
VAJIRAM & RAVI

Philosophical Nature of Indian Music

- The Indian classical music, be it **Hindustani or Carnatic**, has essentially got a spiritual component inherent in it. **Reasons for the development of spiritual component** are:
 - Temples provided a platform where these arts flourished;
 - Bhakti or selfless devotion that was the underlying essence;
 - The artistic principles of Indian classical music are formulated and structured in such a way that it becomes an inward journey for its practitioners so that they get intimately connected with their within.

Spiritual Features of Indian Music

A. Nadopasana - The Invocation of the Primordial Sound

- For a true practitioner of classical music, the approach used to be Nadopasana – the invocation of the primordial sound. For these practitioners, music **became an internal journey for the realisation of the ultimate truth**.
- Even the selection of the Raga and the composition at the time of a performance was a result of the intuition and the inspiration of the moment.

B. The Guru-Shishya and Gharana tradition

- It is another crucial feature which is common for all the classical music traditions of India. For centuries, this Guru-shishya transmission has made it possible to carry forward the intense experiences innately embedded in this great tradition of enlightened practitioners of music.
- The musical gharanas of north Indian or Hindustani classical music have also **contributed to the diversity** of their form of music by presenting a distinct style of it.

The Origin and Historical Development of Different Forms of Indian Music

- The origin of Indian music can be traced back to the **chanting of Vedic hymns and mantras**. The **Chandogya Upanishad** talks about the **seven styles of** gana (musical modes), highlighting the importance of Svara (phonemes) of a Vedic mantra that should be pronounced with absolute accuracy.
- In the post-Vedic age came the **NatyaSastra**, one of the ancient most compendium on Indian art forms. It was compiled between 200 BCE to 200 CE. It is said that **NatyaSastra author, the sage Bharata Muni**, created the **Natya** (theatre) by integrating **speech** from the Rig Veda, **music** from the Sama Veda, **acting** from the Yajur Veda, and **emotions** from the Atharva Veda. This further contributed to the tradition of **Gandharva Veda** - the Vedic science of music.
- One of the earliest references of Ragas used in the Indian classical music can be found in the **Buddhist textual sources**. The 10th century manuscript of **CharyaGiti** (performance-songs) obtained from Tibet, is attributed to the 8th century CE Mahasiddhas Sarahapa. In these texts, there has been mention of classical music Ragas such as **Bhairavi and Gurjari**.
- In the southern part of India, **Prabandha-gana** was the popular performing genre that existed between the 11th to 16th centuries. The word Prabandha, connotes a well-bound composition.
- It was the **Prabandha tradition that gradually influenced the emergence of two associated**, yet distinctive, styles of classical music that are now known as Hindustani and Carnatic music.
- In the north-eastern India, with the efforts of 15-16th century saint-scholar of the Vaishnava tradition, **Srimanta Sankardev**, a cultural reformation took place and the traditions of the past were revived. He devised new forms of **music (Borgeet), and dance (Sattriya)**.

- **Sikhism** is perhaps the **only religion that uses music as its chief mode of worship**, where poetic teachings of Gurus, composed in classical music, are used as prayer and offering. Using different styles, the Sikh Kirtans are rendered in the Raga and Tala of Indian classical music. In the **Guru Granth Sahib**, the **notation of thirty-one Ragas** of Classical music has been supplied with necessary particulars.
- **In Islam**, music has been honoured and incorporated in dervish dances or qawwali singing by the Sufi mystics for triggering their consciousness to its union with the divine supreme.
- With regards to Indian classical music, it should be noted that the term Classical only suggests that **it has its foundations in the standard convention or shastra**, in accordance with the textual tradition.

Embracing Pluralism and Particularism

- Though spirituality has been the unifying factor for different disciplines of Indian classical music, India is endowed with a rich and diverse musical heritage. Reasons behind this diversity are – **diversity** of geography and culture and **uniqueness of ethnicity** across Indian subcontinent (ancient text Natyashastra has recorded this distinctness)
- In the Natyashastra, the **musical style of northern India** is mentioned as ‘**Udichya**’ while the **musical style that was prevalent in the deccan region** is recorded as the **Andhriya**.

The Emergence of Khayal Music

- It has developed around the time period of the 17th century CE. Historically, its popularity coincided with the breaking down of the Mughal empire and the rise of **riti (romantic) poetry** of Hindi literature.
- The Khayal style, which was an **offshoot of its precursor classical music form called Dhrupad**, particularly suited to the courtesans. Majority of Khayal artists were Muslims and much of its technical vocabulary is derived from Urdu.

The greatest exponents of Hindustani music of our times - Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar.

Ragamala: Visual Art and Classic Music

- A typical example of the **amalgamation of Indian classical music with visual art and poetry** was the evolution of **Ragamala** (**‘garlands of musical modes’**) **painting series** of medieval India.
- It was a form of Indian miniature painting that depicted various Indian musical modes or Ragas.

Conclusion:

The specific cultural forms and historical traditions have contributed to the emergence of epistemological diversity of Indian music. Spirituality has constantly remained the underlying core principle of this music.

