relating to human rights and environment.²⁵

Mrinalini Sarabhai was appreciated for her precision, technical skill and *abhinaya* (acting). She did many innovations in dance like making the stage bigger, which gave more space for dancers to show their dance, more men joined her academy and she incorporated *Tandava* style in dance which made the style more vigorous and stronger, and more boys were motivated to learn dance. She found a magnificent male dancer Chatuni Paniker from Kerala, and they together gave wonderful performances all over the world. She pushed the boundaries of the classical dance styles of Bharatanatyam and Kathakali. She improvised in the Kathakali dance style by reducing heavy costume and make up and brought before the world the true strength and beauty of the style in her production '*Manushya*'. She started complex choreography. She did many experiments by adding abstract concepts to Bharatanatyam and added a different dimension to the dance style. She believed that new dance forms do evolve over time, but it is important that they develop from a traditional classical foundation. According to her "the tool of the

dancer is primarily the body. The intellect contemplates, the body expresses. The body has to be perfectly trained in order that the mind can use it whichever way it will. The choreographer evaluates each movement and finds its unique quality the 'Sat' or essence. The choreographer does not merely accept a movement but tries to understand and analyse the 'why' of it." According to her "purity of a dance form is not necessarily old or new. It is a comprehension of the basic vocabulary, and identity wisdom". She said "Most dancers are content with an acceptance and do not wish to do more than perfect them. But others who desire intensely to discover the meaning of movement, the world of perception, the deep experience of composition, I am one of them born with a desperate consuming desire to create and the need to question". She choreographed more than 300 dance dramas in her career with contemporary themes like 'Manushya', 'Krishna-Gopala', 'The Mahabharata', 'Kirat Arjuna', 'Vasant Vijayam', 'Abhisarika', 'Vasavdutta', 'Git Govind', 'Sita Kalayanam', 'Ramayana', 'Maya', 'Matsya Kanya', 'Mira', 'Chandalika', 'Aspirations', 'Revelation', 'Surya', 'Parashakti', and 'Ganga'.²⁶

In addition to being a dancer and a choreographer she was also a writer, she wrote books on dance, many novels, poetry, plays and stories for children. 'Kirat Arjuna' was based on the theme from mythology, 'Vasant Vijayam' was choreographed in Kathakali dance style and she performed it with her dance partner Chattuni Pannickar and her troupe dancers. She choreographed 'Abhisarika' in Bharatanatyam dance style which was based on a romantic theme of young lovers. 'Vasavdutta' she choreographed using folk techniques. 'Geet Govind' was based on the Jaydev's lyrical poem based on the love of Krishna and Radha. Her gift for creating and arranging ballets using the classical modes was exceptional, which was seen in her work 'Seeta Kalyanam', which was based on the story of marriage of Rama and Sita from Ramayana. The beauty of her productions was enhanced by the use of beautiful costumes and décor.²⁷

She was bestowed with many national and international awards for her contribution towards classical dance. In 1965, she received the Padma Shri. In 1968 she was honoured with a gold medal by the Mexican Government. In 1991, the Gujarat Government honoured her with the Pandit Omkarnath Thakur Award for

valuable contribution in the field of performing arts. In 1992, she received the Padma Bhushan. She had two children, Kartikeya and Mallika. Her daughter Mallika followed in her footsteps and became a famous dancer. Mrinalini Sarabhai was passionately devoted to her dance and she continued dancing well into her eighties and did not let age slow her down. She passed away on January 21, 2016, at the age of 97, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.

She was gifted, deeply well versed in the classical and folk modes. She brought honor to India and Indian dance wherever she performed.²⁸

1:3:7 Guru Gopinath

Guru Gopinath was one of the greatest Gurus and performers of Kathakali. He belonged to a family of Kathakali artists. His family had history of nearly two hundred years. The great Kathakali artist Champakkulam Paachu Pillai is his elder brother. He was a trained Kathakali artist. He was well versed in both southern (*Kaplingaadan*) and northern (*Kalluvazhi*) style (*chitta*) of Kathakali. He was a born artist, well-tempered through traditional discipline but his contribution was his own ingenuity to expand the framework of tradition. Guru Gopinath was among the first pioneers who carried Kathakali to different parts of India. He sensed that Kerala model of Kathakali would not work in other regions, so he liberated the art from the rigidity which was the reason it was not appreciated in other regions. His biggest contribution was to make "Kathakali" more accessible to teachers, students and audience. And to do this he brought some innovative changes to create a new style of dancing from this ancient dance form known as 'Oriental dance', 'Kathakali Natanam' and later 'Kerala Natanam', without sacrificing its spirit and classicism. He was born on 24th June, 1908, in the family of Kathakali dancers in Champakkulam, Ambalappuzha Taluka of Alleppy District in Kerala. So he was trained as a dancer from a very young age of thirteen. For twelve years he took training from great Gurus of Kathakali dance like Champakkulam Paramu Pillai, Mathoor Kunjupillai, and Thakazhi Kesava Panicker at Champakkulam. He was later sent to 'Kerala Kalamandalam' for further training in Kathakali dance. He got rigorous training under great Gurus like Pattikkamthodi Ravunni Menon, Guru Kunchu Kurup and Guru Kavalappara Narayanan Nair. He took training of

Rasa Abhinaya under Natyaacharya Padma Shri Mani Madhava Chakkiyar. He became dance partner to Ragini Devi- formerly Esther Luella Sherman – an American born dancer from Michigan. Guru Gopinath and Ragini Devi made their first stage performance in Mumbai in December 1932. Due to immense success of this performance they were encouraged to give numerous performances all over India. They presented Kathakali in an eminently palatable way and thus made it more acceptable to the audiences. Thus they made Kathakali dance popular and comprehensive to layman as well as connoisseur. They got immense appreciation from big personalities like Tagore, Nandalal Bose and they continued to travel, perform and propagate this beautiful dance form. Later Gopinath returned to Kerala and married Thankamani. He started performing and touring with Thankamani.²⁹

