CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN AND SOME BASIC CONCEPTS OF BHARATANATYAM

2.1 Introduction

The art of dance began as an outward spontaneous expression of deep inner feelings. Gradually dance developed into a mimetic and representational activity following a rhythm. The activities of life like hunting, fighting, fishing, sowing, reaping, cooking and the like were depicted in dance. It became a method of communication as and when dance used meaningful gestures to convey ideas and emotions. One’s own emotions and feelings were expressed through the body parts even before the formation of language and symbolic gestures. Pre-historic dance was called primitive. This representational dance was categorized into folk and ritual. While the former included games, songs and dances of elders and children with occupational or vocational activities and riddles as themes, the latter included religious and social activities like propitiating gods, invoking spirits, magic, war dances, birth and marriage ceremonies and so on. The folk aspects created joyful experiences, social interactions and collective theatrical entertainment, and the ritual aspects were highly stylized and symbolic in nature.¹

In course of time the folk aspect of dance became categorized into ritualistic or religious folk and highly stylized gestural or classical dance. The folk category includes all the folk dances of India. For example, kaniyan kūttu (dance bringing out the devotion of a person by name Kaniyan) of Tamilnadu, saturi (dance on Lord Kṛṣṇa’s childhood pranks) of Assam, nāg pūjā (a prayer dance praying to Lord Śiva for victory) of Nagaland, goncha (prayer dance for rain) of Madhya Pradesh, gaunal (ritualistic form) of Maharashtra, daśāvatāra (a religious tradition in which the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu are enacted) of

Goa are some of the ritualistic folk dances. The classical dances of India include Bharatanatyam, Odissi,

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Kathak, Kathakali, Manipuri, Kuchipudi, Mohiniattam and Sattriya. Dance styles that are practised today in different regions of India express their regional flavour although they have a common origin. The Indian classical dances demonstrate the high philosophical values and the deep religious sentiments of the Indian people. Indian classical arts are a product of the creative genius of the people and they express a passionate search for a complete identification of self with the supreme power.

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya has expressed the transcendental aspect of Indian dance, in the foreword to the book *The Dance in India*, as follows: “Dance symbolizes an inspiration which elevates us from the earthly bonds that bind us down to higher levels, thus releasing the wrapped and suppressed feelings, and create even if it be fleetingly; those moments of the soul when we become one with the universe.” Projesh Banerji, in his text, *Art of Indian Dancing*, speaks of the three essential features in a dance:

One, a spontaneous movement of the muscles and limbs under the influence of some strong emotion, feeling or passion, such as joy, pleasure, anger or religious exaltation; two, pleasure derived both by the dancer and the spectator due to a definite combination of such graceful movements; and three, the vivid representation of emotions in other people watching the dancer, due to such carefully trained movements.

In *Laghu Bharatham*, Sudharani Raghupathy writes that dance carries a dual message, namely, the physical to be lifted to the plane of the sublime and the interpretation of the universal by the submergence of the individual self. From the above references it is clear that the Indian classical dances ultimately aim at merging the self with the SELF. The origin of Indian dance is generally traced back to the pre-historic period. In this study, the mythological and the historical origin of dance are focused on.

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2.2 The Origin

2.2.1 The Mythological Origin

Mythology is the study of myths and legends. They do not constitute history in the accepted sense of the term. Nor can they be considered idealized or exaggerated history. Myths are indeed products of the fertile imagination of vested interests, not of reason and intended to appeal to faith and credulity. They are erected upon an unquestioning belief in the supernatural agency.\(^7\)

Mythology is said to inspire craftsmen who meditate on the stories of God’s divine perfection and revelations and incorporate their perceptions into marvellous sculptures.\(^8\) Jagadisa Ayyar, in his *South Indian Shrines*, remarks that the statements contained in the *Purāṇas* are required to be accepted as they are.\(^9\) It is not the focus here to probe into the truth of *purāṇic* stories, but to understand the origin of dance in India as accepted by scholars and the people. The origin of dance in India lies buried in distant past where mythology, religion and art were deeply intertwined. It is believed that dance and religion form two aspects of the same truth.

Mythology says that the first musical sound and rhythmic syllables originated from Śiva when the ear ring (*kuṇḍala*) fell from his ears and created the sound *tat tit tom nam*. One does not find any historical proof for this belief. The purpose here is not to probe into the scientific foundation of this belief, but to study the traditional belief in the divine origin of Bharatanatyam. The mythological origin teaches that Indian classical dance is a divine art and is always connected to the Hindu gods and goddesses. The earliest reference to dance appears in the Rig Veda, while describing Usha (dawn) as revealing beauty like a dancer, removing the garment in the form of darkness.\(^10\)

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\(^8\) Enakshi Bhavnani, *The Dance in India*, p. 15.


There are numerous Sanskrit texts that speak of the mythological origin of Indian dance, namely Bharata’s Nāṭyaśāstra, Nandikeśvara’s Abhinayadarpana, Dhananjaya’s Daśarūpaka. The mythological origin of dance is viewed from the point of view of some famous scholars in the following pages. In Nāṭyaśāstra, sage Bharata speaks of the origin of nāṭya in the following lines. The people at the beginning of the tretāyuga were leading their lives full of misery and lust. Devas (gods) were worried about this situation and they approached Indra, the king of devas, for a solution. So, Indra approached Brahma, the creator of the universe, and asked him to create an entertainment for the people. Brahma sat in meditation and recollected the four Vedas and created the fifth Veda Nāṭya Veda by taking the dialogues from the Rig Veda, music from the Sāma Veda, histrionic and gestural representation from Yajur Veda and the sentiments from the Atharva Veda. He gave the Nāṭya Veda to sage Bharata and advised him to do something creative. Bharata with his hundred sons choreographed the plays composed by Brahma. He made use of the three nṛttis (styles), Bhāratī (verbal utterance), Sāttvatī (conception of the mind) and Ārabhaṭī (vigorous physical activity). He felt that something was lacking in the choreography and so he decided to add the Kaiśikī (the charmingly graceful). Thus he requested Brahma to give him women for the performance and Brahma created twenty-six celestial damsels for the purpose of performance. On the occasion of the festival of the flag of Mahendra, the performance was performed with the divine troupe entitled Asuraparājayam (the story depicting the defeat of the demons). On seeing the performance, the demons that were viewing the show, became very furious and began to disturb the play. Then, by the orders of Brahma, the closed theatre was constructed by the chief architect Viśvakarmā and the play was produced successfully.11

