



Kathak Attire Evolution: From Ancient to Modern Era

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ABSTRACT:

Originating from North India, Kathak is a beautiful dance form with a rich history. It includes stories in actions, gestures, and faces. Kathak dance is practiced in various schools called "Gharanas", including Lucknow, Jaipur, and Banaras. Kathak's performance usually consists of three parts: Nritya, Nritya, and Natya. Nritya refers to a graceful and rapid movement that shows the dancer's talent. Nritya uses subtle gestures and subtle facial expressions to express emotions and tell stories through dance scenes. Nadia, on the other hand, focuses on acting and storytelling, often with music and poetry. The female dancers are dressed in beautiful, colorful Kathak costumes that include lehengas, saris, and jewelry. Male dancers wear kurta pajamas, dhotis, turbans, shirts, and accessories like swords and scarves. These costumes enhance the performance and bring the dance to life by adding appeal and visual impact. Contemporary Kathak artists introduce new performances, fusion music, and storytelling techniques to attract a wide audience. New Kathak outfits blend modern beauty with traditional attire. While female performers wear corsets or fusion dresses, male dancers prefer modern fashion and minimal decorations. Modern Kathak costumes combine traditional and modern elements, bringing the originality and appeal of Kathak to the new generation. Gunghru (or Gunghroo) is an important part of Kathak dance. Small bells are hung around the ankles of Kathak dancers. Kathak bells differ from bells used in other Indian classical dance cultures in that they are not attached to a mat or strip of leather. Instead, they are woven one by one along a strong rope.

Keywords: Kathak, Contemporary, Ghoonghat, Costume

1. Introduction :

Kathak has two types of performance: Nritya was the first to use a pure dance form in which the rhythm of the performance changed from slow to fast to climax. Often two types of configurations are involved: "Toda" is longer and "tukra" is shorter. Nritya is the second style, and its main cause of interest is its expressiveness. This type of storytelling uses a variety of expressions. This style is also called Bhaav Bataana. The Nritya style is more commonly used in modern Kathak. Nritya is more related to Lucknow Gharana while Nritya is more related to Banaras Gharana.

Kathak developed over time into three styles: classical, modern, and Sufi. Kathak is divided into three main gharanas or schools according to geography. These are the gharanas of Jaipur, Lucknow and Banaras. They have their interpretation and repertoire.

TAWAIF is a well-known institution associated with Kathak, but much like the Japanese geisha tradition, it is a misunderstood institution for female artists. This job requires the highest level of training, intelligence, and most importantly, courtesy. It was common for royals to send their children to Tawaif to be educated in etiquette. During the Victorian era, when Britain consolidated its power over India, this great institution was unfortunately branded as mere prostitution and outlawed. The art form of Kathak went into irreversible decline until after independence when people regained interest in the traditional Indian art form.

History

The Kameshwar Library in Maharashtra states that Kathak originated in the 3rd or 4th century BC. Mahabharata also recognizes Kathak. In the 16th century, Kathak was performed at courts to entertain royalty and enjoyed royal patronage. Kathak incorporated both rotational and straight-leg movement techniques. The Nawab of Awadh provided royal support to Kathak. Wajid Ali Shah was the main driving force behind the creation of the Lucknow Gharana in the 19th century. The Lucknow Gharana achieved perfection under the guidance of Thakur Prasad Maharaj, the chief court dancer of the Nawab's court. His sons Bindadin Maharaj and Kalkadin Maharaj administered his estate.

Banaras Gharana also came into existence at the same time. Janaki Prasad was the founder of this Gharana. During the British rule in India, Kathak became known as crude entertainment in the form of stereoscopic images, associated with the trafficking of immoral women. After that, its popularity declined slightly. In the early 20th century, Kathak was brought back to the world stage by Kalka Prasad Maharaj, a descendant of Thakur Prasad Maharaj. Afterward, his achievements were continued by the next generation.

Scholars at the temple encourage Kathakkars to tell stories from great epics such as Mahabharata, Ramayana, Puranas, and Vedas. Scholars thus laid the foundation for the transformation of Kathak from a myth, God, and goddess into a temple dance.