He was awarded the 'Veera Srumkhala' by Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma the King of Travancore. He was honoured with a doctorate from The Rabindra Bharathi University. In Viswa Bharathi University, his statue was erected. His demonstration of *Nava Rasa* is featured in major museums in US, France, Germany and Switzerland. Kathakali style of dancing was a male monopoly. Guru Gopinath experimented and proved that girls can perform Kathakali. He was appointed as the Palace Dancer and Principal of the dance institution run by the royal family. He founded institutions like the 'Natananiketan' in Chennai and the 'Viswa Kala Kendra' in Trivandrum, the International Kathakali Centre in Delhi. He was among the first actors who acted in Malayalam movies. He has acted in the movie 'Pahlada' as Hiranyakasipu. This was the sixth Malayalam movie and the third movie having sound tracks. He has made guest appearances as Jesus Christ in 'Jeevithanauka' and 'Poorthana' in 'Bhakathakuchela'.³⁰

Guru Gopinath could show different emotions on each half of his face at the same time. He made Kathakali more accessible to dancers, students and audiences by bringing some innovative changes, and made a new dance style which was called 'Kerala Natanam'. He brought Kathakali out from the courtyards of Brahmins, Kings and the chambers to the common people and masses. Ordinary people started appreciating the dance form, who had no knowledge of the dance style, because of Guru Gopinath's Performances.³¹

He simplified the training course of Kathakali and developed a syllabus of a short period of six years. He even choreographed dance items and ballets on themes other than mythology and showed the world the strength, power and adaptability of Indian classical dances. He choreographed many dances on biblical and social themes. He wrote many dance books in Malayalam and English. He died on stage, as he wished, with makeup, attire and anklets while enacting the role of King Dasharatha in his famous ballet Ramayana on 9 October 1987 at Fine Arts Hall, Ernakulam. The Kerala government has established a dance village named 'Guru Gopinath Natanagramam' in Trivandrum. The Natanagramam has a 3-storey dance museum dedicated to him.³²

Guru Gopinath travelled and performed in many parts of the world. He gave performances in US, USSR and Sri Lanka. He was a member of the first cultural delegation of independent India to the USSR in 1954. Among them was the great Indian Dancer Tara Chaudhari, the only North Indian born dancer performing South Indian dances. He was invited as a judge of Classical Dances in the Eighth World Youth Festival held at Helsinki, Finland in 1961.³³

He received many awards for his contribution in the field of dance including 'Abinava Nataraja' at the Bengal Music Conference held at Calcutta in 1934, 'Palace Dancer' by Maharaja of Travancore in 1936, 'Guru' at Indian People's Theatre Association Conference and All Malayali Arts Festival in Delhi – 1948, D.Litt. Degree from Rabindra Bharathi University, Calcutta in 1972, Award of the Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Akademi, Award from Sangeeta Nataka Akademi, New Delhi, and many more.³⁴

1:3:8 Smt. Ragini Devi

Smt. Ragini Devi was another dancer who devoted her life to studying and preserving Indian Classical Dance. Ragini Devi was a white American dancer and ethnographer. Ragini Devi was born in 1893 in Midwest and was raised in Minneapolis in U.S.A. She was the first American female dancer to learn Kathakali, which was a male dominated dance form. She started learning Kathakali at 'Kerala Kalamandalam' in 1930s. She was instrumental in introducing dances of India to the U. S. She played a very important role in the revival of Indian Dance. Ragini Devi married an Indian physicist, Ramlal Bajpai and so she was able to meet with authentic

Indian musicians who accompanied her in her recitals. In 1928 Ragini Devi published her book, '*Nrityanjali: An Introduction to Indian Dancing*'.³⁵ Along with Guru Gopinath, she performed extensively, and popularized Indian classical dance. Both of them performed dance dramas like, 'Shiva-Shringara-Tandavam', 'Laxmi-Narayan-Nrityam', 'Sita-Haran' and many more. She gave lecture demonstrations to communicate with the audiences. Their shows were appreciated a lot and very successful, due to simplified Kathakali costumes and make-up and good music effects. Guru Rabindranath invited her to perform at Shantiniketan. After seeing their performance, Rabindranath Tagore invited Kathakali dancers to teach Kathakali at Shantiniketan. Ragini Devi performed in many universities and gave lecture demonstrations at many places in America. This popularized Indian Classical Dance in America. Ragini Devi was a catalyst who was instrumental in the revival of Indian Classical dance.³⁶

1:3:9 Smt. Sitara Devi

Smt. Sitara Devi was born on 8th November, 1920 in Kolkatta in a Brahmin family. Sitara Devi was a brilliant and accomplished dancer of Kathak dance style, singer and an actress. She was another dancer who was responsible for the revival of Indian classical dances. She belonged to a family of dancers. She was named Dhanalakshmi in childhood. Her paternal family was originally from Varanasi but later settled in Kolkatta. Her father was Sukhadev Maharaj and mother was Matsya Kumari. Her mother's family belonged to the community of performing artists. She was related to the royal family of Nepal. Sukhadev Maharaj was employed in the royal court of Nepal. He learnt Bharatanatayam and Natyashastra in Nepal, and he also performed and practised Kathak. He earned his livelihood from Kathak. He passed on his passion of dancing to his children, Alaknanda, Tara, Dhano, Chaube and Pande. Later on the family settled in Varanasi.³⁷