The mythological origin of nāṭya is described in the above quotation. The origin of nṛttta (rhythmic dance) and nṛtya occurred later, when the plays were performed in front


13 Nṛttta element of dance is decorative where the movement does not interpret any idea or convey any meaning or sentiment.
of Śiva and Śiva gave his suggestions. Bharata gives the following description of the origin of nṛtta and nṛtya. The troupe went to Kailās, the abode of Śiva, and presented two plays Amṛta-manthana and Tripuradāha. After witnessing the play, Śiva suggested that nṛ tta (tāṇḍava) could be incorporated in the play and told the sage Taṇḍu to teach it to Bharata. Bharata learnt nṛ tya (lasya) from Pārvatī and he used it in his play. The pūrvarñga (preliminaries) included the nṛ tta and the solo items in the play included the nṛ tya.

In Abhinayadarpaṇa Nandikeśvara speaks of the mythological origin of dance:

Āṅgikam bhuvanam yasya
Vācikam sarvavāṁ mayam/
Āhāryam candratārādi
Tam numah sātvikam śivam

(Abhinayadarpaṇa Verse 1)

The meaning of the above verse is – whose bodily movement is the entire universe, whose speech is the language of the universe, whose ornaments are the moon and the stars, Him we worship, the serene Lord Śiva. The above verses say that Śiva is the whole universe and all activities that are happening in the world happen through him. Therefore, it can be concluded that dance originated from the action of Śiva or from himself. Lord Śiva is

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14 Nṛ tya is a combination of rhythmic dance along with delineation of sentiments and feelings, where ideas and emotions or the meaning of the literary content of a song or a poem are rendered through the language of gestures and facial expressions.

15 The play on the churning of the ocean for the sake of the nectar is named Amṛta-manthana or Asuravijaya. It belongs to the samavakāra play. Samavakāra is one of the ten dramatic types. The dominant sentiment is the heroic. There are twelve heroes, devas and asuras.

16 The play on the burning of the three worlds is named Tripuradāha and it belongs to the dhima play. The prominent sentiment is raudra. There are sixteen haughty heroes in this drama.

17 Taṇḍava is the masculine dance with vigour and force.

18 Lasya is the soft expression with feminine grace in it.


compared to an actor / dancer from whom the four *abhinayas* namely the āṅgika, vācika, āhārya and sāttvika emanate.²²

There is another description of the origin of dance given by Nandikeśvara in the following lines. In the beginning, Brahma gave the Nāṭya Veda to Bharata and Bharata together with the *gandharvas*, the musicians and *apsaras*, the celestial damsels performed the nāṭ ya, nṛ tta and nṛ tya before Śiva. After witnessing the performance, Siva instructed his attendants (*gaṇas*) to teach Bharata the masculine form of dancing named *tāṇḍava* and then he made Bharata to learn the feminine and graceful form of dancing named *lāṣya* through Pārvatī, his consort. Pārvatī taught this dance to Uṣa, the daughter of king Bana and Uṣa taught the art to the milkmaids of Dvārakā, who in turn taught to the women of Saurāṣṭra, who in turn taught to the women of other countries. Thus the art of dancing, which was meant as an entertainment for the gods, was traditionally handed down to the mortals in the world.²³

From the above lines, one understands that the Nāṭya Veda had nṛ tta, nṛ tya and nāṭ ya in it. Later Śiva, through his attendant, taught *tāṇḍava* and Pārvatī taught *lāṣya* to Sage Bharata and thus spread them among the humankind. The highest form of beauty is manifested in art and that art or beauty is personified in the form of Śiva, who is also the embodiment of truth. Śiva is considered the prime personality for the origin of dance. The pinnacle of beauty is Śiva who is truth and therefore the words *satyam śivam sundaram*²⁴ are apt for the art. Besides these, there is the belief that Śiva is the lord of dance and each and every movement in dance was born from his actions.

Banerji describes the origin of Indian dance in his text *Art of Indian Dancing*:

The first sound *nāda* or the musical sound is said to have been created by the *damaru* (drum) of Śiva and dancing has been emanated from the cosmic movements of the same god. These forms of art are adored, as they are associated with the Supreme

²² *Abhinayadarpana*, pp. 1-2.

²³ Ibid., pp. 11-14.