During the arrival of the Mughals who stole the temple's wealth, these Kathakkars also became embroiled in the Mughal court. Appeasing the emperor

became paramount, and the focus of worship changed. It underwent many radical changes and developed in dance techniques, manuscripts, music, jewelry, and costumes. The Urdu language was introduced into art.

Kathak dancers began training their family members to preserve the legacy of the historical art form as there was no other way to preserve this unwritten and unrecorded art form. However, due to British intervention in the situation, famous dancers of the Mughal era were forced to abandon their profession as the art form was banned by the ruler.

Gharanas

Maharaj Ishwari Prasad Mishra and his brothers brought the first style of Kathak known as Natwari Nitrya to Lucknow. Besides teaching dance to his three children, Adguji, Khadguji and Tularamji, Ishwari Prasad also wrote a book with the permission of Lord Krishna. Adguji taught rituals to his three sons Prakashji, Dayalji and Harilalji and later Khadguji and Tularamji became adults. These brothers introduced religious dances to the courts of Shuja-ud-Daula and Asif-ud-Daula. And through the temples they patronized the royal family, and the dance style was called "Darbari Kathak". Later it was called "Kathak style Lucknow", "Kalka bindadin Gharana" and finally "Kathak Gharana".

Banaras Gharana

The supreme deity is especially famous as Shiva Tandavas and Banaras is revered as Shiv Nagari, the city of Shiva. Therefore, wearing the manly Tandava continues to be a symbol of Banaras Gharana. Not many people like Banaras Gharana these days. Although it originated in Rajasthan, Banaras is the only place where it has developed further. For this reason, it is called Banaras Gharana.

According to Kothari, Janakiprasad, who had moved to Varanasi and had famous dancers and musicians as his associates, began ruling from a village near Bikaner. Jankiprasad, an Indian dancer and Sanskrit scholar is famous for creating the mnemonic syllables known as "bols" in Kathak, the language used in this traditional dance form.

Jaipur Gharana

The Jaipur Gharana was founded about 150 years ago. In the Jaipur gharana, Bhanuji, who gained fame for his performance of Shiva Tandav, gave birth to Kathak. The Bhakti movement, in which Kanuji began dancing as a disciple of Krishna Ji and eventually gained privileges in Lasya, influenced his son. Kanuji's grandsons Hari Prasad and Hunuman Prasad worked hard to improve the dance form and increase its aura.

Jaipur Gharana originated from the court of the Kachchwaha kings of Jaipur, Rajasthan. Kathak delighted art lovers with its depiction of legendary stories. Jaipur Gharana has stylishly met the expectations of dance lovers.

The Jaipur gharana focuses more on body movements and footwork than the Lucknow gharana which focuses more on abhinaya. In Jaipur gharana, abhinaya is considered delicate. In Lucknow Gharana, Kathak revolves around creative abhinaya and expressive performance.

Nowadays, the Jaipur gharana has not changed its field of activity and is focusing on dance and footwork. Jai Lal, Janki Prasad, Kundan Lal, Mohan Lal, and Naval Kishore are among those with whom he continues the glorious history for future generations.

2. Literature Review :

2.1 India is a secular country with many different cultures and religions, each with its own unique Kathak dance style. Kathak, performed by the Katakars, is a traditional dance genre of North India derived from the Sanskrit term "katha". The three pillars are the gharanas of Jaipur, Banaras, and Lucknow. The Kathak tradition is currently continued by Pandit Birju Maharaj and Sitara Devi of Banaras Gharana. Kathak dance is known for its clean, sophisticated style and unique costumes designed for specific body movements and steps.

2.2 Kathak Circle Dance provides a brief overview of the origins and performance of this art form. It begins with prayer dancers and continues with famous dancers from North India performing pieces from the Kathak repertoire.

The film is both academically useful and visually pleasing. The technical production is skillfully filmed and lacks guts. The dance was performed perfectly. Even though not all dancers appear, each part is independent and effectively reflects the diverse nature of the genre.

2.3 Kathak has been traveling through time for thousands of years. Although it originated during the Mughal period, its origins date back to the Kalyug period. It also originated from storytelling and dancing for temple devotees in Mughal courtyards to entertain the Mughals, as well as today's staged concert performances. After this, there were significant changes in the way Katakars practiced in temples, telling stories about gods and goddesses to their worshippers. They later performed at the Mughal Court, dancing to the beat. Currently, concerts are being held with music and corresponding songs.