Sukhdev Maharaj decided to revive Kathak dance form by adding religious input in it, as it was looked down upon at that time as it was performed by *Natch* girls. He taught this form of dance to his daughters and faced the rage from his community members. But this did not deter his determination. He changed his residence and came to another area of Varanasi and established a school to teach dance to children including his own daughters

and son. He admitted children of prostitutes who came to the school to learn dancing. He composed dance on religious themes like Mahabharata. Dhanalakshmi had been watching her sister, twenty year elder to her, learning dance, and she learned dancing by observation and self-practices.³⁸

She was later admitted into the 'Kamachhagarh High School'. While at this school, a dance drama based on the mythological story of Savitri and Satyavan was to be enacted in a cultural program to be conducted by the students of the school. She was selected for the role and she was also assigned the task to teach the dance to her co-performers in the sequence. After the dance drama, a local newspaper named 'Aaj' reported about the cultural program emphasising about the enchanting performance of Dhanno. Later Dhanno was renamed as Sitara. She learnt dance from her elder sister Tara. Incidentally, Tara is the mother of famous Kathak dancer, Gopi Krishna.³⁹

She started giving performances at the age of eleven years. Her family shifted to Bombay. She left schooling. Soon after reaching Bombay, Devi gave a Kathak performance in 'Atiya Begum Palace' before a select audience, which included Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, and Sir Jehangir. She impressed Tagore who wanted her to give a special performance in Tata Palace of the Tata Group. There the eleven-year-old dancing damsel danced Kathak, with all its nuances, for three hours. Tagore felicitated her and blessed her. Later she gave dance sequences in some Hindi movies like Usha Haran, Nagina, Roti Vatan, and Anjali. In the movie Mother India, she performed a Holi song. She stopped working in films after this, as she thought movies were adversely affecting her study of Kathak dance. Rabindranath Tagore described her as *Nritya Samragini*, meaning the empress of dance, after watching her performance when she was just 16 years old.⁴⁰

She had mastered the art of Kathak to its fullest degree and was technically brilliant and introduced some new thrilling mode of Kathak in her performances. She was a master of *Parans*, a composer and excellent in *nritya* and *nritya* both. She was the recipient of several awards and accolades, and performed at several prestigious venues in India and abroad, including at the Royal Albert Hall, London (1967) and at the Carnegie Hall, New York (1976). She acted in a few Hindi movies, where she did dancing roles.

She was the first dancer to introduce saree in Kathak dance. She also taught Kathak at 'Indira Kala Vishwavidhyalaya', Kairagarh and 'Kathak Kendra' in Lucknow. Her performances on and off screen revived the interest of people in the classical dance style of Kathak. She got many awards for her contribution to the field of classical dance including 'Sangeet Natak Akademi Award' (1969) and the 'Padma Shree' (1973), 'Kalidas Samman' (1995) and 'Nritya Nipuna'. She passed away on 25th November 2014 in Mumbai.⁴¹

1:3:10 Madam Menaka

Another artist who helped to put Indian dancing on the world map was Madam Menaka. Madam Menaka was born on 15th October 1899 in Barisal, East Bengal. Madam Menaka was trained in Lucknow Gharana of Kathak dance style. Her real name was Leila Sokhey and was born of British-Bengali Parentage. She was the daughter of an Indian Bengali Pearey Lal Roy, a barrister who was trained in England, who later on lived and practiced in Kolkata, and who had married a British woman. Her father supported her love for the arts. She, as a child, attended Loretto Convent in Darjeeling and studied Western music. Leila and her sister Meera were exposed to “art” due to their father’s contact with Indira Raje, the princess of Baroda. They saw Bharatanatyam and also Kathak, which was called “*Natch*”, in the Durbar. They liked Kathak and after the recommendation of Indira Raje, the father relented and Leila studied Kathak under Pandit Sitaram Prasad, who was related to Achhan Maharaj, Lacchu Maharaj and Shambhu Maharaj, traditional Kathak dancers. She also learnt dance from Ram Dutt and Lachhu Maharaj. Her husband Col. Sokhay supported her a lot. Her meeting with Pavlova was also instrumental in her training as a dancer.⁴²

She organised the first ballet company of India in 1934, known as Menaka Indian Ballet Company. Leila was renamed as Menaka after she started her dance company. She was known as Madam Menaka. She started dance classes at her home. She used to perform solo, duets, group dances and dance dramas. In 1934, she performed her first dance drama, ‘Krishna Leela’, in Opera house at Bombay. Ram Narayan Misra of Bindadin Gharana used to dance with her as her partner. She presented to Indian stage beautiful compositions which had rich choreography and rich *abhinaya*. She brought a transformation in the

presentation of Indian classical dance by using varied ragas, beautiful costumes and excellent stage decoration. The other dance dramas that she choreographed were 'Deva Vijaya Nritya'(1935), 'Menaka Lasyam'(1938), 'Kaliyamardan'(1939), and Malavikagnimitram (1939). From January 1936, she toured for two years in India and Europe. In 1936, she participated in the Dance Olympiad at Berlin Olympics in July 1936. She won prizes for her 'Deva Vijaya Nritya'. Due to this Kathak got international recognition and popularity. Menaka also choreographed dances for the black and white silent movie productions, in Germany and England by the Nascent movie Industry. She did a lot of creative work in Pune and Bombay. She adopted Damyanti Joshi and groomed her. These pioneers, Uday Shankar, Ram Gopal, and Madame Menaka did a lot of creative work in the field of dance and made Indian dance popular at the International Level.⁴³

1:3:11 Smt. Balasaraswati

Smt. Balasaraswati was looked upon as a brilliant dancer and child prodigy by the Gurus and scholars in those days. Balasaraswati was born on 13th May 1918. She was also known as Tanjore Balasaraswati. She was a celebrated Bharatanatyam dancer. She was born in the family of dancers and musicians. She belonged to the seventh generation of the family of musicians and dancers, who had a very bright reputation in the music field. Her ancestor Pappammal was a musician and dancer in the court of Thanjavur in the mid-eighteenth century. Her Grandmother was Vina Dhanammal who was a Veena player and was considered to be a great musicians of her time. Her mother Jayammal was a singer, who encouraged her training in Bharatanatyam, and also accompanied her as a singer.⁴⁴