Northeast Region: Unique Identity

In India’s NE region, earliest human footprints here have been traced back to the early Stone Age or Palaeolithic Age (between 40,000 and 35,000 years ago).

Demography

- Ethnologists point at the presence of traces of **Negritos** too, apart from prominent existence of people of pre-Dravidian, Eurasian, Austroloid, Mongoloid, Alpine or Armenoid, Mediterranean, Indo-Aryan and Irano-Scythian stocks.
- The people of the region can be divided into three broad groups from the ethnological point of view- **hill tribes, plain tribes and non-tribals of the plains.**
- The population varies from as low as 43 per sq km in Arunachal Pradesh to 398 per sq km in Assam.

- The region has over 160 Scheduled Tribes and over 400 other tribal and sub-tribal communities and groups. **Ethnically most tribes belong to the Indo-Mongoloid racial stock.**

Languages

- People of this region speak languages of different divisions and subdivisions of the great Sino-Tibetan linguistic family.
- The Bodo, Rabha, Dimasa and Karbi languages of **Assam**, Garo of **Meghalaya**, Kokborok of **Tripura**, and most languages spoken in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and the hills of Manipur belong to the **Tibeto-Burman sub-family** of the Sino-Tibetan group.
- Assamese on the other hand belong to the **neo Indo-Aryan family**, while Khasi is a **Mon-Khmer (Austro-Asiatic)** language spoken in Meghalaya.
- Nepali, Bhetia and Lepcha are the three major languages in Sikkim, which is ethnically different from the other Northeastern states.

Religion and Faiths

Vaishnavism is the most prominent in Assam and Manipur. Among major indigenous faiths are **Donyi-Polo in Arunachal Pradesh** and **Niam-tre in Meghalaya**. Arunachal Pradesh also has a significant presence of **Buddhism**; the Monpa, Sherdukpen, Memba and Khamba tribes follow the Mahayana school, while the Khamti, Singpho and Tangsa tribes follow the Theravada school.

Songs of Shaman – Arunachal Pradesh

- Shamanism is prevalent among different tribes in Arunachal Pradesh. Every tribe in Arunachal Pradesh has its **own kind of ritual expert** for performing rites and sacrifices.
- **In Arunachal Pradesh**, Shaman is mostly seen as a diviner, communicator, negotiator, healer, ritual specialist, and religious expert but neither as a magician nor a mystic. S/he is the **middleman between human and spirits** who can communicate with the spirits.
- Shamans are also the **storehouse of traditional knowledge** in the form of legends, myths, ritual incantations etc.

Festival

- **Assam** - Bihu, the most popular festival. It has its roots in agrarian practices - **Bhogali Bihu** is celebration of the harvest, **Rongali Bihu** is about the New Year. Assam also observes **Kongali Bihu**-which comprises of a solemn prayer for a good crop.
- The Bodos call their **New Year festival Baisagu**, the Dimasas call it **Busu**, the Karbis call it **Rongker**, the Mishings call it **Ali-aye-Lrigang**, and the Rabhas call it **Baikho**.
- **Meghalaya** - The Khasis celebrate Shad Suk Mynsiem, the Jaintias celebrate Behdeinkham and the Garos Wangala.
- **Mizoram** - All three festivals— Chapchar Kut, Mim Kut and Pawl Kuft—are related to agriculture, during which the Mizos perform Cheraw, the amazing bamboo dance.
- **Arunachal Pradesh** - The Adi community celebrates **Solung**, the Apatanis celebrate **Dree**, the Niyishis celebrate **Nokyum**, the Galos celebrate **Mopin** and the Monpas celebrate **Losar**-all related to agriculture.
- **Nagaland** - Tribe-wise festivals are— Sekrenyi (Angami), Aoling Monyu (Konyak), Moatsu (Ao), Tuluni (Sema), ZJokhu Emong (Lotha) and Amongmong (Sangtam).

- **Manipur** - Cheiraoba is the Manipuri New Year festival. **Lai Haraoba** is celebrated to appease the sylvan deity called Umanglai. **Yaoshang** is the wonderful week-long Holi festival. **Rath Yatra, also called Kang Chingba**, is a nine-day chariot festival dedicated to Lord Jagannath.

Sowa-Rigpa (Knowledge of Healing or Science of Healing)

- The term Sowa-Rigpa is **derived from Bhoti language** which means “Knowledge of Healing”. It is an ancient Indian medical system **conceived and propounded by Lord Buddha in India**.
- The principle **medical text “rGyud-bZi”** (Chatush Tantra—a textbook of fundamental principles of Sowa-Rigpa in Sanskrit language) was pioneered by Lord Buddha and translated into Bhoti language around 8-12th Century and amended by Yuthok Yontan Gombo and other scholars of Trans Himalayan region according to the socio-climatic conditions.
- The **fundamental principles of Sowa-Rigpa** is based on Jung-wa-nga (Panchmahabutha), Nespa-sum (Tridosha), Luszung-dun(Saptadhatu) etc.
- According to Sowa-Rigpa health is an equation of balance of tridosha and five cosmophysical energies (Panchmahabutha), balance within the body, balance with the environment, and with the Universe.
- **Pulse examination and astrological evaluation/analysis** of an individual are the unique diagnostic tools in Sowa-Rigpa.