²⁴ *Satyam*, *śivam* and *sundaram* are the three attributes of the Absolute. *Satyam* stands for truth, *śivam* for what is good, noble and eternal and *sundaram* for beauty.
Being. This personification for art is a great conception of art. The myth says that Hindu dance springs from Śiva.\(^{25}\)

The Hindu tradition recognizes Śiva as the creator of dance, the lord of dance, and the best cosmic dancer. He is also called nādānta where nāda means the sound and anta means the end. The end of the sound is said to be the beginning of the praṇava or Om sound that is at the center of enlightenment.\(^{26}\) There is another myth illustrating the origin of dance and music which connects it with the apsaras or the dancing nymphs of heaven. Banerji describes it in *Art of Indian Dancing*:

The right hand of the female body has seven joints that include the tip of the finger as sa; the three knuckles as ri, ga, ma; the wrist as the pa; the elbow as dha; and the shoulder as ni. The other hand also has the same series. In connection with the body, the perpendicular line of the body includes the neck as sa; shoulders as ri; waist as ga; hip as ma; knee as pa; heel as dha; and toe as ni. The movements are formed from the bending of the joints according to the desire of the artiste forming into beautiful dance compositions.\(^ {27}\)

Banerjee further writes on the origin of dance thus:

Śiva is considered as the cosmic dancer and the first dancer according to Hindu conception. A legend says that once there was a dispute between Śiva and Pārvatī as who the better dancer is. Śiva won the contest by lifting one of his legs on the top of his crown and began dancing. Pārvatī being a feminine stopped dancing and acknowledged Śiva to be the best dancer.\(^ {28}\)

The above mentioned mythological references throw light on the dances of the gods on particular occasions with specific purposes. All gods of the Hindu pantheon are shown to dance, from the elephant-headed Gaṇapati to the enchanting Kṛṣṇa. There are many more myths and legends that speak of the origin of dance. These myths delineate the association of dance with divine personalities, thereby making dance divine. These myths serve as reference


\(^{26}\) Manjula Lusti Narasimhan, *Bharatanatyam*, p. 36.

\(^{27}\) Projesh Banerjee, *Art of Indian Dancing*, pp. 3-4.

\(^{28}\) Ibid., p. 10.
points for the present researcher in the study of the supernatural narratives of dance. The historical origin of dance based on ancient Tamil texts is dealt with in the following pages.

2.2.2 Historical Origin of Dance

The historical origin of dance is traced from the earliest Tamil literature down to the 10th century AD. The famous Tamil texts selected are *Pattupāṭṭu* (anthology of ten early Tamil classical poems), *Eṭṭu tokai* (the eight anthologies), *Kāttanūl* (treatise on dance-drama), *Pañcamarapu* (five-fold traditional usage), *Tolkāppiyam* (source book on linguistic and grammatical study, social anthropology, psychology and cultural ecology) and *Cilappatikāram* (the story of the anklet). As soon as one hears the word “history,” one might think of kings and dynasties. The historical origin of dance discussed in this thesis is to the references to dance found in the Tamil texts and not to ruling dynasties. Dance was very popular and prevalent in the olden days and these Tamil texts give information on the existence of different forms of dance too.

The chronological framework of the above-mentioned texts presented hereunder is taken from the article of Raju Kalidos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Century</th>
<th>Work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caṅkam: Early(^{29})</td>
<td>since at least 100 BC</td>
<td><em>Tolkāppiyam</em></td>
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<td><em>Naṟṟai</em></td>
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<td>Caṅkam: Later(^{30})</td>
<td>AD 200</td>
<td><em>Maturaikkānci</em></td>
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<td><em>Kuṟ ṅcippāṭṭuṟṟu</em></td>
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<td>AD 300</td>
<td><em>Paripāṭṭal</em></td>
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<td><em>Tirumurukāṟṟuṟṟuṇṭaṟṟai</em></td>
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\(^{29}\) The first saṅgam flourished in South Madurai which was in the grip of a fierce sea-erosion; it was patronized by 89 kings, it lasted 4449 years; there were 549 poets.

\(^{30}\) The second saṅgam was established in Kapāṭapuram on the east coast. It was patronized by 59 kings; it lasted 3700 years and had 59 poets and 5 royal people in it.
2.2.2.1 Pattupāṭṭu and Ėṭṭutokai

The Saṅgam (Caṅkam) literature is aptly regarded as the crown of Tamil literature. The ancient works, Pattupāṭṭu (a collection of ten ancient Tamil poems) and Ėṭṭutokai (the eight anthologies of the Caṅkam period) give details about the art of dance in the Caṅkam period. Naṟṟiṇai (a text on musicology), Kuṟ untokai (an anthology of 402 Tamil stanzas), Aiṅkuṟ uṉūṟu (an anthology of love lyrics), Kalittokai (an anthology of 150 stanzas in kali metre describing the erotic emotions and five tracts of land), Akanāṉūṟu (an anthology of 400 love lyrics belonged to the 3rd or the 2nd century BC). Puṟanāṉūṟu (an anthology on the external world), Patiṟṟuppattu (an anthology of ten sections, each of them in praise of a Chera king), Paripāṭṭal (an anthology of 70 stanzas of songs) comprise Ėṭṭutokai.

Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭṭai (a poem in honour of Murukāṉ by Nakkirar), Porunarrāṟṟuppaṭṭai (a guide poem for war-bards to Chola king Karikāla by Mudattama Kanniar), Ciṟ upāṇāṟṟuppaṭṭai (an idyll by Nallur Nattattanar on the chief Nalliyakōṭar of Oymāṉāṭu), Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭṭai (a guide poem for bards with large lutes praising Torṇṭi antiraiyaṉ by Rudran Kannanar), Mullaippāṭṭai (anthology on the jasmine country and the theme of a woman by Nappūṭar) Maturaikkāṉci Neṭ unalvāṭṭai (a poem of praise by Māṉkuṭṭi Marutāṉ on the Pandyan king Neṭ uṇcelṉ iyan of Talaiyālankānam), Kuṟ iṅcippāṭṭai (the song of the mountains: the tactful conversation of the confidant by Kapilar), Paṭṭi Ṛappāḷai (a poem on Chola king Karikāla by Rudran Kannanar),

31 The third saṅgam was founded in the present Madurai situated on the banks of the Vaigai. It endured 1850 years and was patronized by 49 Pandyan rulers and 49 poets.


