Drama is a unique art form. It includes many art forms such as-acting, music, scenic design, dance etc. When all these forms are combined, they make drama a multi-dimensional medium of entertainment. It is evident that painting and music can be performed by solo artists but drama is a collective art. Many people are involved in it such as, writer, director, actors, music director, dance director, light designer, set designer, make-up person, costume designer etc., besides many who come to watch the theatre activities.
We can say that after the development of different art forms like acting, painting, music, dance then drama came into existence. It has to be kept in mind that, the solo performance had existed from the beginning of civilization. There was no developed language at that time and for expressing the thoughts and feelings, people were using sounds, facial expressions, gestures and postures.

Drama is not just acting but acting is a part of drama.

**Bharat Muni’s Mythology about Drama**

Bharat Muni wrote the manuscript about drama, which is known as *Natyashastra*. Natyashastra is the most detailed and elaborate of all treatises on dramatic criticism and acting ever written in any language, and is regarded as the oldest surviving text on stagecraft in the world whose date of composition is uncertain (estimates range from 200 BCE to 200 CE). It is believed that, extracts have been taken from the four Vedas and then Natyashastra was created. From the Rigveda-dialogue, Samveda-songs, abinaya or acting from Yajurveda, and Rasa was taken from Atharvaveda. Bharat Muni ascribes drama as a ‘Pancham Veda’ (fifth Veda).

**The establishment of the Indradhwaj (Jarjar)**

The plays of that time were performed in open places; this was the reason for the insecurity of the performance. Bharat Muni prayed for the security from evils and weather. Bharat Muni was concerned about the attack of demons. On his request, the demons were intimidated that drama is a mode of entertainment for all. It incorporates all subjects, problems and emotions.

**Natyashastra**

Natyashastra is reckoned as the poetics of Indian drama, which demonstrates every aspect of Indian drama while covering areas like music, stage-design, make up, dance and virtually every aspect of stagecraft. With its kaleidoscopic approach, *Natyashastra* has offered a remarkable dimension to growth and development of Indian classical music, dance, drama and art. Hence it is certainly not an overstatement to say that, *Natyashastra* had has indeed laid the cornerstone of
the fine arts in India. The commentaries on the *Natyashastra* are known, dating from the sixth or seventh centuries.

The earliest surviving treatise, is the ‘Abhinavabharati’ by Abhinava Gupta. It was followed by works of writers such as Saradatanaya of twelfth-thirteenth century, Sarangadeva of thirteenth century, and Kallinatha of sixteenth century. However, the ‘Abhinavabharati’, is regarded as the most authoritative commentary on Natyashastra as Abhinavagupta provides not only his own illuminating interpretation of the *Natyashastra*, but wide information about pre-Bharata traditions as well as varied interpretations of the text offered by his predecessors. Written in Sanskrit, the vast treatise comprise of 6,000 sutras. The *Natyashastra* has been divided into 36 chapters, sometimes into 37 or 38 due to further bifurcation of a chapter or chapters. The title can be loosely translated as "A compendium of theatre" or "A Manual of Dramatic Arts".

A number of sages approached Bharata Muni to know about the secrets of ‘Natyaveda’, which creates the background of *Natyashastra*. The answer to their question comprises the rest of the book. The narratives, symbols and dialogues are used in the methodology of *Natyashastra* which opens with the origin of theatre, beginning with inquiries made by Bharata’s pupils, which he answers.

*Natyashastra* consists of four elements namely-1) Pathya or text, including the art of recitation and rendition in performance taken from the Rig Veda, 2) Gita or songs, including instrumental music from the Sama Veda, 3) Abhinaya or acting, the technique of expressing the poetic meaning of the text and communicating it to the spectator from the Yajur Veda and 4) Rasa or aesthetic experience from the Atharva Veda. It is, at the outset, the anukarana or 'redoing' of the triple universe and life in its entirety, but ultimately it is the anukirtana of bhava i.e. re-telling of emotive states in order to create a new world of 'imagination'. It can be interpreted in many ways, but one can draw certain obvious characteristics of Sanskrit theatre.

![The Original Unwritten VEDA](image)

*Natyashastra* covers every possible facet in detail, such as issues of literary construction, the structure of the stage or *mandapa*, detailed analysis of musical scales and movements (murehhanas), analysis of dance forms and their impacts on the viewers. It mirrors all the arts and crafts, higher knowledge, learning, sciences, yoga and conduct. Its purpose is to entertain as well as to educate.

Bharata was an ideal theatre artist. He has experienced pleasure as well as pain in life, and is gifted with restraint as well as vision. He understood the fact that performance is a collective
activity that requires a group of trained people, knit in a familial bond and has best portrayed this understanding in the first chapter of his treatise, Natyashastra.

