



Folk Dance Yakshagana

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Why in News?

Tulasi Raghvendra Hegde, a 15-year-old prodigy, has gained recognition as a leading **Yakshagana performer**. Recently awarded the Young Achiever Award 2024 by the Rotary Club of Madras East.



What is Yakshagana?

- **About:** Yakshagana is a traditional folk dance-drama from **coastal Karnataka**, combining **dance, music, song, and elaborate costumes**.
 - Its name, "Yakshagana" translates to "**celestial music**" (**Yaksha meaning celestial and Gana meaning music**), and it presents a celestial world through scholarly dialogues and **night-long performances**.
 - Yakshagana performances are held in **open-air theatres**, often in village paddy fields, after harvest. Traditionally performed by men, women are now increasingly part of Yakshagana **Melas**(troupes).
- **Key Elements of Yakshagana:**
 - **The Act:** Each performance focuses on a sub-story (**Prasanga**) from ancient Hindu epics like the **Ramayana or Mahabharata**.
 - These performances combine stage acting and commentary, with a lead singer or **Bhagavatha** narrating the story, accompanied by traditional music.
 - **The Music:** Yakshagana music features instruments like **Chande** (drums), Harmonium, Maddale, **Taala** (mini metal clappers), and flute, creating a rhythmic atmosphere for the dancers.
 - **The Dress:** Performers wear elaborate and unique costumes, including large headgear,

colorful face paint, body costumes, and musical beads on the legs (**Gejje**).

- These costumes are heavy, requiring great strength, and the performances last several hours.

Folk Dance

- **About:** It is a traditional dance form passed down through generations, reflecting the community's customs, rituals, and daily life, serving to express identity and transmit cultural heritage.
- **Major Folk Dances of India:**

Region	Folk Dance Form
Andhra Pradesh	Burrakatha, Butta Bommalu
Assam	Bihu
Bihar	Biraha, Jat-Jatin
Chhattisgarh	Gaur Maria, Raut Naach
Goa	Tarangamel, Fugdi
Gujarat	Garba
Himachal Pradesh	Charba
Jammu & Kashmir	Dumhal
Jharkhand	Chhau (Saraikella)
Karnataka	Yakshagana, Bhootha Aradhane, Pata Kunitha
Kerala	Kummi, Kolkali-Parichakali, Padayani, Kaikottikali, Chakyar koothu, Mayilattam
Madhya Pradesh	Jawara
Manipur	Thang Ta
Mizoram	Cheraw
Nagaland	Rangma
Odisha	Chhau (Mayurbhanj), Paika, Jhumar, Danda-Jatra, Dalkhai
Punjab	Bhangra, Giddha, Jhoomar
Rajasthan	Ghoomar, Kalbelia
Sikkim	Singhi Chham
Tamil Nadu	Kummi, Mayilattam
Uttar Pradesh	Raslila, Dadra
West Bengal	Chhau (Purulia), Alkap

Classical Dances of India

⇒ The first well-known source to address classical dances is **Bharat Muni's work Natya Shastra**.

Two basic aspects

Lasya

- Signifies **bhava, rasa, abhinaya, and grace**.
- Symbolic to the **feminine** features of dance.

Tandava

- More focus on **movement and rhythm**.
- Symbolic to the **male aspects** of dance.

Three main elements (Nandikeshwara's Abhinaya Darpan)

Nritta

- Basic dance moves.
- Rhythmically performed.
- No emotion or expression at all.

Natya

- Dramatic representations.
- The dance performance elaborates on the story.

Nritya

- Sentiment and the emotions evoked through dance.
- Different methods of expression or mudras in the dance.

⇒ There are **108 primary mudras**, each of which is used to express a different emotion.

⇒ According to the **Sangeet Natak Akademi**, there are **eight classical dance forms** in India.



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following pairs: (2014)

1. Garba : Gujarat
2. Mohiniattam: Odisha
3. Yakshagana : Karnataka

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- A. (i) only
- B. (ii) and (iii) only
- C. (i) and (iii) only
- D. (i), (ii) and (iii)

Ans: (C)

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