She started taking training of dance at a very young age of four, under Guru Kandapa Pillai. Simultaneously she also took training in music. At the age of seven in 1925 she gave her *Arangetral* in the Kamakshi temple of Kanchipuram and surprised the audiences with her dancing and *abhinaya* skills. She was one of the first traditional performers of her style to perform outside of South India. She was known for her brilliant and extempore *Sanchari Bhavas* in *abhinaya*. In 1934 she performed in Calcutta, where Uday Shankar saw her, and was so impressed by her dance that he promoted her performances. She gave performances in many other countries and got appreciation from

great personalities in the field of Dance like Shambu Maharaj, Martha Graham and Ted Shawn. She established a dance school in Madras to promote the art form. In 1960s she visited many countries. In 1970 she visited United States for performances and for teaching. Through her performances in India as well as abroad Balasaraswati introduced and promoted the traditional art form of Bharatanatyam. She trained a number of students in this art form.⁴⁵

She received a number of awards for her contribution in the field of dance like the 'Sangeet Natak Akademi award' in 1955 and 'Padma Bhushan award' in 1977. She was also awarded 'Sangeet Kalanidhi award' from the Madras Music Akademi. Film maker Satyajit Ray made a documentary on Balasaraswati. After a prolonged illness, Balasaraswati passed away on February 9, 1984. Her legacy is preserved by her family members and students. Her daughter Lakshmi Knight became a performer, and she followed Balasaraswati's style. Her grandson Aniruddha Knight also performs in the traditional style of their family.⁴⁶

1:3:12 Guru M. K. Saroja

Guru M.K. Saroja was a gifted, extremely talented, and a doyen of Bharatanatyam dance. She was born on 7th April 1931 at Chennai (erstwhile Madras), in Tamilnadu. She was trained under the great Bharatanatyam Guru Muthukumaran Pillai from a very small age of 5 years. Muthukumaran Pillai was a renowned classical dance teacher and was among the first teachers who taught at Kalakshetra. He spotted M.K.Saroja when he came to Madras to teach *Sadir* dance to girls who belonged to some established families in big cities. Muthukumar Pillai had trained many boys in dance in his village including Ramaiah Pillai, Kunchidapadam Pillai and Muthuswami Pillai. He trained many famous Bharatanatyam dancers like Ram Gopal, Mrinalini Sarabhai and Kamala Laxman. He took baby Saroja everywhere as his pupil to show others what the art of dance was. When Rukmini Devi started 'Kalakshetra' and she needed a dance teacher, Muthukumaran Pillai was the first one to be appointed. Muthukumaran Pillai took six year old baby Saroja with him to show Rukmini Devi his standard of teaching. Rukmini Devi was very impressed with the dance of baby Saroja and so she immediately appointed Muthukumaran Pillai as the first dance teacher. Few years later Ram Gopal

started his famous Bangalore studio and he invited Muthukumaran to teach. So Muthukumaran took baby Saroja with him to Bangalore. M.K.Saroja is an exclusive exponent of Muthukumaran Pillai's dance style.⁴⁷

In 1940 M.K. Saroja made her debut. She soon became famous for her excellent performances. E.Krishna Iyer and Prof. Sambhamoorthy helped promote her career. She was a very sought after dancer for stage performances as well as films. Her contemporaries were Vyjayantimala, Kalanidhi and later, Kamala, who was taught the basics by Saroja's sister Selvamani and whose *Arangetral* was done by Guru Muthukumaran Pillai. Her three films, 'Krishna Bhakti', 'Nalla Thambi' and 'Paithiakaaran' with her classical dance became famous. In December 1949 she got married to Mohan Khokhar who was a renowned art historian and dance scholar and also a co-student at 'Kalakshetra'. At the age of 24 he was posted as the first Head of the Dance Department, College of Indian Music, Dance and Dramatics, The M.S.University of Baroda in 1950. So, they came to Baroda and spent 12 years of their life in Baroda. She too shared her knowledge of dance with the students of Department. She witnessed the first dance course being shaped at University level first time in India in 1950s. Due to her Tamil and dance background, great dance Personalities like E Krishna Iyer, Prof. Sambhamoorthy came to lecture and be a part of new wave of classical dance movement in Gujarat. Many a times Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar accompanied her in her vocal performances in Baroda. They complimented each other. The audiences would immerse in a state of ecstasy by the mingling of soulful singing of Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar and extraordinary *abhinaya* of Guru M. K. Saroja. And she learnt some nuances of Kathak dance style from noted Kathak Gurus Sundarlal Gangani and Kundanlal Gangani in Baroda. In 1961 she moved to Delhi as Mohan Khokhar was posted as the special officer for dance at the 'Sangeet Natak Akademi'. She started teaching dance in Delhi and continued with her performances too. She had an opportunity to perform at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, in front of the visiting Saudi Arabian ruler. King gave her a small bag as a gift after the recitals. She found few gold coins when she opened it. She immediately gave it to her husband, who was the acting secretary of the Akademi, as it was for the government organised function. Shri Mohan Khokhar deposited those coins immediately with the Ministry, as it was government property. Such was her honesty and devotion to art. Her dance was strongly

supplemented with music of high standard as she danced with very good musicians and singers. Her dance and music merged well. She was highly respected in India as well as abroad for setting and maintaining high standards in dance. She gave more than 500 recitals. She toured for three years with the star dancer Ram Gopal and thus through her performances won appreciation for Indian classical dances. She visited Paris regularly from 1970 to 2000, to teach students at 'Mandappa'. In 2000 she retired from professional dance, after dancing for 60 unbroken years. She has four sons. Her third son Ashish Khokar is a famous dance critic, author and art historian.⁴⁸