The first chapter explains the response and involvement of the spectator in drama. The spectators come from different sections of society without any distinction, but are expected to be slightly initiated into the appreciation of theatre. This is because of the fact that they may respond properly to the art as an empathetic sahridaya. Theatre flourishes in a peaceful environment, free from hindrances. The first chapter ends emphasizing the significance of drama in attaining the joy, peace, and goals of life.

The norms for theatre architecture or the prekshagriha i.e. auditorium are mentioned in the second chapter. The role of prekshagriha is to protect the performance from all obstacles caused by adverse nature, malevolent spirits, animals, and men. There are different types of spaces such as medium-sized rectangular space as ideal for audibility and visibility, apparently holding about 400 spectators, smaller and larger structures, respectively half and double this size, and square and triangular halls. Bharata’s model was an ideal intimate theatre, considering the subtle abhinaya of the eyes and other facial expressions which he described in the second chapter of Natyashastra.

The third chapter describes an elaborate prayer for the gods protecting the auditorium, and prescribes rituals to consecrate the space.

Chapter four of the Natyashastra begins with the story of a production of Amritamanthana i.e. ‘Churning of the Nectar’.

After some time, a dima titled Tripundaha or 'Burning of the Three' Cities is staged, which incorporated tandava dance. These form the pure dance movements required for the worship of gods and the rituals. This chapter also lays the foundation of angikaabhinaya or physical acting developed in later chapters. The fifth chapter however details the elements of purvaranga. Thus the first five chapters are structurally integrated to the rest of the text.

The sixth and seventh chapters deal with the fundamental emotional notions and aesthetics of rasa and bhava. The bhavas, which include the vibhavas, are communicated to spectators through abhinaya, especially angika. Therefore, it receives elaborate treatment in chapters 8-12.

The chapters like 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 thus codify body language based on a definite semiotics. Movement requires well-defined blocking, so immediately afterwards the Natyashastra lays down the principle of kakshyavibhaga in the thirteenth chapter. The extremely flexible and easy principle of establishing space on stage and altering it through parikramana or circumambulation is a unique characteristic of traditional Indian theatre and dance and are subtly dealt in the next chapters of Natyashastra.

Chapter 18 explains the ten major forms of drama and natika, a variety of sub-forms. The next chapter analyses the structure of drama as well as the inclusion of lasyangas or components of feminine dance derived from popular dance and recitative forms in theatre. Chapter 20 gives an elaborate account of the vrittis.
Chapter 21 deals with make-up, costume, properties, masks, and minimal stage decor. Chapter 22 begins with *samanya* or ‘common’ abhinaya, which compounds the four elements of *abhinaya* harmoniously. It discusses other aspects of production too, which may be viewed as ‘inner’, adhering to prescribed norms and systematic training, and ‘outer’ or done freely outside such a regimen. This chapter ends with an analysis of women’s dispositions, while the following chapter 23 deals with male qualities and patterns of behaviour.

Chapter 24 enumerates the types of characters in Sanskrit drama. Chapter 25 defines the specific ways of expressing different objects and states, and the use of gestures, postures, gaits, walking, and theatrical conventions. The next two chapters present the nature of dramatis personae, the principles of make-up, and talks about the success and philosophy of performance. The chapter 27 deals with music employed in theatre. Chapter 28 covers *jati* or melodic types or matrices, *sruti* or micro-intervals, *svara* or notes, grama or scales, and murcchana or modes, now ragas. Chapter 29 describes musical instruments like the vina and distinguishes between vocal and instrumental music, further dividing vocal into two types *varna* or colour, only syllabics and *giti* or song, with lyrics. Chapter 30 describes wind instruments like the flute and ways of playing it.

Chapter 31 deals with rhythm, and metrical cycles. Chapter 32 defines songs, their specific employment, forms, and illustrations. Chapter 33 lists the qualities and defects of vocalists and instrumentalists. Chapter 34 relates to the origin and nature of drums.

The analysis of body forms and movements defined in *Natyashastra* also influenced Indian sculpture and the other visual arts in later centuries. For about 2000 years the Natyashastra has inspired new texts and various regional traditions of theatre. Kutiyattam in Kerala is an extant Sanskrit form that imbibed and developed theory and practices originating from the *Natyashastra*.

**Navras**

Navras (नवरस) (Sanskrit, hindi and urdu) is the aesthetic experience of the nine basic emotions or tastes (rasas) (रस), viz., marvelous (अदभुत), comic (हास्य), heroic (वीर), furious (रौद्र), apprehensive (वीभत्स), compassionate (करुणा), sensitive (perception of love) (शौचगार), horrific (भयानक), and calmed (शांत).
A rasa denotes an essential mental state and is the dominant emotional theme of a work of art or the primary feeling that is evoked in the person that views, reads or listen to such a work.

The concept of rasa is fundamental to many forms of Indian art including dance, music, musical theatre, cinema and literature, the treatment, interpretation and usage.