2.4 The basis of Indian classical music is Ragas. Each raga has a unique ability to evoke different, timeless moods. There are six principles in the ragas (Raga Bhairav, Megh, Molkans, Hindol, Shri and Deepak), which correspond to the six seasons of nature.

All classical music played in Kathak is tuned differently and played in different ragas.

2.5 As we all know, dance is eternal and never dies. It is transmitted from teacher to student through guru-shishya-parampara. Kathak also attaches great importance to the teacher-student relationship. When Kathak first began to be performed, it was passed down only to gharana, with fathers

teaching their descendants or successors. But now we can say that it has become a passion and people are learning in business as well. Now children can learn to dance in many dance schools. According to historical research, the Katakara tribe taught their students to continue Kathak in some way, but these days it seems that people are learning Kathak to perform it as a dance.

2.6 The origins of Kathak are many and varied. The term "prostitute" refers to a traditional female performer, while "bhand" or "bhagatiya" refers to a male performer. Kathak has country theaters of different styles, both secular and religious, such as Ras Leela, Ram Leela and Nautanki.

2.7 Indian culture has traditionally emphasized diversity. This music and heritage culture has been cultivated very carefully by the people. However, if culture is not preserved, it will die out over time. Therefore, the recovery of folk music culture is a process of cultural restoration. The authors of this research paper focused on Indian folk music and dance known as Kathak. Even as time passes and circumstances change slightly, the essence of the culture that we must continue to revive must be the top priority.

2.8 Kathak is a classical dance from North India. Kathak is a very beautiful and elegant dance. This dance is performed by both Hindus and Muslims thanks to its magnificent spins with virtuosic footwork, subtle pantomime, and gentle gestures. Nowadays both girls' and boys' study and teach Kathak, but things used to be different. Kathak is interesting because it has a very beautiful past and consists of many problems and difficulties. It is also associated with the Mughal period and plays a role in Hindu mythology such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana. This dance is used to worship Lord Krishna. The word Kathak comes from the Sanskrit word Katha, which means story.

2.9 The following data supports the theory that practicing Kathak dance regularly for at least 5 years with 30 minutes of daily practice harmed sedentary body composition. The study found that women who worked in the sedative industry but regularly practiced Kathak had lower body weight, BMI, and body fat percentage.

3. Transformation of Costume from Ancient to Modern Era :

Both Hindu and Muslim groups consider Kathak popular, and the dance costumes combine elements of both cultures. There are two types of clothing for Hindu women. One of the outfits includes a saree with a unique drape, a choli or blouse that covers the upper body, a scarf, and some places. Another outfit consists of a long skirt with transparent odhni and contrasting choli.

Traditional jewellery, usually gold in color and consisting of jewels for the nose, ears, neck and hands, defines the outfit perfectly. Along with the harmonium and table, a musical bracelet known as "Gungkuru" consisting of a leather strap or thick thread with small metal bells attached is wrapped around the ankle and produces rhythmic sounds. The dancer shows off her amazing footwork. In the second case, the dancer wears jewelry on her head. She is wearing bright and shiny makeup, which makes her expression even more eye-catching.

Hindu Kathak dancers usually wear silk dhoti, exposing most of their body. When Kathak is performed males do wear clothes, they usually wear a half jacket and tie a silk scarf around their upper body. Compared to female dancers, male dancers' decorations are more subdued. Both wear stone necklaces.

Muslim dancers cover their arms and upper body with long coats, tight pants known as churidar or pajamas, and skirts. The purpose of a scarf is to complement your entire outfit with elegant jewelry.

Nowadays, modernization has brought minor changes in Kathak costumes as well, as people prefer a combination of stylish, sophisticated, and elegant looks. Long jackets and long skirts are the same spin-off, but over time, the design of the long jacket and odhni changes.

When Kathak is performed in Bollywood films, the costumes and looks are also perfectly adapted. Kathak has appeared in many films, the most famous of which are Devdas and Umarao Jaan. Madhuri Dixit, who plays the role of Kathak in the upcoming film Kalank, also wore an elegant outfit.

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