In Padma Subramayam's words "she is a saintly person, never given to publicity and hype".⁴⁹ She was always simple and humble. Everyone spoke well about her. She was always smiling and warm to everyone. She quietly served the art without using any cunningness or smartness to survive in the dance field. Department of Theatre, University of Rome and Claude Lamorrise has made documentary films on Guru M.K.Saroja. She was honoured with many awards like 'Padma Shri' in 2011, 'Sangeet Natak Akademi Award' in 1995, 'Sangeet Natak Akademi Tagore Ratna' in 2011 and many more. She has trained many students like Nargis Katpitia, Pratibha Pandit, Sudha Patel, Laxmi Valrani, Indrani Rehman, Yamini Krishnamurthy, Shobana Radhakrishna, Rasika Khanna, Arup Ghosh, Lucia Maloney and Milena Salvini. She was truly devoted to her art and was considered true *Bhakta* of Bharatanatyam, and will be remembered as a true student, teacher, dancer and true devotee of Bharatanatyam dance.⁵⁰

1:3:13 Jhaveri sisters

The name of Jhaveri sisters is synonymous with Manipuri. What Smt. Rukmini Devi did for Bharatanatyam, Jhaveri sisters did for Manipuri. Jhaveri sisters were among the first dancers who learnt and were responsible for the art form to be appreciated outside Manipur. Nayana, Ranjana, Suverna and Darshana the four sisters, not only mastered the technique of the Manipuri dance but also imbibed the spirit and the various modes of the dance with deep love. Jhaveri sisters were trained in the art form under Guru Bipin Singh in early forties in Mumbai. By 1950 Jhaveri sisters formed a group and started performing in Mumbai. Their father encouraged them to learn dance, though in those times society was not in favour of educated girls learning dance. Jhaveri sisters were

associated with the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Indian National Theatre. They strictly followed the code and percept of Manipuri dance. Their performances were appreciated everywhere, whether they danced solo, or in group or presented a ballet. They earned a very special name as Manipuri dancers. As they were responsible for taking Manipuri to other countries. In Manipur itself, they are called as ambassadors of the art form. They choreographed ballets like 'Usha Haran', 'Raj Nartaki', 'Chaitanya Mahaprabhu', 'Bhanu Shinger Padavalli' and many more. 'Usha Haran' was a ballet based on Mythology and it was the first attempt to produce a ballet in Manipuri style. 'Raj Nartaki' was a ballet based on the story of a dancing girl. 'Chaitanya Mahaprabhu' was based on the story of the devotion of this great saint to God. 'Bhanu Shinge Padavalli' was based on the work of poet Rabindranath Tagore. Performances of Jhaveri sisters contributed a lot in popularizing Manipuri dance.⁵¹

1:3:14 Kuchipudi Classical Dance style

Many great dancers and Gurus like Natyamcharya, the late Vedanta Lakshminarayana Shashtri, Pendala Satyabhama, Chittajallu Venkataraman, Vempati Satyam, Vedantam Raghavayya, Pasumurti Krishnamurthy, Korda Narsimha Rao, and Chinta Krishnamurthy are responsible for the revival and spread of Kuchipudi dance. Chinta Krishnamurthy established the dance center 'Venkatarama Natya Mandir'. Through his dance center he worked very hard for the Kuchipudi dance style. Banda Kanaka Lingeshwara Rao was responsible for the spread of Kuchipudi dance style. He introduced Kuchipudi to the modern stage. He established the 'Siddhendra Kalakshetram Dance School' at Kuchipudi village. In this dance school training is imparted to a large number of students, in its purest form. He did intensive research in the Kuchipudi dance style and added a lot of valuable information regarding the dance style. Vedantam Satyanarayana Sharma was another Kuchipudi dancer, who was responsible for spreading this dance style through his brilliant performances.⁵²

1:3:15 Odissi Dance style

According to Kalinchandra Patnaik the lack of patronage had led to the decline of Odissi dance. It took a long time for Odissi dance to recover. The culture of Odissi had

become a thing of the past. In 1948, All India Radio station started in Cuttack. And Odissi music was to be broadcast on it. It was called *Aaanchalik Sangeet* at that time. Kalinchandra Kalicharan Patnaik named this music Odissi. There was a strong protest from traditionalists for this new name, but Kalicharan Patnaik was committed to raise the prevailing dance form's status from an '*Anchalik dance*' to a classical dance style.⁵³

Kalincharana Patnaik was one of the great reformists of Odissi dance. Thus with the efforts of Gurus and dancers like Kalichnaikaran Patnaik, Prataprudra Dev, Ramananda Pattanaik, Kelucharan Mahapatra, Dhirendranath Patnaik, Deba Prasad Das, Menati Mishra, Indrani Rehman and Sanjukta Panigrahi, Odissi got its respectable place and status and was appreciated by the audiences in India as well as other countries. Kalicharan Patnaik from Cuttak' was a *Natyacharya*, composer, writer and producer. He was also a research specialist. He contributed to Odissi dance through his study and writing, his valuable collection of manuscripts and his compositions. Kumari Sanjukta Misra, Jayanti Ghose, Balakrushna Das and Kumari Angarbala Roy were dancers, whose performances helped to spread the beauty of Odissi dance.⁵⁴

1:3:16 Smt. Vyjanthimala

Smt. Vyjanthimala is a film actress, Bharatanatyam dancer and also a Karnatic singer and a dance choreographer and a parliamentarian. She was born on 13th August 1936. She was born in Triplicane near Parthasarathy Temple in a Tamil Iyengar Brahmin family. Her parents were Mandyam Dhati Raman and Vasundhara Devi. She was raised primarily by her grandmother, Yadugiri Devi. Her ancestors were from Mysore. Her mother was a leading actress in Tamil Cinema in the 1940s.⁵⁵