The performance of a particular rasa differs on the basis of different styles and schools of abhinaya, and the huge regional differences even within one style.

Bharata Muni enunciated the eight rasas in the Natyasastra. Each rasa has a presiding deity and a specific colour. There are four pairs of rasas. For instance, hasya arises out of sringara. Bharata Muni established the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Rasa</th>
<th>Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shingāram (love)</td>
<td>light green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hāsyam (laughter)</td>
<td>white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Raudram (fury)</td>
<td>red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kāru_yam (compassion)</td>
<td>grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bibhatsam (disgust)</td>
<td>blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bhayānakam (horror)</td>
<td>black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Viram (heroic mood)</td>
<td>golden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Adbhutam (wonder)</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ninth Rasa

Abhinavagupta suggested a ninth rasa in when only eight were accepted and it had to undergo a good deal of struggle between the sixth and the tenth centuries, before it could be accepted by the majority of the Alankarikas, and the expression Navarasa (the nine rasas), could come into vogue. They are Śāntam: Peace or tranquillity. Colour: white

In addition to the nine rasas, two more appeared later (esp. in literature). Additional rasas:

Vātsalya (parental love)

Bhakti (spiritual devotion)

However, the colours and the relation between these additional rasas have not been specified.
Earlier, in the literary compositions, the emotion of bhakti as a feeling of adoration of God was considered only a minor feeling, fit only for stothras, but not capable of being developed into a separate rasa as the sole theme of a whole poem or drama. Aacharya Abhinavagupta mentions bhakti in his commentary on the Natyashastra, as an important accessory sentiment of the shantarasa.

A rasa is the developed delightful state of a permanent mood, which is called Sthayi Bhava. This development towards a blissful state results by the interplay on it of attendant emotional conditions which are called vibhavas, anubhavas and sancharibhavas. Vibhavas means karana or cause: it is of two kinds - alambana, the personal or human object and substratum, and uddipana, the excitants. Anubhava, as the name signifies, means the effects following the rise of the emotion. Sancharibhavas are those crossing feelings which are ancillary to a permanent mood. Eight more emotional features are to be added, namely, the saatvikabhavas.

The theory of rasa described in the text has been a major influence on the modern theatre of India as well as Indian cinema.

**Sanskrit writers and plays**

The fragments of Sanskrit drama date from the 1st century CE. The *Mahabhasya* by Patañjali contains the earliest reference to what may have been the seeds of Sanskrit drama. This treatise on grammar from 140 BC provides a feasible date for the beginnings of theatre in India.

Its drama is regarded as the highest achievement of Sanskrit literature. It utilised stock characters, such as the hero (nayaka), heroine (nayika), or clown (vidusaka). Actors may have specialised in a particular type Kālidāsa in the 3rd-4th century CE, is arguably one of ancient India’s greatest Sanskrit dramatist. Three famous romantic plays written by Kālidāsa are the *Mālavikāgnimitram* (Mālavikā and Agnimitra), *Vikramōrvaśīyam* (Pertaining to Vikrama and Urvashi), and *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* (The Recognition of Shakuntala). The last was inspired by a story in the Mahabharata and is the most famous. It was the first to be translated into English and German. Śakuntalā (in English translation) influenced Goethe’s ‘Faust’ (1808–1832). The next great Indian dramatist was Bhavabhuti (c. 7th century CE). He is said to have written the following three plays: *Malati-Madhava*, *Mahaviracharita* and *Uttar Ramacharita*. Among these three, the last two cover between them the entire epic of ‘Ramayana’. The powerful Indian emperor Harsha (606–648), is credited with having written three plays: the comedy *Ratnavali*, *Priyadarsika*, and the Buddhist dram *Na agananda*. Other famous Sanskrit dramatists include Śudraka, Bhasa, and Asvaghosa. Though numerous plays written by these playwrights are still available, little is known about the authors themselves.
Urubhanga

Urubhanga or Urubhangam is a Sanskrit play written by Bhasa in the 2nd or 3rd century AD. Based on the well-known epic, the ‘Mahābhārata’, by Vyasa, ‘Urubhanga’ focuses on the story of the character Duryodhana during and after his fight with Bhima. Although Urubhanga contains the same core storyline as that in the Mahābhārata, Bhasa’s altering of certain aspects results in a different presentation of the story. The most extreme of these alterations is Bhasa’s portrayal of Duryodhana, who in ‘Urubhanga’ is given more human qualities. While tragedy is rare among Sanskrit dramas, Bhasa’s presentation of Duryodhana’s side of the tale adds certain tragic elements to the play.

Urubhanga is a deviation from the famous epic ‘Mahabharata’. The protagonist Duryodhana is presented in a different light in Urubhanga. He isn’t exempted from his original evil deeds, but he is shown as a character with heroic qualities. The play centres on events that happen preceding his death; Duryodhana is shown repenting his past, reconciling with his family, and realizing the futility of war.