33 The Caṅkam Period is fixed approximately between 2500 B.C. and the 1st century A.D. The Caṅkam period had learned assemblies or academies of ancient times patronized by Pandya kings. The three periods are termed, Caṅkam, Iṟ aiccaṅkam (mid period), Kaṭ aiccaṅkam (post saṅgam period).

Malaipat ukaṭ ām (a poem on the theme of a dancer also called Kuttarāṟṟ uppat ai by Peruṅ kuṇ ṛ ur Peruṅ kaučikaṇ ār) comprise Pattupāṭṭu (the ten idylls).  

Caṅkam literature informs that Ātimanti, daughter of King Karikāla and a noteworthy queen in the Chola kingdom; Āṭṭaṅ atti, a chieftain of Chera dynasty and Āṭṭukōṭṭai, a king, were experts in the art of dance. Caṅkam literature provides the information that the members of the royal family, along with the poets, practised the art of dancing. During the Caṅkam period, cil upāṭar (a division of the pāṉar caste), perumpāṉar (a division of the pāṉar caste), Yaḷ pāṉar (a division of the ancient pāṉar caste famous for playing on stringed instruments), icaipāṉar (a division of the ancient pāṉar caste famous for their singing), along with the group of kūttar/āṭṭ unar (actor, dancer), poruṇar (a dancer/master), viṟ aliyar (a female dancer who exhibits the various emotions and sentiments in her dance), kūṭiyar (wife of kūttar), nāṭ aka kanikaiyar (actress in a drama) who belonged to the kūttukkalai sect along with the instrumental musical experts fostered this art form.  

The dance forms referred to in Caṅkam literature are Tunaṅkai (a kind of dance), Kuṟ avai (dance in a circle prevalent among the women of hill tracts), and Veṟ iyāṭ al (to dance under possession by Skanda). The other dance forms are Āriyakkūṭtu (dancing with poles on ropes by an aboriginal people called āriyar), Vāṭāvaiḷḷi (a kind of dance), Viṟ aliyāṭ al (dance of a viṟ ali), Vāḷlai kūṭtu, Tuṭituṅkal (a form of dancing), Kayirāṭ al (to dance with ropes), Pāvai aṭṭ al (dance bringing out the killing of the asuras by Lakṣmī when she assumed the form of kollippoḷaival), Aruvai āṭṭ al (to dance with net or hoop suspended from the shoulder), Kūṭṭāṭ u ṛ painṭāṭ al (to dance with jumps and leaps), Tuṭ i āṭṭ al (a dance of victory), Verikkūṭtu (dance of a priest possessed by Skanda – mad play), Koṭ iyar kūṭtu (dance of the professional dancers), Kaḷ alnilai kūṭtu (a dance on the theme of victorious warriors),  

38 Ibid., p.4.  
and Vāl amalai kūttu (dance of the soldiers with swords who have gathered round a fallen enemy king). The references of kūttar (dancer/actor) from various texts in the Caṅkam period are given below. The above references point to the fact that different dance forms existed and were prevalent in Tamil society during the Caṅkam period.

Tolkāppiyam, in Akattinai, describes kūttar as professional dancers. By taking up kūttu as their profession, they belonged to the class of pāṇar (an ancient class of Tamil bards and minstrels), poruṇar (dancer), viṟ ali (female dancer), and pāṭ ini (songsters, women of the pāṇar caste). The kūttar were highly regarded and appreciated in the king’s court. The women folk of the kūttar, known as viṟ aliyar (female dancer), sang and danced among the courtiers and were appreciated. The one who performed after victory in the battle was called muntēr kuṟavai (to dance in front of the victorious king), and the one who performed after the declaration of peace was called pintēr kuṟavai (to dance behind the king’s chariot). Details on Veriyātal are found (Caṅkam literature) in Tolkāppiyam. Information regarding Veṟiyātal, its period, the land, the field, costumes and facial make-up, and the reason for performing such a dance is well explained. The reason for performing this dance is the expression of extreme devotion and love for Lord Murukaṉ. Murukaṉ and the women folk are said to have performed this art of dance. The poets who sang of the women who danced under the possession of Lord Murukaṉ were known as veṟ ipāṭ iyā kāmakkaṇṇiyār.

Caṅkam literature brings out the details regarding the land, the area, the dressing of kuṟ avai kūttu (a dance form danced in a circle by the women of the hill tracts). It enables the readers to know the reason for this dance form, the way it was performed, the dancers, and the music used for it. The details about tunaṅkai kūttu, its period, place, area, the dancers and the dance form are also found in Caṅkam literature. The dance is performed by joining the hands and beating across the ribs. Since the king also participated in this dance, this was supposed to have been regarded highly by the people. Thus Caṅkam literature beautifully explains how dance was practiced in daily life and how kūttar and viṟ aliyar danced and entertained the kings and the people.


2.2.2.2 Kūttanūl

Kūttanūl or kūttiyal is an ancient treatise on the art of dance. This is a unique and comprehensive treatise on the three fold arts of dance, music and drama. Atiyarkku Nallar and Nacinarkiniyar, the prose writers of Cilappatikāram⁴² (an ancient Tamil epic poem) and Cīvakacintāmaṇi⁴³ (a Jain epic poem) respectively, have mentioned Kūttanūl (a treatise on gesticulation in dancing) in their works. So it is clear that Kūttanūl is prior to Cilappatikāram and Cīvakacintāmaṇi. Even though the author of this text is known as Ĉāttanār, it is evident from Kannūl that his full name is Kuttanur Cembut Ceyyar Cattan. He is said to belong to a village called Kuttanur in the Pandya kingdom. One hears about someone called Cembutcei, a student of Agasthiar, and student who belonged to the same period of Tolkappiyar. Ĉāttanār is entitled in Pāyiram as “Nāṭya Brahma,” which means the supreme creator of dance. This title proves that Cattanar created many varieties of kūttu and so he is the author of Kūttanūl. This information has been gathered by S. D. S. Yogiar, the prose writer of Kūttanūl.⁴⁴ From Kūttanūl, the existence of dance, its form, and the details of the art have been probed in brief.