Dance

- Two of the dance forms of the Northeast—Manipuri of Manipur and Satriya of Assam.
- Assamese saint reformer **Sankaradeva, introduced the Satriya dance** which is governed by strictly laid down principles in respect of hastamudras, footworks, aharyas, music etc. **Manipuri dance has a large repertoire**, the most popular forms being Raas, Sankirtana and Thang-Ta.

Rangkholi – Meghalaya

- Rangkholi or ‘**Tiger Festival**’ is a religious festival celebrated by the people of Nongtalang village in the **War-Jaintia region of Meghalaya**. The War-Jaintias lives on the slopes of the west Jaintia hills district bordering Bangladesh.
- As per tradition, whenever any person from the village catches a tiger or its feline like, rituals have to be performed. The festival is mainly held in the month of January to March.

Chokri Naga Folk Songs – Nagaland

- The Chokri community is a sub community under the tribe Chakesang (Naga).
- Chakhesang tribe as a whole have a **Chakesang cultural research center** situated at Chethba town in Phek district. They cherish the folk song culture as their proud heritage.

Handloom

- Assam has the highest number of handlooms in the country. Assam’s traditional handloom industry has been basically silk-oriented. State is also home to the unique **muga or golden silk**—a variety of wild silk geographically tagged to Assam.
- In Assam, people commonly weave **mekhela-chador**, while the ceremonial set also includes a riha. **Bodo tribal women** of Assam weave the **dokhona and jwmgra** that constitute a woman’s traditional dress, while the **aronai** is a beautiful scarf worn by men.

- Most common handloom products of the **Mishing tribes** are **sumpa and galuk**, a two-piece dress for women, while Rabha women weave khangbung and riphon.
- **In Manipur**, some of the popular traditional fabrics include the **phanek of the Meiteis**, **kasan of the Tangkhuls**, and so on.
- **In Arunachal Pradesh**, **Apatani women** weave bilanabi, chinyu-abi and jig-jiro, **Singpho women** sew pukang, **Nyishi women** weave par-ij, **Khamti women** weave siu-pashao.
- **Naga tribes** - The Ao shawl is called tsungkotepsu, while the Angami shawl is called loramhousho.
- **Mizoram** - varieties of the puan—a drape and uncut rectangular cotton cloth with tualhlohpuan and punchei.

Musical Richness

The **long dama of the Garos** of Meghalaya (they play 100 drums in unison during the Wangala festival); the **bhor-taal** (large brass cymbals used in Assam's Satra monasteries); the **bengbung of Mizoram** (similar to a xylophone).

Conclusion

Intertwined with a geography of multicultural coexistence, the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution provides them equal protection and opportunities.

Bamboo: Rejuvenating Rural Economy

Challenges Due To CoVID

- The lockdown dealt a **double whammy to the economy**, one due to the closing down of all economic activities and two, due to the flight of labour from cities back to rural areas.
- The **large-scale reverse migration** of rural populations has created immense pressure on the rural economy, that is already dealing with issues of unemployment and underemployment.
- A significant majority of these returning migrants are **skilled and semi-skilled labour**. MGNREGA is unable to offer them opportunities. Our **urban-centric growth model** makes it imperative that we contain the pandemic in our cities as soon as possible.

Bamboo: Cultural Linkage

- **Pena** is a single stringed musical instrument. It consists of two parts, the penamasa or dhorr which is a bamboo pole attached to a coconut shell and pena cheijing or chorr, which is a bow used to produce friction on the string.
- **Pena is an indispensable part of Meitei society in Manipur**, used in ritualistic functions like Lai Haraouba and Lai Ikouba.

Way Out

- Underemployment and unemployment existed in urban growth clusters due excessive migration. It is therefore imperative that a significant portion of this semi-skilled and skilled labour be retained in the villages.
- This will have a **two-pronged impact**: it will reduce the population pressure on our urban growth centers and two, it will make available semi-skilled and skilled labour in our villages to rejuvenate the rural economy.

How Bamboo Can Be Helpful?

- The pre-industrialised Indian economy saw a vibrant global mercantile trade where products made by local artisans had great demand. We must draw lessons from this great economic heritage to grow our footprint in the global market.
- Bamboo is one such natural indigenous raw material that can play a key role in the rejuvenation of the rural economy. It is the **most environment friendly plant** on this planet, being one of the **highest carbon sequesters** amongst all the floral species.
- Bamboo is also a very effective natural resource to **control soil erosion, raise the water table and improve fertility of even the most degraded soils.**
- Bamboo can **add up to 6-8 inches of humus to the soil every year.** Most Bamboo species form an evergreen canopy, shedding leaves all year round and this too contributes to improving soil health.
- The **tensile strength of bamboo** is also being harnessed to reduce the use of steel.
- Bamboo is a **pro-poor credible alternative** to timber providing the rural poor and small land holders an opportunity to participate in and benefit from the US\$100+ billion wood products market.
- Bamboo sector has the potential to offer **exponential entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.**
- Another dimension of promoting Bamboo key driver for agro-industrialisation is **its low dependence on high-technology or infrastructure, its easy availability** in the rural areas and availability of local labour.