In the beginning of the play there are three soldiers that are marveling at the battle field between the Kauravas and Pandavas. They describe the scene before them in detail, each taking turn to muse and exclaim over the various details that they observe. As they progress through the battle field, they arrive to the battle between the middle Pandava Bhima and the Kaurava Duryodhana.
The soldiers then proceed to describe the fight between Bhima and Duryodhana. The audience is seeing the battle entirely through the description of the three soldiers; ultimately, Bhima falls from Duryodhana’s incessant blows. Duryodhana, refusing to kill Bhima while he is on the ground, instead has his thighs crushed by Bhima for false play and violation of rules.

After Duryodhana has fallen, Bhima is carried away hurriedly by the other Pandavas, and Duryodhana is left on the battleground. This act of false play incites the anger of Baladeva, who wants to seek justice. However, Duryodhana stops him, having become resigned; this begins the part of the play that starts to emphasize the heroic qualities of Duryodhana.

Duryodhana blames Krishna and forgives Bhima, as the play progresses, he is reconciled with his blind parents, then his queens (Malavi and Pauravi), and his son. Duryodhana is distressed about his situation, as he can no longer salute his father, nor can he let his son sit on his lap. He also accepts the futility of war.

At the end of the play, Ashvatthaman, the preceptor’s son, appears with the intent to seek revenge for Duryodhana and kill the Pandavas during the night, and Ashvatthaman names Durjaya, Duryodhana’s son, as king of the kingdom just before Duryodhana dies. However, it needs to be noted that, the play does not end completely in a tragic note, as there are signs of hope for the future, since it is unorthodox for Indian Sanskrit dramas to end on a sad note.

**Classical Indian Theatre**

**Kathakali**

Kathakali is a stylized classical Indian dance-drama noted for the attractive make-up of characters, elaborate costumes, detailed gestures and well defined body movements presented in tune with the anchor playback music and complementary percussion. It originated in the country’s present day state of Kerala during the 17th century and has developed over the years with
improved looks, refined gestures and added themes besides more ornate singing and precise drumming.

Popular belief is that Kathakali is emerged from "Krishnanattam", the dance drama on the life and activities of Lord Krishna created by Sri Manavedan Raja, the Zamorin of Calicut (1585-1658 AD). Once Kottarakkara Thampuran, the Raja of Kottarakkara who was attracted by Krishnanattam requested the Zamorin for the loan of a troupe of performers. Due to the political rivalry between the two, Zamorin did not allow this. So Kottarakkara Thampuran created another art form called Ramanattam which was later transformed into Aattakatha. Krishnanattam was written in Sanskrit, and Ramanattam was in Malayalam. By the end of 17th century, Attakatha was presented to the world with the title ‘Kathakali’.

Kathakali has similarities to krishnanattam, Koodiyattam (a classical Sanskrit drama in Kerala) and Ashtapadiyattam (an adaptation of 12th-century musical called Gitagovindam). It also incorporates several other elements from traditional and ritualistic art forms like Mudiyettu, Thiyyattu, Theyyam and Padayani besides a minor share of folk arts like Porattunatakam. All along, the martial art of kalarippayattu has influenced the body language of kathakali. The use of Malayalam, the local language (albeit as a mix of Sanskrit and Malayalam, called ‘Manipuravalam’), has also helped the literature of kathakali to be easily understood by the average audience.

Traditionally, there are 101 classical Kathakali stories, though the commonly staged among them these days are total less than one-third that numbers. Almost all of them were initially composed to last a whole night. Nowadays, there is an increasing popularity for concise, or often select, versions of stories so as the performance lasts not more than three to four hours from evening. Thus, many stories find stage presentation in parts rather than totality. And the selection is based on criteria like choreographical beauty, thematic relevance/popularity or their melodramatic elements. Kathakali is a classical art form, but it can be appreciated also by novices—all contributed to the elegant look of its character, the abstract movements and synchronisation with the musical notes and rhythmic beats. And, in any case, the folk elements too continue to exist. For better appreciation, it is good to have an idea of the story being enacted.

The most popular stories enacted are Nalacharitham (a story from the Mahabharata), Duryodhana Vadham (focusing on the Mahabharata war after profiling the build-up to it), Kalyanasoug and hikam, (the story of Bhima going to get flowers for his wife Panchali), Keechakavadham (another story of Bhima and Panchali, but this time during their stint in disguise), Kiratham (Arjuna and Lord Shiva’s fight, from the Mahabharata), Karnashapatham (another story from the Mahabharata), Nizhalkuthu and Bhadrakalivijayam authored by Pannisseri Nanu Pillai. Also
staged frequently include stories like Kuchelavrittam, Santanagopalam, Balivijayam, Dakshayagam, Rugminiswayamvaram, Kalakeyavadham, Kirmeeravadham, Bakavadham, Poothanamoksham, Subhadraharanam, Balivadham, Rugmangadacharitam, Ravanabhavam, Narakasuravadham, Uttaraswayamvaram, Harishchandraracharitam, Kacha-Devayaniand Kamsavadham.