Kūttanūl has nine major divisions and each division is called nūl (book). Each nūl is further divided into small parts with subtitles. Every subdivision provides many definitions of its own. Cuvainūl (book on production of aesthetics) is the first book of this kind in Tamil, which connects art and language with the divine. Cuvainūl explains the divine origin of music, dance, and drama, and the evolution of sounds, shapes and emotions – both natural and aesthetic; and their manifestations in all their possibilities and limitations as a theoretical art and craft. It also explains the vettiyal (the branch relating to akam – mental or psychic aspect in the dramatic composition) and potuviyal (the branch relating to puram – external aspect in the dramatic composition).⁴⁵

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⁴² Cilappatikāram is an ancient Tamil epic poem, having Kovalan as the hero. It was written by Ilango Adigalal about the beginning of the 2nd century BC and it was later commented upon by Adiyarkku Nallar and Nacinarkiniyar. It is one of the famous paṇca kāviyam (five poems) in Tamil.

⁴³ Cīvaka Cintāmani is a Jaina epic poem with Jivaka as the hero. It was composed by Tiruttakkatēvar, about the beginning of 10th century AD and it is one of the paṇca kāviyam.


The Tokainūl (dictionary of dance forms) mentions one hundred and eight Śiva tāṇḍavas out of which twelve are explained in detail with their standing postures. The Varinūl (book on folk dances) states that there were many varikkāttu (folk dances) performed in the aintiṇai (the five regions / five situations), namely the mullai (forest tract), kuṟiṇci (hilly tract), marutam (agricultural tract), neytal (maritime tract) and pālai (desert tract). The above folk dances are performed even today. They are called kirāmiya nāṭṭiyakal (village folk dances). Varinūl gives consolidated information about all these dances.

The Kalainūl (book on the dancing limbs) is a very elaborate text consisting of more than a thousand sūtrās (definitions) on the anatomical divisions of the human body. This book talks about the state and the movement of the different parts of the body such as the feet, toes, heels, ankles, knees, calves and thigh. It also describes, the actions of the neck, chin, cheeks, ears, mouth, nose and the facial expressions and their appropriate physical modifications, such as horripilation and tremors.

The Karaṇanūl (book on the combination of dance gestures) can be aptly described as a collection of information about dance. The 108 karaṇas and the mudrās (hand gestures) related to them, the sthānakas (standing postures), cāris (the movements of the feet), kalaśas/aṅgahāras (movement of limbs), tāṇḍavās (the vigorous dance), lāsas (the graceful dance) are explained in Karaṇanūl.

The Tālanūl (book on time measure) describes the aspect of rhythm in dance. This book is also called Tāla Samutiram (ocean of tālas). It consists of three parts: Aṅkaṅkal (the ten parts of a tāla), Kirakaṅkal (the starting points of a tāla) and Mūrcanikal (the derivation from rāgas and tālas). Tāla is divided into Iyal Tāla (a variety in the tāla) and Aṭṭa Tāla (a variety of tāla with twelve counts) by the author, who also explains them in

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46 Cf. Cattanar, Kūttanūl, p. 149.
47 V. P. K. Sundaram, Tamil icaikalaikkalanīciyam, part 4, pp. 98-100.
48 Ibid., part 1, p. 19.
49 Ibid., part 2, p. 120.
50 Ibid., part 4, p. 54.
detail. The book further explains the five original tālas in Iyal Tāla and the thirty-five subdivisions derived from them. It also talks about the svara (musical notes) and jathis (rhythmic syllables). In the Aṭṭa Tāla section, the one hundred and eight tālas of sage Agasthiar and the fifty-two tālas of other artists, and their jathis are explained.

Icai or music is intimately related to dance. In Icai (book on music), the ascending and descending musical notes of the thirty melodies, which are not in vogue, are well brought out. Some of these songs are handled by the tēvāram (a garland of devotional songs praising Śiva) saints. The melodies found in the Icai are used nowadays for dance songs. Moreover, the devotional songs sung by the tēvāram saints are also used as devotional pieces in dances. As the songs are in Tamil language, they are practised only by the Bharatanatyam dancers.

The Avainūl (book on theatre architecture) talks about the auditorium where the dance is performed. The details about the hall, the audio required, the screen, the costume are explained in this text. Besides these, the lighting effects, the dramatic feelings and expression, make up and the green room are also mentioned. The Kannūl (summation) explains the objective of dance and its practice in dance. The benefits received through dance are explained. This book talks about various aspects such as yoga, good physique, good voice, the medicinal ointment, exercise, breath control and the control of the mind to attain perfection and liberation.51

The above explanations make one familiar with the dance and the related subjects that existed in Tamil society during the time of Kūttanūl.