Vyjanthimala was one of the most prominent actresses of South India as well as Bollywood. She made her debut in the Tamil language film 'Vaazhkai' in 1949 and in the Telugu film 'Jeevitham' in 1950. She became one of the leading actresses of South Indian as well as Hindi cinema. She worked in many good and successful Hindi movies. She was responsible for changing the standard of Indian cinema by introducing good classical dance and semi classical dance in Indian Cinema. She has performed some beautiful classical as well as semi classical dance songs, which won laurels for her country

as well as Indian classical dance. She also specialized in folk dances. She has a dance school in Madras where she imparts training in classical dance as well as folk dance. Vyjayanthimala married Chamanlal Bali, a Punjabi Hindu Arya Samaji from Delhi but lived in Anna Salai, Chennai in 1968. After marriage, she gave up her acting career and moved to Chennai. After quitting movies, Vyjayanthimala continued with her classical dance career. She was conferred with many honours and awards like the 'Sangeet Natak Akademi Award'. The award was presented to Vyjayanthimala in 1982 for her contribution in the field of Bharata Natyam classical dance.⁵⁶

1:3:17 Dr. Kanak Rele

Dr. Kanak Rele is an exponent of *Mohiniattam* dance and also a Kathakali artiste. She is a dancer, choreographer and an academician. She is the Founder-Principal of 'The Nalanda Kala Mahavidyalaya' in Mumbai. She is the founder-director of the 'Nalanda Dance Research Centre'. She has written books on dance like 'Mohiniattam, The Lyrical Dance' and 'Bhavaniroopana: A Handbook of Indian Dance Terminology'. She learnt Kathakali from Guru "Panchali" Karunakara Panicker. She learnt 'Mohiniattam' from Kalamandalam Rajalaxmi. She travelled to Kerala and filmed exponents like Kunjukutty Amma, Chinnammu Amma and Kalyanikutty Amma. She developed her own style of 'Mohiniattam', 'Kanak Rele School' of 'Mohiniattam'. She has choreographed many dance dramas like 'Kubja', 'Kalyani', 'Silappadikaram' and 'Swapnavasadattam'. She is the recipient of many awards like the 'Sangeet Natak Akademi award', 'Padma Shri' and 'Padma Bhushan'.⁵⁷

1:3:18 Smt. Yamini Krishnamurthi

Smt. Yamini Krishnamurthi was a beautiful exponent of Bharatanatyam, Odissi and Kuchipudi dance styles. She was born on 20th December 1940 in Madanapalli, Chittoor district, Andrapradesh. She was brought up in Chidambaram, Tamilnadu. She gave her debut performance in 1957 in Madras at the age of seventeen years. Yamini Krishnamurthy received the initial training of Bharatanatyam from Smt. Rukmini Devi Arundale, at 'Kalakshetra School of Dance', Chennai. She also took training from eminent masters like Kanchipuram Ellappa Pillai and Thanjavur Kittappa Pillai. She learnt

Kuchipudi from Vedantam Lakshmi Narayana Shastri, Chinta Krishnamurthy and Pasumarthy Venugopal Krishna Sharma. Yamini also learnt Odissi from Guru Pankaj Charan Das and Kelucharan Mahapatra.⁵⁸

In 1957, at the age of seventeen years, Yamini Krishnamurthy performed for the first time in Chennai. Within three years of her maiden performance, Yamini became one of the well-known and leading classical dancers of the country. To impart training to younger dancers, Yamini Krishnamurthy started the 'Yamini School of Dance' in Delhi in 1990. She has also made a special program on dance for Doordarshan channel. She wrote a book 'A Passion for Dance', which was appreciated by all. Yamini was recognized as "*Asthana Nartaki*" (resident dancer) of the 'Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam'. She received many awards, including the coveted 'Padma Shree' in the year 1968 and the 'Padma Bhushan' - the second highest civilian awards of India, in 2001. She was also honored with the 'Sangeet Natak Akademi Award' in 1977. She has a leading place as an exponent of Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi. She imparts dance lessons to younger dancers at her institute, 'Yamini School of Dance', Hauz Khas, New Delhi. She dedicated her life to dance. She performs all the three dance styles with distinction and brilliance. She performed with brilliance the Kuchipudi items like 'Bhama Kalapam', 'Tarangam', and 'Navrasa' and with equal perfection she performed 'Bhumi pranam' and 'Pallavi' of Odissi dance form. She performed all over India and also abroad gaining appreciation.⁵⁹

1:3:19 Smt. Ritha Devi Mukhopadhyaya

Smt. Ritha Devi was an exponent of Odissi, Manipuri, Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi and Kathakali dance styles. She was born on 6th December 1924. During her younger days her father was posted in Baroda. Shrimati Ritha Devi Mukhopadhyaya trained in many dance styles under eminent masters. She learnt Manipuri dance from Haobam Atomba Singh; Bharatanatyam from Pandanallur Chokkalingam Pillai; Kathakali from Karunakaran Panikkar; Mohiniattam from Lakshmi Nair and Chinammu Amma; and Kuchipudi dance from Vempati Chinna Satyam. She also learnt Sattriya dance from Jatin Goswami and Roseshwar Saikia. She learnt Odissi dance from Pankaj Charan Das. She focused mainly on the Mahari tradition. She gave many performances across India. Shrimati Ritha Devi also performed in Europe and the former Soviet Union in the