Recently, in attempts to popularize the art form, stories from other cultures and mythologies, such as those of Mary Magdalene from the Bible, Homer's Iliad, and William Shakespeare's King Lear and Julius Caesar besides Goethe's Faust too have been adapted into Kathakali scripts and on to its stage.

Traditionally, a Kathakali performance is usually conducted at night and ends in the early morning. Now a days it isn't difficult to see performances as short as three hours or less. Kathakali is usually performed in front of the huge kalivilakku (kali meaning dance; vilakku meaning lamp) with its thick wick sunk till the neck in coconut oil. Traditionally, this lamp used to provide the sole light when the plays used to be performed inside temples, palaces or houses of nobles and aristocrats. Enactment of a play by actors takes place to the accompaniment of music (geetha) and instruments (vadya). The percussion instruments used are chenda, maddalam and, at times, edakka. In addition, the singers (the lead singer is called ponnani and his follower is called “singidi”) use chengila (gong made of bell metal, which can be struck with a wooden stick) and ilathalam (a pair of cymbals). The lead singer in some sense uses the chengala to conduct the vadyam and geetha components, just as a conductor uses his wand in western classical music. A distinguishing characteristic of this art form is that, the actors never speak but use hand gestures, expressions and rhythmic dancing instead of dialogue (but for a few characters).

A kathakali actor uses immense concentration, skill and physical stamina, gained from regimented training based on kalaripayattu, the ancient martial art of Kerala, to prepare for his demanding role. The training can often last for 8–10 years, and is intensive. In kathakali, the story is enacted purely by the movements of the hands (called mudras or hand gestures) and by facial expressions (rasas) and bodily movements. The expressions are derived from natyashastra (the tome that deals with the science of expressions) and are classified into nine forms as in most Indian classical art forms. Dancers also undergo special practice sessions to learn to control their eye movements.

There are 24 basic mudras—the permutation and combination of which would add up to a large variety of the hand gestures in vogue today. Each can be classified into samaana-mudras (one mudra symbolising two entities) or misra-mudra (both the hands used to show these mudras). The mudras are a form of sign language used to tell the story.

The main facial expressions of a kathakali artist are the navarasams (nine feelings or expressions) which are sringaram, hasyam (ridicule, humour), bhayanakam (fear), karunam (pathos), roudram (anger, wrath), veeram (valour), beeabhatasam (disgust), adbhutam (wonder, amazement), shantam (tranquility, peace).
One of the most interesting aspects of kathakali is its elaborate make-up code. Most often, the make-up can be classified into five basic sets namely pachcha, kathi, kari, thaadi, and minukku. The differences between these sets lie in the predominant colours that are applied on the face. Pachcha (meaning green) has green as the dominant colour and is used to portray noble male characters who are said to have a mixture of satvik (pious) and rajasik (dark) nature. Rajasik characters having an evil streak (tamasic= evil) - all the same they are anti-heroes in the play (such as the demon king Ravana) - and portrayed with streaks of red in a green-painted face. Excessively evil characters such as demons (totally tamasic) have a predominantly red make-up and a red beard. They are called Red Beard. Tamasic characters such as uncivilised hunters and woodsmen are represented with a predominantly black make-up base and a black beard and are called black beard. Women and ascetics have lustrous, yellowish faces and this semi-realistic category forms the fifth class. In addition, there are modifications of the five basic sets described above such as vella thadi (white beard) used to depict Hanuman and pazhuppu, which is used majorly to represent deities.

Yakshagana

Yakshagana literally means the song (gana) of the yaksha, (nature spirits), formerly known as kēṭike, āṭa, bayalāṭa, and daśavatāra. It is believed to have evolved during the period of the Bhakti movement. It is sometimes simply called "the play" in both Kannada and Tulu. The yakshagana form of today is the result of a slow evolution, drawing its elements from ritual theatre, temple arts, secular arts (such as bahurupi), royal courts of the past, and the artist’s imaginations—all interwoven over a period of several hundred years.

Early yakshagana poets included Ajapura Vishnu, Purandaradasa, Parthi Subba, and Nagire Subba. King Kanteerava Narasaraja Wodeyar II (1704–1714) authored 14 yakshaganas in various languages in the Kannada script. Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar (1794–1868) also wrote several yakshaganaprasanga, including Sougandhika Parinaya. Noted poet, Muddana, composed several yakshagana prasangasa, including the very popular Rathnavathi Kalyana.