2.2.2.3 Pañcamarapu

The music literature called Pañcamarapu (a book on five established literary usages, five-fold traditional usages) was composed by Cerai Aṟivarar in the 9th century AD during the time of Pandyan Tirumaran of the last Cakam Period. This book has five major divisions, namely, Icaimarapu (literary usage of music), Vācciyamarapu (literary use of speech), NIRUTTAMARAPU (literary usage of dance), AVINAYAMARAPU (literary usage of expressions) and TĀLAMARAPU (literary use of time measure). The Icaimarapu and Vācciyamarapu are not explained here.

since they have no direct reference to dance. Niruttamarapu, Avinayamarapu and Tālamarapu are discussed in the following lines since each text gives detailed information on dance and music.\(^52\)

1. **Niruttamarapu**: Niruttam (dance, one of the sixty–four arts) is a common name for all kūtus and tăn ḍava (dance). Niruttamarapu has the following five divisions:

a. **Niruttavakaimarapu** (the characteristics of different types of dancing): In the Niruttavakaimarapu, there are the seven kūtus, namely, tăn ḍ avam (the vigorous dance),\(^53\) niruttam (dancing),\(^54\) năṭ yam (drama),\(^55\) kuṭ avai (to dance in a circle), vari (a kind of masquerade dance), kōlam (a graceful dance)\(^56\) and vakai (a division of dance).\(^57\) These seven kūtus are classified into three types of kūtus called cānti kūtus (a kind of dance calculated to give peace of mind to the hero and other actors), vinōta kūtus (dance performed in the presence of kings in celebration of their victories) and vakai kūtus (a section of dance).\(^58\) Besides these, sixteen akamārgaporuḥ (exposition by gesture and dancing), the rhythm for tăn ḍ ava (dance with jumping/leaping movements), jathi (rhythmic syllables), körvai (garland of rhythmic

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\(^{52}\) Arivanar, Pañcamarapu, part 1, 2nd ed. (Coimbatore: Sakti Aranilaiya Publications, 1975), pp. x-xi.

\(^{53}\) The term tăn ḍ ava has several meanings, like akaval (dance as a peacock), tăn ḍ al (to dance jumping), acātal (to move, stir), peyartal (to move) and kūtā ḍ al (to dance). Tăn ḍ ava is of two types, coṛ ka tăn ḍ ava (Śiva’s dance in paradise) and āḍanta tăn ḍ ava (the blissful dance of Śiva).

\(^{54}\) Nirutta (nṛ tun) is kūtu or dance with music, which includes four types of abhinaya (expressions), navarasas (nine sensibilities), jathi and svara (musical notes). Nirutta is of three types namely, tēci (a mode of dancing), vaṭ uku (a dance of the region to the north of the Tamil country) and cīṅkalam (a mode of dancing with gesticulation peculiar to the Sinhalese).

\(^{55}\) Nāṭ ya is avinaya kūtu (expressional dance). It has three divisions, namely tăn ḍ ava, niruttam and nāṭ yam. All the above three kūtus are considered cānti kūtu. It comprises of nāṭ akam (drama) based on iyal (literature) and icai (music).

\(^{56}\) Kōlam is a dance in which men sing and dance in different forms about the news of different countries like Īḷ am (Tamil settlements in Sri Lanka in Caṅkam Period), Arālam, Maram, Cittu, and Cōṅkālam.

\(^{57}\) The term Vakaikkūtu stands for the eleven kūtus from pantaraṅkam to kaṭ aiyar kūtu. These kūtus are associated with different gods and goddesses with their different moods – pantaraṅkam and koṭ ukoṭ ūṭ i by Śiva; kuṭ ākūtu by Murukāṇ; markūtu by Kannan (Kṛṣṇa); allīyu kūtu by Kṛṣṇa; pāvai kūtu by Lakṣmī; kuṭ ai kūtu by Mayōn (Kṛṣṭa); tuṭ i kūtu by Murukāṇ; peṭ i kūtu by Manmathan (god of love); marakkāl kūtu by Đurgā; kaṭ aiyar kūtu by Indrani (wife of Indra, the god of the devas). Cf. Arivanar, Pañcamarapu, part 2, pp. 3-6.

\(^{58}\) Cf. Arivanar, Pañcamarapu, part 2, pp. 1-2.
syllables), sixteen tāṅḍava cintu (metrical line of three feet) and other such musical forms are explained in detail.  

b. Tāṅḍava Tāla Marapu: Tāṅḍava Tāla Marapu introduces the aspects of akam (mind). Akam stands for the three mental aspects of sāttvikam (peace), rāsatam (enthusiasm) and tāmatam (meekness) and the nine rasas (sentiments) of uvakai (joy), nakai (laughter), aḷ ukai (pathetic), vekulī (anger), perumitam (sense of pride), accam (fear), ilivaral (fatigue), maruṭ kai (surprise), naṭ unilai (peace). These nine rasas are exhibited through three characters namely, the sāttvika, rājasā and tāmasā. The sixteen types of tāṅḍava that were danced by Śiva and Kālī in a place called Ālankāṭ u are said to have expressed the characters and navarasas of akam in their dance and this aspect is known as akamarga (exposition by gesture and dancing of the three characters, namely sattva (yogic), rajas (majestic) and tāmas (powerful and aggressive). These tāṅḍava are described in the following lines.

c. Akamārgaporuḷ Jathivaralāru Marapu: Akamārgaporuḷ jathivaralāru marapu describes jathi or catikōrvai (the garland of rhythmic syllables) called corkaṭ u (rhythmic syllables). The corkaṭ u is beautifully and rhythmically rendered orally and enacted through hands or kaṇcakaruvai (a brass instrument to maintain the tempo). The dancers perform in accordance with the rhythmic syllables. At present it is known as naṭ u uvāṅkam (a brass and bronze...