International Cooperation to Promote Bamboo

- The **International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation (INBAR)** is a multilateral development organisation that promotes —_ environmentally sustainable development using Bamboo and Rattan. It has 46 Member States. INBAR has played an especially strong role in promoting South-South cooperation
- **In 1998, India became a signatory to the INBAR treaty.**

Nazhu Festival – Nagaland

- The Nazhu Festival of the **Pochury-Naga** merits attention as it continues to be observed by a small group of people who barely keep alive the ritualistic practices.
- The most symbolic and unique element common to all is **heralding of Nazhu**, with the **erection of a bamboo totem Awuthruu**, that resembles a giant wind chime hung from a tall bamboo.
- The totem is erected any day from the 20th to 24th February. For the Laniri Nale, the totem goes up on the 24th February with all the formalities completed on this day.

Conclusion

- Bamboo clusters can be developed as **hub-and-spoke models** with technology enabled and high-skill processes being undertaken at the hub and primary processing undertaken at the village level.
- The sustainable qualities of bamboo are critical to the **contemporary policy discourse on ‘circular economy’** that involves designing products, services and supply chains which are regenerative: that is, which are based on renewable energy and resources, do not generate waste and keep products and materials in use for the longest time possible.
- Bamboo can become the cornerstone of the circular economy and offers India the opportunity to leapfrog to an inclusive green economy.

Visual Arts

It ranges from enthralling rock sculptures to the astounding wall paintings, to the distinct temple architecture, to the very unique Chitrakathi and Ganjifa paintings to the appealing Warli paintings to the attractive Rangoli to recently discovered Petroglyphs (rock carvings).

Cave Arts

- The **Elephanta caves**, the **Ajanta** and the **Ellora caves** are enlisted in the UNESCO World Heritage Site list.
- The caves at Ajanta and Ellora near Aurangabad are a striking reminder of an age of Buddhism at its peak. Caves 16, 17, 1 and 2 of Ajanta form the largest corpus of surviving ancient Indian wall-paintings.
- **Ellora** also called **Verul**, dates back to the **Rashtrakuta dynasty**. There are over 100 caves at the site, all excavated from the basalt cliffs in the **Charanandri Hills** that have evidence of Buddhist, Hindu and Jain 'viharas' and 'mathas'.
- **Cave 16** features the **largest single monolithic rock excavation** in the world, the **Kailasha temple**, a chariot shaped monument dedicated to Lord Shiva. The **Pitalkhora caves** located in the **Satamala Hill Ranges** of Maharashtra, consist of 14 rock-cut cave monuments which date back to the third century BCE.
- The **Elephanta caves** are located on a small island in the sea near Mumbai. The caves are hewn from solid basalt rock. The carvings narrate **Hindu mythologies**, with the **large monolithic 20 feet Trimurti Sadashiva** (three-faced Shiva), **Nataraja** (Lord of dance) and **Yogishvara** (Lord of Yoga) being the most celebrated.
- The **Kanheri caves**, around the outskirts of Mumbai are considered to be very important to understand the development of Buddhism in Western India.
- The **Bhaja, Karla, Bedse, Pandavleni, Lenyadri, Manmodi and Shivneri** caves are wellknown for their architecture, sculpture and paintings.

Zadipatti

- Zadipatti is practised in the **rice cultivating region/Eastern region of Maharashtra** (Chandrapur Bhandar and Gadchiroli district) during the harvest season and derives its name from the local name zadi for rice.
- It is a blend of **commercial and folk theatre form**. Live music is a vital part of the form and the actors are singers as well.
- Zadipatti was born out of the **tribal performing art called Dandar**, which was a theatrical performance combining music and dance.

Dashavatar: Traditional Folk Theatre Form

- Dashavatar is a folk theatre form practised by farmers in the Sindhudurg district of the South Konkan region of **Maharashtra** and the **North Goa district of Goa**. Dashavatar is **popular form of drama** in the rural areas.
- The performance uses bright make-up and costumes. It is accompanied by three musical instruments: a paddle harmonium, tabla and zanj (cymbals).

Petroglyphs (Rock Carvings)

The recently discovered 1,000 rock carvings in Ratnagiri district, which are estimated to be 1200 years old, have immense archaeological significance. The carvings have a huge range of images from human and animal forms to abstract pattern and fertility symbols.

Warli Paintings

- The Warli art is a **painting style of the tribals** who predominantly inhabit Dahanu, Talaseri, Jawhar, Palghar etc. The art uses very basic representation-a circle, a triangle and a square-to depict nature and daily activities of the tribals.
- The central motif in these ritual paintings is surrounded by scenes portraying hunting, fishing and farming, festivals and dances, trees and animals.
- Only **white colour** is used in Warli paintings. The white pigment is a mixture of rice paste and water with gum as a binder.

The Pinguli Chittrakathi

The **Thakkar tribe** has been practicing Pinguli Chittrakathi since the 17th century. This is done using a paper, brush and handmade colours. It follows a sequence and is based on the stories of the Mahabharata and Ramayana. A **collection of pictures is used to tell the story**, which unfolds in the form of songs supported by the music.