Yakshagana is a theatre form that combines dance, music, dialogue, costume, make-up, and stage techniques with a unique style and form. This theatre style is mainly found in the coastal districts and the Malenadu region of India. Yakshagana is traditionally presented from dusk to dawn.
A typical performance consists of background music played by a troupe of musicians (known as the himmela); and a dance and dialog group (known as the mummela), who together enact poetic epics onstage. The himmela is made up of a lead singer (bhagawata)—who also directs the production—and is referred to as the "first actor" (modalanevesha). Additional himmela members are players of traditional musical instruments, such as the maddale (hand drum), the pungi (pipe), the harmonium (organ), and the chande (loud drums). The music is based on ragas, which are characterized by rhythmic patterns called mattu and tala (or musical meter in western music). Yakshaganatalas are believed to be based on patterns which later evolved into the Carnatic talas.

A yakshagana performance typically begins in the twilight hours, with an initial beating of the drums of several fixed compositions, called abbara or peetike. This may last for up to an hour before the actors finally arrive on the stage. The actors wear resplendent costumes, headdresses, and face paints. The rakshasa (the demon) in yakshagana performances is called bannadavesha. The streevesha, or female roles, are performed by male actors. Yakshagana can refer to a style of writing, as well as the written material itself. There are questions on whether this writing system originated in Telugu literature. It was probably used for poems enacted in bayalaata (or open theatre drama), such as the ballads of Koti and Chennayya. Yakshagana in its present form is believed to have been strongly influenced by the Vaishnava Bhakti movement.

A performance usually depicts a story from the Kavya (epic poems) and the puranas (ancient Hindu texts). It consists of a story teller (the bhagvatha) who narrates the story by singing (which includes prepared character dialogues) as the actors dance to the music, portraying elements of the story as it is being narrated. All components of yakshagana—including the music, the dance, and the dialogues—are improvised. Depending on the ability and scholarship of the actors, there will be variations in dances as well as the amount of dialogue. It is not uncommon for actors to get into philosophical debates or arguments without falling out of character. Yakshagana is popular in the districts of Uttara Kannada, Udupi, Dakshina Kannada, Shimoga and Kasaragod. Yakshagana has become popular in Bangalore in recent years, particularly in the rainy season, when there are few other forms of entertainment possible in the coastal districts.

Summary

- Drama is a unique art form.
- It includes many art forms such as-acting, music, scenic design, dance etc. When all these forms are combined, they make drama a multi-dimensional medium of entertainment.
- Drama is not just acting but acting is a part of drama.

Natyashastra

- Bharat Muni wrote the manuscript about drama, which is known as Natyashastra.
- Natyashastra is the most detailed and elaborate of all treatises on dramatic criticism.
- It is believed that, extracts have been taken from the four Vedas and then Natyashastra was
created. From the Rigveda-dialogue, Samveda- songs, abinaya or acting from Yajurveda, and Rasa was taken from Atharvaveda.

- Bharat Muni ascribes drama as a Pancham Veda (fifth Veda).
- Natyashastra has offered a remarkable dimension to growth and development of Indian classical music, dance, drama and art.
- The earliest surviving treatise, is the Abhinavabharati by Abhinava Gupta. It was followed by works of writers such as Saradatanaya of twelfth-thirteenth century, Sarngadeva of thirteenth century, and Kallinatha of sixteenth century.
- The Natyashastra has been divided into 36 chapters, sometimes into 37 or 38 due to further bifurcation of a chapter or chapters. The title can be loosely translated as "A compendium of Theatre or A Manual of Dramatic Arts".
- Natyashastra consists of four elements namely-
  1) Pathya or text, including the art of recitation and rendition in performance taken from the Rig Veda,
  2) Gita or songs, including instrumental music from the Sama Veda,
  3) Abhinaya or acting, the technique of expressing the poetic meaning of the text and communicating it to the spectator from the Yajur Ved and
  4) Rasa or aesthetic experience from the Atharva Veda.
- It is, at the outset, the anukarana or redoing of the triple universe and life in its entirety, but ultimately it is the anukirtana of bhava i.e. re-telling of emotive states in order to create a new world of ‘imagination’.
- Natyashastra’s purpose is to entertain as well as educate.
- Bharata was an ideal theatre artist as evident in the by his creation Natyashastra.
  - The first chapter explains the response and involvement of the spectator in drama.
  - The first chapter ends recommending the worship of the presiding deities of theatre and the auditorium and emphasizing the significance of drama in attaining the joy, peace, and goals of life.
  - The norms for theatre architecture or the prekshagriha i.e. auditorium are mentioned in the second chapter. The role of prekshagriha is to protect the performance from all obstacles caused by adverse nature, malevolent spirits, animals, and men.
  - Bharata’s model was an ideal intimate theatre, considering the subtle abhinaya of the eyes and other facial expressions which he described in the second chapter of Natyashastra.
  - The third chapter describes an elaborate puja for the gods and goddesses protecting the auditorium, and prescribes rituals to consecrate the space.
  - Chapter four of the Natyashastra begins with the story of a production of Amritamanthana i.e. ‘Churning of the Nectar’, a samavakara performed according to Brahma’s instructions on the peaks of Kailasa, witnessed by Siva.
  - After some time, a dima titled Tripumdaha or Burning of the Three Cities is staged, which incorporated Tandava dance. These form the pure dance movements required for worship. This chapter also lays the foundation of angikaabhinaya or physical acting developed in later chapters.
The fifth chapter however details the elements of purvaranga. Thus the first five chapters are structurally integrated to the rest of the text.