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59 Ibid., pp. 4-6.
60 (i) Adī tāṅḍava was danced by Śiva, using eight tālas, in front of Viṣṇu, Brahma and celestial beings. (ii) Śiva danced Anu Tāṅḍava in seven tālas to the song of Viṣṇu, after bending the mount Meru. (iii) Prakāśa Tāṅḍava was danced in five tālas, to protect the living things in the world. (iv) Pūṭ a Tāṅḍava was danced, in eight tālas, for Yama samhāram (the destruction of the god of death). (v) Puṭ pāṇical was danced, in five tālas, when the celestial beings worshipped Śiva. (vi) Puyaṅkam was danced, in four tālas, in Tāraka vanam (forest) in the form of Birustatarkas (mendicants). (vii) Tēci was danced in Tillai, in five tālas, after burning Tiripuram (the three worlds). (viii) Ottu was danced in five tālas after taking āḷ am (poison). (ix) Nīṭi was danced for the sapta rishis in six tālas. (x) Nīḷ al was danced for Ravana in three tālas. (xi) Vaippu was danced to show the one hundred and eight karatras in four tālas. (xii) Vaippu was danced with Kāli in four tālas. (xiii) Vākkiyam was danced after searching for aṭ i and muṭ i (top and bottom) in six tālas. (xiv) Kavuttam/kavuttuvam was danced to emphasize rhythm in three tālas. (xv) Tunukku was danced to describe the philosophy of the functioning of the world in seven tālas. (xvi) Tenṭ apāṭam was danced by Śiva with Kāli in Tiruvālanṭ u using one tāla. Cf. V. P. K. Sundaram, Cerai Arivanar iyaṭṭ iya Paṅcamarapu (Tirunelveli: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, 1915), pp. 365-374.

61 Cf. Arivanar, Paṅcamarapu, part 2, pp. 5-7.
62 V.P.K. Sundaram, Tamil icai kalaikkalaṉciyam, part 3, p. 165.
instrument played by the dance teacher while the dancer dances). This small division has the
above-mentioned sixteen types of tāṇḍava in its own combined form.\textsuperscript{63}

d. Akamargaporuḷ Taru Marapu: Akamargaporuḷ Taru Marapu is a small division that has
the relevant songs for each of the sixteen tāṇḍavas.\textsuperscript{64}

e. Kūttilakkaraṇamarapu: Kūttilakkaraṇamarapu means the characteristics of kūttu. The
following are the actions of the kūttu in this tradition: Andabēda (the movement of the eyes);
putpabheda (to show expression according to the meaning of the given song); pūsāri (to jump
and dance on the floor according to rhythm); ālsāri (to dance round the dance-stage);
āṅgasāri (to do the bodily abhinayas in the proper way); and kāla (time-measure) referring to
the past, present, and future. To keep the rhythm at a particular level and then proceed, to
dance the exact dance relevant to its rhythm when rhythm comes to sama, and to dance one or
two counts beyond are referred to the past, present and future kāla.\textsuperscript{65}

There are six positions of the legs used in kūttu: (i) vaiṇava (to stand with one leg
slanting); (ii) sama nilai (to keep the legs at equal levels); (iii) vaikāśa (to stand keeping the
knee slanting); (iv) maṇḍala (to separate the legs leaving twelve toes’ interval); (v) āliṇḍa
(keeping one leg to one side and the other leaning on it); and (vi) pratyāliṇḍa (to keep one leg
to the side and the other to the front).\textsuperscript{66}

The actions of the foot are five in number: (i) sama (to stamp at the same level); (ii)
maṇḍala (the interval between the two heels); (iii) utkattita (stamping in front); (iv) aṅcita
(to lift, standing on the hind heels); and (v) kuṅcita (heels thrown down, toes all bent down).\textsuperscript{67}
The hand gestures and leg poses for tēci, vaṭuku and ciṅkalam are described. For tēci, the
hand gesture is candrakalā and the leg pose is in maṇḍala; to show vaṭuku, the hand gesture

\textsuperscript{63} Cf. Arivanar, Paṅcamarapu, p. 17.

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., p. 41.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., p. 49.

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., pp. 50-51.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., p. 52.
is saṁdamsa and the leg pose is vaikāśa; and for ciṅkalam, the hand gesture is tripatākā and leg pose is in ubhaya\(^{68}\) (this is a combination of maṇḍala and vaikāśa leg pose).

2. **Avinayamarapu**: Avinayamarapu is the tradition of abhinaya (artistic expressions). Abhinaya is one type of kūttu. In abhinaya kūttu the actions of the leg, body, eyes, face and hands take place simultaneously. Expressing through abhinaya is called nāṭaka icaittamiḻ (dramatic representation with song).\(^{69}\) This tradition includes the following six sub-divisions:

(i) *Pindi* or *oṟṟaiikkai marapu* (single-hand tradition) that include āṇkai (male hand), peṇkai (female hand), alikkai (eunuch’s hand) and potukkai (common hand).\(^{70}\)
(ii) *Pinnayal* or *reṭṭaiikkai marapu* (double hand tradition) includes the el irkai (to show hand gesture beautifully, dancing to rhythm) and toļ irkkai (to show in action through abhinaya).\(^{71}\)
(iii) *Aṅga kiriyai marapu* (the usage of the action of the body) are sixteen in number. They are (1) sarigai (to move sideways keeping the leg straight); (2) purigai (to walk casually); (3) sama kali viti (to move sideways, front and back); (4) ardha kali kai (to perform sarigai and purigai together); (5) puratita (to walk both sides, right-left, left-right); (6) ardhapuratita (to move as if floating); (7) svastika (to keep hand and leg svastika like nagabandham); (8) ullola (to lift and fold one leg); (9) kuratta (to twist in the shape of svastika); (10) vettana (to stand as if both the legs are joined to front and back); (11) upavettana (to stand as if both the legs are joined to back and front); (12) tikkebhana (to stand with one leg and stretch and fold the other leg); (13) piravruttam (to move to one side, bending the body); (14) ukkebhana (to move lifting one leg like hopping); (15) akkebhana (to move lifting one leg to the front); and (16) nikutta (to beat the legs one after the other).\(^{72}\)

(iv) There are nine movements of the head: (1) to look up; (2) to look down; (3) to rotate; (4) to bend circularly; (5) to move sideways; (6) to move up and down; (7) to look back; (8) to lift upward and (9) to shake the head violently. (v) The three movements of the

\(^{68}\) Ibid., pp. 53-55.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., p. 57.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., p. 56.