The Ganjifa

- **Ganjifa are handmade playing cards** which were earlier used by the Royal family of Sawantwadi. These cards are made from circular pieces of paper on which intricate designs of Dashavatara (Ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu) are hand-painted. A set of Dashavatara Ganjifa consists of 120 cards.
- Under the patronage of the Royal family of Sawantwadi, the Chitari community has preserved this dying art.

Bhitti Chitra

- Bhitti Chitra is an art style that depicts **religious themes on the walls** of houses or temples. The Matheran or Mahatma communities are traditional Bhitti Chitra artistes.
- The paintings are embossed with gold and silver to enhance the depictions. This is commonly created on temple walls and is often intricate.
- The Matherans live in Godvard near Pali and are known for their paintings of the Gangaur idols.

Rangoli

- Rangoli is a traditional floor art. Mesmerising patterns are created on the floor or the ground using materials such as coloured rice, dry flour, coloured sand or flower petals.
- The themes for rangoli are varied: celebrating religious, historical or topical personalities and events, and highlighting current social issues such as female foeticide, national integrity. Glitters, paints and stickers make the art form even more beautiful.

Performing Art

Tribal Music

- Few Tribes of Maharashtra - Bhil, Mahadev Koli, Gond, Warli, Kokna, Katkari, Thakur, Gavit, Kolam, Korku, Andh, Malhar and Pardhi,

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- An important feature of their music is a **close blend of movements and vocals**. All important events, such as childbirth, initiation, marriage or death, as also change of seasons and harvesting, have specific music associated with them.

Nandiwala

- The nandiwala is a specialist performer who **presents animal shows**. Combining tricks with some soothsaying he employs gubgubee (a double-sided membranophone), ghadyal-tipru (a mallet used to strike a metal disc) and tiny bells as instruments.
- Rhythmic playing, controlled verbalisation, loud thumping and scraping constitute the musical input. After the show, the performer asks for alms.

Bahuroopi

- The term literally means one with many disguises as the performer parades in different disguises impersonating pregnant women, young mothers, etc.
- He is a devotee of cult deities like Bahiroba, Khandoba, Jakhai and Janai, and his songs, full of verse and rhymes, are a humorous invitation to marriage.

Dhangari Ovyā

- This **movement-oriented song** is associated with **goatherds (dhangars)** and centred on Biruba, an incarnation of Lord Shiva.
- The dhangars, colourfully clad, dance around players of a huge dhol executing vigorous movements. Broad forceful rhythms, emphatic stanza endings and powerful voice projections are a part of this performance, which is usually held outdoors.

Vasudev Geet

- Vasudev, the performer, is an incarnation of Lord Krishna. Ghungaroo (ankle bells) and a hand-held pair of manjiri (cymbals) accompany the flute or the singing.
- Vasudev sings himself and executes nimble, delicate dance steps and whirling body movements.

Waghya-Murali Geet

- The songs form a **sub-variety of gondhal**, a **known form of ritual theatre**. However, the feminine element qualitatively differs from the parent genre in its aesthetic orientation.
- **Waghya and murali** are respectively the **male and female devotees** of Khandoba. The murali is the chief dancer and the waghya is the accompanist, participating in the performance known as /agran (keeping awake).
- The performance is distinguished by the murali's attractive costume and the sensuous grace of her movements. Tuntune (one string rhythm-cum-drone chordophone), ghungaroos and ghol (a small bell) are the only instruments used.

Ranmale Goa

- Ranmale is a **ritualistic and folk theatre** form based on mythological stories from the popular Indian epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata. It is **presented during the Holi festival** and is celebrated as **Shigmo (spring festival) in Goa and Konkan areas**.
- This form comprises of dance, drama and folk songs called Jats. Each participant of the drama makes his entry to the tune of folk songs. The **traditional instrument, Ghumat** is an earthenware drum with one of its ends covered with the skin of the monitor lizard and the other mouth kept open.

- Jats are sung by the **initiator of the folk drama called Sutradhar**, while the folk artists stand in a row on the stage acting like a backdrop.

Folk Dance

Ritualistic Dance Form

- Ritualistic dance forms can be seen in the **Khandoba Jagran** of the waghya-murali. The participants through the dance express their devotion to God Khandoba and Goddess Renukadevi.
- In Gondhal, the gondhali (male performer) dances uninhibitedly to the beats of the sambal and at the same time sings gondhal songs which are devotional in nature.

Devotional Dance Form

- The **bharud and the kirtan** are spontaneous devotional dance forms. In bharud, the bharudkar (performer) sings the opening line, then preaches delivering a spiritual message, and between and after indulges in dancing.
- The **warkari kirtan or dindi dance** is performed during the Pandharpur pilgrimage. The dance is not choreographed but is extempore with an overflow of devotional expressions of the warkari (pilgrims), ardent devotees of Lord Vitthal.
- Bohada which is also known as Panchami, Akhadi, Chaitee constitutes a dance drama associated with mythological stories.
- The stories of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Lalit and Dashawatara all form part of the repertoire.

Social Awareness Dance Form

- Powadas (ballads) have been popular ever since the time of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Powada has an in-built veer ras (valiant spirit) in it and successfully narrates the tales of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and other brave warriors.
- It is well-known for the propagation of social doctrines and pronouncing social messages at various levels.