The sixth and seventh chapters deal with the fundamental emotional notions and aesthetics of rasa and bhava. The bhavas, which include the vibhavas, are communicated to spectators through abhinaya, especially angika.

The chapters like 8,9,10, 11 and 12 thus codify body language based on a definite semiotics.

Natyashastra lays down the principle of kakshyavibhaga in the thirteenth chapter. The extremely flexible and easy principle of establishing space on stage and altering it through parikramana or circumambulation is a unique characteristic of traditional Indian theatre and dance and are subtly dealt in the next chapters of Natyashastra.

Chapter 18 explains the ten major forms of drama and natika, a variety of sub-forms.

The next chapter analyses the structure of drama as well as the inclusion of lasyangas or components of feminine dance derived from popular dance and recitative forms in theatre.

Chapter 20 gives an elaborate account of the vrittis.

Chapter 21 deals with make-up, costume, properties, masks, and minimal stage decor.

Chapter 22 begins with samanya or common abhinaya, which compounds the four elements of abhinaya harmoniously. This chapter ends with an analysis of women’s dispositions, while the following chapter 23 deals with male qualities and patterns of behaviour.

Chapter 24 enumerates the types of characters in Sanskrit drama.

Chapter 25 defines the specific ways of expressing different objects and states, and the use of gestures, postures, gaits, walking, and theatrical conventions. The next two chapters present the nature of dramatis personae, the principles of make-up, and talks about the success and philosophy of performance.

The chapter 27 deals with music employed in theatre.

Chapter 28 covers jati or melodic types or matrices, sruti or micro-intervals, svara or notes, grama or scales, and murcchana or modes, now ragas.

Chapter 29 describes musical instruments like the vina and distinguishes between vocal and instrumental music, further dividing vocal into two types, varna or colour, only syllabics and giti or song, with lyrics. Chapter 30 describes wind instruments like the flute and ways of playing it.

Chapter 31 deals with rhythm, and metrical cycles.

Chapter 32 defines songs, their specific employment, forms, and illustrations.

Chapter 33 lists the qualities and defects of vocalists and instrumentalists.

Chapter 34 relates the origin and nature of drums.

The analysis of body forms and movements defined in Natyashastra also influenced Indian
sculpture and the other visual arts in later centuries.

- Kutiyattam in Kerala is an extant Sanskrit form that imbibed and developed theory and practices originating from the Natyashastra.

**Navras**

- Navras is the aesthetic experience of the nine basic emotions or tastes.
- A rasa denotes an essential mental state and is the dominant emotional theme of a work of art or the primary feeling that is evoked in the person that views, reads or listen to such a work.
- Bharata Muni enunciated the eight rasas in the Natyasastra. Each rasa has a presiding deity and a specific colour.
- Abhinavagupta suggested a ninth rasa in addition to the eight and the expression Navarasa (the nine rasas), could come into vogue.
- In addition to the nine rasas, two more appeared later (esp. in literature). Additional rasas:
  - Vātsalya (○) parental love
  - Bhakti (□): spiritual devotion
- A rasa is the developed delightful state of a permanent mood, which is called Sthayi Bhava.
- Vibhavas means karana or cause: it is of two kinds - alambana, the personal or human object and substratum, and uddipana, the excitants.
- Anubhava, as the name signifies, means the effects following the rise of the emotion.
- Sancharibhavas are those crossing feelings which are ancillary to a permanent mood. Eight more emotional features are to be added, namely, the saatvikabhavas.
- Three famous romantic plays written by Kālidāsa are the Mālavikāgnimitram (Mālavikā and Agnimitra), Vikramōrvaśīyam (Pertaining to Vikrama and Urvashi), and Abhijñānaśākuntalam (The Recognition of Shakuntala).