1960s. In 1972 she was invited to New York, to teach Indian dance at New York University's School of the Arts. She taught there for ten years. Later on she taught at many institutions in United States. She also conducted workshops at Duke University and the Universities of San Francisco and Philadelphia in the 1980s. She produced solo dance-dramas based on Kalidas's 'Kumarasambhavam', Shudraka's 'Mrichhakatikam' and Upendra Bhanja's 'Lavanyavati'. She returned to India in 2003. Shrimati Ritha Devi opened her dance school in Pune and since then she has been imparting training in dance in her school, in Pune. For her service to dance, Shrimati Ritha Devi has been honoured with the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' of the 'Guru Pankaj Charan Odissi Research Foundation' (2005). She is also a recipient of the 'Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Award' (2009). She has received fellowships for choreography from the 'Creative Artistes' Public Service', New York and the 'National Endowment for the Arts', Washington. Smt Ritha Devi Mukhopadhyaya received the 'Sangeet Natak Akademi Tagore Award' for her contribution to Odissi dance. She died at the age of 92 years in Pune.⁶⁰

1:3:20 Kumari Kamala

Kumari Kamala was born on 16th June 1934 in a Brahmin family in Mayuram in India. She is an Indian actress and a dancer. She appeared in many south Indian as well as Hindi films. She took training in Kathak from Lachu Maharaj in Bombay. From the age of four years she was working in films. She performed small roles in films like 'Valibar Sangham' (1938) and 'Ramanama Mahimai' (1939). She later on worked in Hindi movies like 'Jailor' in 1938 and 'Kismet' and 'Ram Rajya' in 1943. Later her mother moved to Madras, so that she can take training in Bharatanatyam. She took training in Bharatanatyam from Kattumannarkoil Muthukumar Pillai and Vazhuvoor B.Ramaiyah Pillai. Her first successful Tamil film was 'Jagathalaprathapan'. Her dances in the film 'Nam Iruvar' helped to revive and popularize Bharatanatyam dance. In 1953 she was invited to perform for Queen Elizabeth II during her coronation ceremony. In late 1950s she toured many countries for performances. She thus popularised Indian classical dances in India and in other countries. She performed as a child artist in many films. Later on she worked in around 100 Hindi, Telugu, Kannada and Tamil films. Her sisters Radha and Vasanti were also dancers. She was awarded with many awards like 'Kalailamani award'

in 1967, 'Central Sangeet Natak Akademi award' in 1968, 'Padma Bhushan' in 1970. She taught at the Colgate University in USA. She was awarded its 'Branta Professorship' in 1975. She established a dance school in Long Island, 'Shri Bharatha Kamalalaya', where she teaches the Vazhuvoor style of Bharatanatyam.⁶¹

1:3:21 Shirin Vajifdar, Roshan Kumari and Khurshid

Shirin was first from the Parsi community who learnt Indian classical dance and became a famous dancer, choreographer, teacher and critic. In the early 1930s, it was inconceivable that a young girl from the Parsi community would take up classical dancing. The great Guru of Jaipur Gharana Sunderprasadji had moved to Mumbai (then Bombay) and started teaching Kathak to the Poovaiah sisters from Coorg. Shirin studied under the great Guru and took further dance training in Madame Menaka's 'Nrityalayam Dance Institution' in Khandala, near Bombay. Her contemporaries at 'Nrityalayam' were Damayanti Joshi, Shevanti Bhonsale and Vimla. Shevanti later joined Ram Gopal's troupe. Bipinsingh had joined 'Nrityalayam' to teach Manipuri, during that period. Shirin learnt Manipuri from him. There was another Kathakali teacher and dancer, Krishnan Kutty, who taught Kathakali. Shirin studied all the three forms. She participated in the dance dramas of Madam Menaka, like 'Menaka Lasyam' and 'Malavika Agnimitram'. Thus she was introduced to creative dance.⁶²

Her choreography in the film 'Mayurpankh' was highly appreciated. She taught dance to Khurshid and Roshan. They started performing together as Vajifdar sisters. Shirin and her sisters were contemporaries of Poovaiah sisters, Sitara Devi, Tara Choudhary, Mrinalini Sarabhai, Shanta Rao, Vyjayntimala, and Ritha Devi and became quite well known. They were often invited to give performances for charitable causes. They gave private tuitions to young girls from their community when dance became acceptable as an art form. As a teacher, Shirin was a strict disciplinarian. The dancer Shirin, Roshan and Khurshid were adept in the Kathak, Bharatanatyam and Kathakali dance styles and through their brilliant and precise performances in India as well as abroad, they introduced a special flair and appeal in the presentation of their dance. They even specialized in Bharatanatyam. They have trained many young dancers in the Kathak dance style and Kathakali technique in their school 'Nritya Manjari' at Bombay. With

Krishna Kutty she founded 'Nritya Darpan Society'. Shirin was the part of dance delegation to China in 1955. She performed a dance drama, where she played the role of 'Mohini' and Krishna Kutty played the role of 'Bhasmasura'.⁶³

Shirin was married to Mulk Raj Anand, the famous author, founder and editor of the quarterly magazine *Marg*. Khurshid married the renowned painter Shiavax Chavda and Roshan married Hiranmay Ghosh, a chiropractor, and later settled in Kodaikanal. She won a government of India scholarship and went on to study Bharatanatyam under Chokkalingam Pillai in Chennai. She won fame as a brilliant Bharatanatyam dancer. Roshan specialized in Bharatanatyam and Mohiniattam dance style and she contributed a lot by teaching in South India. In 1957 Shirin Vajifdar retired from dancing and she started writing reviews in The Times of India. She died on 29th September 2017.⁶⁴

1:3:22 Ragini, Padmini and Lalitha

Ragini, Padmini and Lalitha were the three famous sisters from Travancore, who were well-known for their brilliant performances. They were actors, dancers and performers in South Indian and Hindi films. They learned dance from Guru Gopinath and Guru T.K.Mahalingam Pillai. Through their electrifying dances they made Bharatanatyam dance popular amongst large audiences.⁶⁵