Entertaining Dance Form

- **Lavani** is an ___ aesthetical combination of singing, enactment and dance, and is one of the most popular folk-dance forms of Maharashtra.
- **Tamasha** is rich in **sringar ras (romanticism)**. There are two types of tamasha, *dholkit fadacha tamasha and sangeet baricha tamasha*. Lavani is performed in both these forms.

Assorted Folk Dance Form

- **Naman, Khele and Balya dance** (Jakhadi) are prominent folk forms. Naman and Khele are purely dramatic forms which are performed during the Holi season whereas Jakhadi is performed during Ganesh Festival.
- In Sindhudurg district, the **chapai dance** of the shepherd community is popularly known. It resembles the **gaja dance of western Maharashtra**. These dances are performed to honour the home-deities of the shepherds Biroba and Jotiba.
- **Koli dance** is the dance of the fishing community (Kolis). It is performed on festive days and at marriages. Men and women dance together invoking the gods. In Vidarbha, the khadi-gammat folk dance is performed only by men.

Rathwa ni Gher: Tribal Dance of Rathwa

- Performed by - The Rathwas, who dwell in the hilly area of the southeastern part of Gujarat
- On the occasion of Holi (festival of colours) also known as Kavant festival, named after the place where the Holi carnival takes place.

Sankheda Nu Lakh Kam: Lacquered turned wood furniture of Sankheda

- Sankheda, a small town in Gujrat has about 80-100 families belonging to the 'Kharadi-Suthar' community identified with the occupation of wood turning.
- Lacquered, turned wood furniture with hand-painted motifs and traditional method & ornamentation, popularly known as Sankheda furniture, is thought to have been produced in the town from about 1855.

Diverse Millet Culture

Millets are increasingly becoming more popular and are on the verge of a revival. From being referred to as 'coarse cereals', these miracle foods have been given a facelift and were notified by the Government of India as 'Nutri-Cereals' in April 2018.

Reduction in production of Millets

- Agricultural policies over the last 40-50 years have systematically encouraged production of wheat & rice at the cost of millets and coarse cereals.
- Area under millet cultivation has seen a sharp decline over the years. While in 1965-66 it stood at almost 37 million hectares, it was down to **14.72 million hectares in 2016-17.**
- The desire to eat more **refined grains associated with social status**, the drudgery of cleaning & de-hulling the minor millets, **upward mobility & favourable policies** like easy availability of wheat & paddy rice in the PDS contributed to a reduction in the demand.

The Socio-Economic Context of Millets

- Millets were considered the **food of the poor** due to their ability to grow even in the most marginalised of lands.
- Diet diversity and eating a wide range of cereals meant **nutrition diversity**. The focus on just wheat and paddy rice reduced nutrition in food to a large extent.

Sign of Revival

- **Millets have been included in the public distribution system in Odisha** and the government is also promoting millets under the National Food Security Act.
- At the behest of the Indian government, the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation has approved its proposal to **declare the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets.**

Millets — Good for Health, Farmers, & Environment

- The only crops that could withstand these climate vagaries and not see a negative impact on yield are millets. Millets are ideal for **rain-fed conditions and saline soils.**
- With the expected decrease in yield, farming livelihoods are at risk. This necessitates growing of climate resilient crops to solve the **double challenge of nutrition & livelihood security.** Millets have a double value in tackling climate change because they contribute to both adaptation and mitigation.

- Millets also are farmed with **minimal fertilizers and pesticides**, so they have a lower carbon footprint. Millets compared to rice reduces GHGs 2% to 13%. Add this to their high nutrition value, **millets are truly a Smart Food**. The biggest gap is **building consumer awareness**.
- Millets are also **highly nutritious** and have the potential to be a solution to the nutrition crisis facing the country.
- A study by ICRISAT published in September 2019, found that **children grew up to 50% more in weight and height parameters on a millet-based diet**.
- Millets are also being hailed as the **solution for many lifestyle diseases** like diabetes, high blood pressure, digestive disorders, gluten allergies and much more.

The Cultural Significance of Millets

- There are many customs and rituals during which millets were made mandatory. **Barnyard Millet or Sanwa** as it is called in Hindi **was reserved for fasting** as it is light and easy to digest and keeps one high on energy.
- **Finger Millet or Madua Rotis** are mandatory to be eaten by women in eastern Indian states of Bihar & Jharkhand before beginning a 3 day long fast for their children. It would keep them full for longer and not cause bloating and acidity during this strenuous fast.

Types of Millets

- There are many lost varieties of traditional millets that were grown across the country, many of which have been lost over time.
- At present in India, there are 9 varieties that are commercially available and in demand and are being grown in different pockets across the country.

Way Forward

- In addition to using millets as staples, companies are also working on creating value added products to increase consumer acceptance and ease of use. Millet cookies, breakfast cereals, noodles and many other products are now available in the urban marketplaces.
- To reap the maximum nutritional benefits from millets, it is essential to encourage them as staple foods.
- By including more millets in our diet, we all have the power not just to take charge of our own health & immunity but also impact the climate and farmers' lives in a positive way.