**Sanskrit writers and plays**

- The fragments of Sanskrit drama date from the 1st century CE.
- The Mahābhāṣya by Patañjali contains the earliest reference to what may have been the seeds of Sanskrit drama.
- Kālidāsa in the 3rd-4th century CE, is one of ancient India’s greatest Sanskrit dramatist.
- Three famous romantic plays written by Kālidāsa are the Mālavikāgnimitram (Mālavikā and Agnimitra), Vikramōrvaśīyam (Pertaining to Vikrama and Urvashi), and Abhijñānaśākuntalam (The Recognition of Shakuntala).
- The next great Indian dramatist was Bhavabhuti(c. 7th century CE). He is said to have written the following three plays: ‘Malati-Madhava’, ‘Mahaviracharita’ and ‘UttarRamcharita’.
- The powerful Indian emperor Harsha (606–648) is credited with having written three plays: the comedy ‘Ratnavali’, ‘Priyadarsika’, and the Buddhist drama ‘Nagananda’.
- ‘Urubhanga’ or ‘Urubhangam’ is a Sanskrit play written by Bhasa in the 2nd or 3rd century AD. Based on the well-known epic, the ‘Mahābhārata’, by Vyasa.
- ‘Urubhanga’ focuses on the story of the character Duryodhana during and after his fight with...
Bhima. ‘Urubhanga’ is a deviation from the famous epic ‘Mahabarata’.

Classical Indian Theatre

Kathakali
- Kathakali is a stylized classical Indian dance-drama noted for the attractive make-up of characters, elaborate costumes, detailed gestures and well-defined body movements presented in tune with the anchor playback music and complementary percussion.
- It originated in the country’s present day state of Kerala during the 17th century.
- Popular belief is that Kathakali is emerged from ‘Krishnanattam’, the dance drama on the life and activities of Lord Krishna created by Sri Manavedan Raja, the Zamorin of Calicut (1585-1658 AD).
- Traditionally there are 101 classical Kathakali stories, the most popular stories enacted are ‘Nalarcharitham’ (a story from the Mahabharata),
- A kathakali actor uses immense concentration, skill and physical stamina, gained from regimented training based on kalaripayattu, the ancient martial art of Kerala, to prepare for his demanding role.
- There are 24 basic mudras—the permutation and combination of which would add up to a large variety of the hand gestures in vogue today.

Yakshagana
- Yakshagana literally means the song (gana) of the yaksha, (nature spirits), formerly known as kēlike, āta, bayalāta, and daśāvatāra.
- It is believed to have evolved during the period of the Bhakti Movement. It is sometimes simply called "the play" in both Kannada and Tulu.
- Noted poet, Muddana, composed several yakshaganaprasangasa, including the very popular ‘Rathnavathi Kalyana’.
- Yakshagana is a theatre form that combines dance, music, dialogue, costume, make-up, and stage techniques with a unique style and form.
- Performed typically, begins in the twilight hours, with an initial beating of the drums of several fixed compositions, called abbara or peetike.
- Popular in the districts of Uttara Kannada, Udupi, Dakshina Kannada, Shimoga and Kasaragod.
- Popular in Bangalore in recent years, particularly in the rainy season, when there are few other forms of entertainment possible in the coastal districts.
Complete the crossword with the help of clues given below:

Across
2. 'clown'
4. ______________ wrote Natyashastra
5. 'nine basic emotions'
7. _______________ consist of pathya or text, Gita, Abhinaya and Rasa

Down
1. Song of Yaksha
3. Song of Yaksha
6. 'parental love'

1. y
2. v a
4. b i a
5. n s
6. v a
7. n a
8. k i
9. u
10. b t a
8. 'classical Indian dance drama'
9. Sanskrit play written by Bhasa
10. 'spiritual devotion'

**Comprehension Questions**

I. **Answer the following in about 15 words:**

1. Who wrote the manuscript about drama and what is it called?
2. What is Krishnanattam?
3. Write two commonly enacted stories in Kathakali?
4. What is Kuttiyattam?
5. Give details of the extract taken from Rig Veda for Nartyashastra?
6. Give details of the extract taken from Sam Veda for Nartyashastra?
7. Give details of the extract taken from Yajur Veda for Nartyashastra?
8. Write another on the extract taken from Atharva Veda for Nartyashastra?

II. **Answer the following in about 50 words:**

1. What is Natyashastra?
2. Write a short note on Abhinavabharti?
3. What was Bharat Muni’s belief about drama performance?
4. What are the 9 facial expressions in Kathakali?
5. What is Rasa?
6. What is Navras?
7. What is Mudra?
8. What is Yakshagna?
9. Explain the role of spectators in dramatics?

III. **Answer the following in about 75 words**

1. Write a note on Natyashahstra?
2. Explain the four elements in Natyshahstra?
3. What is the role of Prekshagriha?

   **OR**

   Write a note on Prekshagriha?
4. Write a note on Kathakali?
5. Why were the staged stories of Kathakali reduced?

IV. Answer the following in about 150 words
1. Write a note on Urubhanga? Explain its relation with Mahabharat?
2. What is Rasa? Explain. What are the 8 Rasas given by Bharat Muni?
3. Explain briefly the Kathakali make-up code?
4. Explain briefly the various Sanskrit plays written in different centuries?