1:3:23 Kalyani sisters

Kalyani sisters were two great exponents of the Bharatanatyam dance style. Their contribution in the revival of dance is noteworthy as through their performances which were perfect expositions they kept the art alive. Their performances helped the dance style to create a permanent place in the hearts of people.⁶⁶

1:3:24 Smt. Maya Rao

Smt. Maya Rao was a pioneer in Kathak dance style. She was a Kathak dancer, choreographer and an educator of Kathak dance style. She has choreographed many dance dramas. She opened her dance institute 'Natya Institute

of Kathak and Choreography' in 1987, at Malleswaram, Bangalore. Thus she brought Kathak to South India. She learnt Kathak from Guru Sohanlal of Jaipur Gharana, Guru Sunder Prasad of Jaipur Gharana, and Shambhu Maharaj of Lucknow Gharana. She also founded a dance company 'Natya and Stem Dance Kampani'. She has received 'Sangeet Natak Akademi Award' by Sangeet Natak Akademi in 1989 and in 2011 she was awarded 'Sangeet Natak Akademi Tagore Ratna' for her contribution in the field of Dance.⁶⁷

1:3:25 Smt. Sadhana Bose

Smt. Sadhana Bose (20 April 1914 – 3 October 1973), was a well-known Indian actress and a dancer. She was a contemporary of Uday Shankar. She learnt Kathak from Taraknath Bagchi and Manipuri dance from Senarik Rajkumar. She performed a number of ballets in Kolkata during the period of 1930s. She performed in Ballets like Bhookh which was on a contemporary theme on Bengal famine, Omar Khayyam etc. She also acted in many movies like Meenakshi. She was a popular and glamorous actress of her time. Her dances in the movies were a reason for her popularity. She has also sung for her movies. Her movie Rajnartaki was very famous. She was the granddaughter of Keshab Chandra Sen, a social reformer and daughter of Saral Sen. She later married film director Madhu Bose, son of Pramatha Nath Bose, pioneering geologist in 1929. She was a popular and glamorous heroine of the silver screen in the 1930s and 1940s. She later made her dance troupe and made all India tour. She got appointed as a trainer in Calcutta's Star Theatre. She was also one of the most sought models for endorsing beauty products during her period. Many of her close relatives were the members of royal families, yet she faced poverty in old age. Just before her death she came to spotlight for the final time and her articles were written in many film magazines and publications.⁶⁸

1:3:26 Other dancers who played important roles in the revival of Indian dance

Smt. Indrani Rehman who was the daughter of Ragini Devi was another dancer who brought fame to Indian classical dances through her brilliant performances. She specialized in Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Odissi and Mohiniattam. She was among the pioneers to present Odissi and Kuchipudi outside their places of origin. Indrani Rehman

performed in almost all the important cities of India and also many countries like Europe, U.S.S.R, and America as a solo performer and also in group. Smt. Damyanti Joshi was one the eminent Kathak dancers who was responsible to raise the standard of classical dance. Many dancers contributed to reviving the Indian dance forms. Smt. Kumudini Lakhia and Smt. Shevanti were two gifted dancers, who studied under and performed with Ram Gopal, and have devoted their lives to dance, performing in many countries. Many other dancers like Rani Karna who was an exponent of Kathak, Chandralekha, Kumari Radha and Kumari Meenakshi who were Bharatanatyam dancers, contributed a lot to the dance style.⁶⁹

Family of Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar also contributed majorly in preserving and propagation of Bharatanatyam Dance style. Smt. Anjali Merh also contributed majorly in making Bharatanatyam popular in Gujarat and across India. Professor C.V. Chandrasekhar also contributed majorly in Bharatanatyam popularising in North India, Gujarat and across the world. Shri Yog Sundar Desai was another dancer who belonged to Gujarat and performed a major role in popularizing Indian Classical Dance in the world.

Many organizations, and groups also have contributed in reviving the Indian dances like 'The Indian National Theatre' functioning in Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras, 'The Bharatiya Kala Kendra' of Bombay, 'The Hima Kala Kendra' which is headed by the brilliant dancer Hima Devi, 'The Little Ballet Troupe', Bombay, 'The Roop Kala Kendra', of Matunga, Bombay, and 'The Kala Kendra' of Delhi. These organizations and groups have rendered valuable services by helping stage excellent dance recitals and helping young dancers to make their debut. Many brilliant ballets were staged and choreographed by some talented dancers, which had an impact on the audiences, because of the good presentation, good stage décor, and pleasing music, unique subject and choreography. Institutions like the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda started diploma, degree and masters level course in Bharatanatyam and Kathak dance styles. So the people who could not afford the high fees of learning classical dance, could easily learn dance at a very nominal fee.⁷⁰

The performing arts in India have gone through many major and minor changes over the centuries, right from the time of the 'Natyashastra' till today, but it did not lose its

roots. Dance is a creative art which was orally handed over from one generation to the next generation. It has gone through many ups and downs and undergone many changes. There were many modifications in each period which have led to many variations in the presentation of Bharatanatyam itself. According to the tradition, during the presentation- “the dancer performed with the musicians and *Tāladaris* (one who plays the cymbal) on the right and percussionists on either side. But today the musicians sit on the right side of the stage.”⁷¹ This is how dance has undergone many changes and have been revived as a national art form of India, through efforts of many dancers, Gurus, organizations and dance lovers. Even folk dances have been given a very important place in our country. Classical and folk dances have been performed at all the important occasions of our country and watched by numerous people all over the world, through television. It is because of the efforts of the many dancers, Gurus and many social workers that this beautiful art form was revived and enjoys a very respectable place today.

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