Temple Inscriptions of Tamil Nadu

- **In terms of sheer diversity of subjects** and comprehensiveness of coverage of medieval India, Tamil Nadu temples have the maximum number of inscriptions.
- Most inscriptions deal with **local administration of land and water**. They are about disputes or allocation or gifts. They give us a lot of information on how land was cultivated, how water was conserved and used.
- Temple walls also record the **resolution of caste disputes**. Bramhadesam in the Tambraparni banks is a magnificent temple. It has on its walls a short arbitration judgement that enjoined **two castes to live peacefully** for the well-being of the entire village.
- A small **inscription from 898 CE in the Shiva temple in Manur**, Tirunelveli is of vital importance. It mentions the village land owners meeting on a night and redrafting the rules of election into the Judicial cum legislative assembly of the village.

- Read in conjunction with the more famous **Uthiramerur inscription**, we can deduce that electoral practices of public franchise was prevalent in Tamil Nadu long before the British “gifted” us democracy.

Harmony Through Dance

- Eight classical dance forms are recognised by the Sangeet Natak Akademi. There are folk dances as well in India.
- The **classical dance forms** are Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathak, Mohinattam, Kathakali, Sattriya, Odissi and Manipuri. These dance forms are not limited to the region they originated from.

Kuchipudi

- It is the art from Andhra Pradesh. One of the foremost and key patrons of Kuchipudi, was the **Nawab of Golconda, Abul Hasan Qutb Shah**.
- In the 17th century, this art form was dying. That was when the Nawab gifted these dancers a whole village which is now called Kuchipudi.
- Kuchipudi dancers are called Bhagavatulu. Theme - episodes from the Bhagavata Purana.
- The **sabdam is considered one of the most important pieces** in the Kuchipudi repertoire. Traditional Sabdams where stories are narrated, often about kings, sometimes even end with a ‘Salam’, like in the **Manduka Sabdam** which narrates the story of Gajendra Moksham. This Sabdam narrates the story of how the king of the elephants is saved by Lord Vishnu.

1. **Kuchipudi** from Andhra Pradesh, a dance-drama tradition, it is known for its grace and fluid movements,
2. **Bharatnatyam**, a more than 2000 years old dance form Tamil Nadu
3. **Kathakali**, Kerala, a stylised art form, it is a blend of dance, music and acting and dramatises stories from epics.
4. **Sattriya**, Assam, the dance is an artistic way of presenting mythological teachings in an enjoyable manner.
5. **Mohiniyattam**, Kerala, performed by women, it is known for its delicate body movements and subtle facial expressions
6. **Odissi** from Odisha, it is a dance of love and passion touching on the divine and the human, the sublime and the mundane
7. **Kathak** popular in North India, represents a unique synthesis of Hindu and Muslim genius in art

Kathak

- **Krishna’s Ras Leela** is an important topic for Kathak dancers. Kathak too was patronised by Muslim rulers in the northern part of India.
- The 19th century is considered the golden period for Kathak. It was during this time that **Nawab Wajid Ali Shah** patronised it and the **Lucknow Gharana** was established.

Intermixing between various dance forms:

- With time, various dance forms started making compositions from other dance forms part of their performances.

- **Ashtapadis are central pieces in Odissi.** Now, Ashtapadis have become an integral part of the repertoire in both **Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi.**
- Social themes are also being explored by dancers to reach a wider audience. Gandhian philosophies and works of Rabindranath Tagore are used by dancers widely.
- Gandhi is being used as a subject by Bharatanatyam, Odissi and other classical dancers.

Role of Institutions:

- the **Ministry Culture** has a major role to play. Its autonomous body, **Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT)**, through its extension programme organises lecture demonstrations to promote art and cultural education in India.
- The CCRT also organises workshops for teachers to sensitise them about the arts so that they can get their students to pursue — art.
- **Cultural grants** are given to institutions and individuals to create infrastructure and also come up with dance productions in the eight dance forms recognised by the central Sangeet Natak Akademi,
- **Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)** brings a diverse group of people to learn Indian classical dance forms. The ICCR **provides scholarships** to people from other countries to learn these dance forms. Such provisions have helped nurture talent in countries like Russia and Bali.
- Festivals like Bharat Parv, festivals organised by various state governments like the Khajuraho Dance Festival, Konark Dance Festival, Mamallapuram Dance Festival provide an opportunity to showcase India's diverse art forms, all on one stage.
- **Festivals of India Abroad** also play an important role in spreading cultural diversity.
- **Doordarshan** airs shows on dance on their national channel as well as their regional channels. This has helped dance reach those in the rural areas.
- NGOs like **Indian International Rural Cultural Centre (IRCEN)** and **Centre for Cultural Studies and Development (CCSD)** are involved in promoting art and culture in the country.
- Due to all these efforts, Indian dance forms have found their place in the world map. The **Chennai Marghazi season**; which is a festival season for dance and music, is so famous that artistes from across the world want to perform during the season.
- For anyone interested in studying about various art forms in India, the **Sangeet Natak Akademi have archives. CCRT too has a library** that can be accessed by anyone.

Kalaripayattu – Kerala

- Kalaripayattu is the **martial art** originated and popularly **practiced in Kerala.** Mythology has it that the warrior sage Parashurama is the promulgator of Kalaripayattu.

Compositions of Ameer Khusro – Delhi

- Abul Hasan Yamin al-Din Khusro, known as Ammer Khusro Dehlawi. He was a musician, scholar and poet, a Sufi Mystic and Spiritual **disciple of Hazarat Nizamuddin Auliya** of Delhi.
- He enriched **Hindustani classical music with Persian and Arabic elements**, from which originated various styles in Hindustani Classical music, such as Khayal, Tarana, Savela, Chaturang, Tirvat, Sawan geet etc.
- The **invention of Tabla and Sitar** is also traditionally attributed to Amir Khusro.
- He wrote his poetic **expressions in Hindavi.**

Territorial Security - India-China Relations

- India and China inherited the undefined boundaries. Despite several rounds of discussions between the then British empire and the Qing dynasty officials, and since independence by the successive leaderships, the territorial limits have neither been defined, delineated nor demarcated.
- Recently, China had extended its claim and objected to Bhutan applying for an environmental project at **Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary in eastern Bhutan**.

Examples of Recent Tensions

- Border incidents of Depsang Plains in April-May 2013, Chumar in 2014 and 2015, Dokhlam crisis of 2017
- Naku La in Sikkim and Pangong Tso and Galwan in the western sector of the border since 5 May 2020. Killing of Indian soldiers at Galwan region on 15 June 2020

Border Agreement Between India and China'

- China had agreed to a series of mechanisms such as 1993 "peace and tranquillity" agreement, 1996 confidence building measures (CBMs) in the military field, 2005 protocols on not carrying arms, 2013 Border Defence Cooperation Agreement on not "tailing" the patrols on the borders.
- In addition, a Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination is for maintaining peace and tranquillity on the borders.

Background:

- **McMahon Line** was drawn at the **Shimla Conference in 1914**. It was mentioned as the LAC in the eastern sector by China's Premier Zhou Enlai in his 7 November, 1959 letter to the then India's PM Nehru.
- However, **China's swap principle**—that is India retaining areas south of McMahon Line while China retaining Aksai Chin—**was not acceptable to the Indian leadership**.
- **1962 clash** froze relations between India and China till the **full diplomatic relations was restored in 1976**.
- Special Representative mechanism began in 2005 to undertake the territorial security talks. 22 such meetings were held by December 2019.

Disputed Areas

- **Western Sector** - These include **eight areas** including Pangong Tso, Trig Heights, Samar Lungpa, Demchok, Chushul, Depsang Bulge and in the last decade as well at **Chumar** in the Himachal, Uttarakhand borders. **Chumar is considered to be an "extended claim" area as the Chinese never raised this dispute** before.
- Also, while Galwan area has not been mentioned in the above areas of contention, both in 1962 and in 2020 that region have become contentious and violent.
- **Middle Sector** – It has three areas in dispute, viz., Barahoti, Kauril and Shipki, although this sector is considered to be less contentious.
- **Eastern Sector** – It has 6 areas in dispute, viz., Longju, Asaphila, Namka Chu, Samdurong Chu, Chantze and Migyutun. India emphasises on the McMahon Line in this sector, while the **Chinese side had asked for concession in Tawang sector** based on religious reasons of being the 16th century Dalai Lama's birthplace.

- **Sikkim region** has been the place for some violent clashes as in 1967 Nathu La- Cho La -Jelep La incident where nearly 400 Chinese soldiers were killed. It is also the region where the **Doklam incident happened in 2017**.
- Sikkim region was never considered to be a disputed region as the 1890 treaty with the Qing dynasty legitimised the borders, although it was never ratified by the respective legislatures.

Challenges in Dispute Resolution:

- Border dispute resolution is highly influenced by geo-politics. For instance, areas in the **western sector** have been more contentious as these borders Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- **Friendship with Pakistan** (Belt and Road Initiative with China Pakistan Economic Corridor is its mainstay since 2014) has been a major conditioning factor.
- At the bilateral level itself, there has been a **wide divergence on the territorial limit definitions** by both sides and the unwillingness to even exchange maps and finalise the dispute resolution.
- Another dimension of the territorial security between India and China is the **principles for resolving the dispute**. There is a wide discrepancy in this regard.
- India has argued for “**fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable**” solution to the dispute, although the 1962 Parliament resolution, in the aftermath of the border clashes mentioned about “every inch of land to be recovered”.
- China, on the other hand had suggested “**mutual understanding, and mutual accommodation**” as its priority which is not acceptable to India as the Chinese formulation has implications for the independent foreign policies.

Kalamkari – Andhra Pradesh

- **Sri Kalahasti** near the temple town of **Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh** specializes in producing temple cloths-Kalamkari (pen-work) – primarily used for their temple festivals or as wall hangings.
- The **stories from the epics** Ramayana, Mahabharat and the Puranas are painted as continuous narratives.
- The colours are obtained from vegetable and mineral sources. The gods are painted blue, the demons and evil characters in red and green.
- Yellow is used for female figures and ornaments. Red is mostly used as a background.