\(^{71}\) Ibid., p. 57.

\(^{72}\) Ibid., pp. 77-80.
neck are: (1) to move up and down; (2) to lift and move like a snake; and (3) to move from left to right like half-moon. (vi) The eight glances of the eyes are: (1) even look (straight); (2) rotating look; (3) to look sideways; (4) broad look; (5) closed look; (6) to look up; (7) to look up and down; and (8) to look down.\(^73\)

*Kāṟṟoḷ ilmarapu*\(^74\) (the usage of leg functions) is a small division in which the actions of the legs for *tēci*, *vaṭ uku* and *ciṅkalam* are specified. The *kāltoḷ il* (movements of the feet) for *tēci* are twenty-four, for *vaṭ uku* they are fourteen, for *ciṅkalam* they are eight.\(^75\) *Araṅgailakkaḷamarapu* (the use of the principles of the stage) gives information about the dramatic stage theory; which has been taken from other sources and included in the text at a later stage. It is expressed in poetic form, *viruttappa*, without any explanation. The same songs are given in another book titled *Bharatha Sangiragam*.\(^76\)

The *pirampilakkamarapu* or *tāṇṭ iyaviyalamarapu* speaks of the stick used by the dance master. While teaching the dancer, the *naṭṭuvanar* used a stick called *paraṭṭappiṟampu*. It was three and a half span long. If this stick was broken at two inches or if more than one inch was cut off, it was considered a bad omen presaging death. The belief was that gods resided in the stick at the following lengths: first one span (cāṇ) Śiva, next two spans Tirumāl, and next half a span Brahma.\(^77\) The use of a stick by the dance teacher is still in practice today. Nowadays the stick is made out of bamboo and sometimes with other types of wood that is preferable to the teacher. *Tāṇṭ iyam* is a tradition to garland the bamboo and apply sandal wood powder and fix it on the ground. *Kāḷadi* (leg movements or strikes) must move according to *kolaṭṭi* (beating of the sticks). *Tāṇṭ iyam piṭittal* (to hold the stick) means the inauguration of dance practice.\(^78\) All these practices are still found in use by dance teachers

\(^73\) Ibid., p. 82.
\(^74\) Ibid., pp. 83-92.
\(^75\) Ibid., p. 92.
\(^76\) Ibid., pp. 93-96.
\(^77\) Ibid., p. 97.
\(^78\) Ibid., p. 98.
and learners of dance. The stick that is used nowadays by the dance teacher to teach dance is called *taṭṭu kucci*, which means the stick used to strike.

From the above discussion it is clear that dance had a standard form and practice when *Pañcamarapu* was written.

### 2.2.2.4 Tolkāppiyam

*Tolkāppiyam*, the most ancient Tamil grammar extant, was written around the 2nd century BC. The author of this book is Tolkappiyar, one of the twelve students of Agastya. He belonged to Tholkappiyakudi, a village situated to the south of Madurai. He devoted himself to grammatical studies and became proficient in grammar. He wrote *Tolkāppiyam*, which excited the jealousy of his master, Agastya. The *Tolkāppiyam* deals with the grammar of literature and its conventions. This text has three parts and counts 1610 sutras. The three parts of it are *el uttu* (orthography), *coll* (etymology), and *porul* (matter) each with nine sections. Each division is called an *atikāram*. Among them, *Poruḷ atikāram* (treatise on grammar of love poetry) describes *akam* (people’s inner personal life), and *puṟam* (people’s external worldly life). *Porul*, in general, deals with the themes and forms of literature. Porul here means ‘that which is important in life.’ It describes art forms, which are connected with people’s life.

In *Tolkāppiyam* both the art forms of dance and drama are codified to the area of *kūttu*. One of the poems in *Tolkāppiyam* says that the *kūttar* is the community of artistes which fostered together the *nāṭ akaviyal* (dramatology) that consisted of acting and the *nāṭ yaviyal* (techniques of dance) which consisted of dance, *abhinaya* (expressions) and *aḍavu*.

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79 The name *tolkāppiyam* means ancient composition. *Kāppu + iyam* means that which preserves the legacy of the old.


81 M. S. Purnalingam Pillai, *Tamil Literature*, p. 23.

82 Ibid., p. 25.

Along with them the field of music also flourished. There are also references to various other dances in the period of Tolkāppiyam. They are explained as follows:

Veṟiyāṭṭu, also called kāntal kūṭtu, is connected with the Tamils’ akavāḷ vu (personal inner life) and puṟavāḷ vu (external worldly life). Kuṟ avai is of two types – muntēr kuṟ avai and pintēr kuṟ avai. Muntēr kuṟ avai is a dance in which the victorious king stands on the chariot, joins hands with his soldiers and dances. Pintēr kuṟ avai is a dance in which the maravar and vīṟaliyar stand behind the chariot of the victorious king and dance praising the king. This comprises ārabhaṭṭiṟṭi, in which valorous men are the heroes. On the whole, this could have been a fast, rhythmic and noisy roaring dance. Vāṭāvḷḷi is a kūṭtu danced non-stop by women for their country to win the battle. Kaḻalnilai kūṭtu is a dance performed after placing kaḻ al (anklet) on the leg of the warriors. It is similar to the tāṅḍava form of dancing. Vālamalai kūṭtu is a rhythmic and controlled dance. The warriors of the victorious king kill the enemy king and his elephant and sing and dance round the dead body of the enemy king, swinging their swords.

Meyppāṭu (physical manifestations of moods/emotions) is the integrated psychophysical activity expressive of emotions evoked by dramatic performance or perception of poetry. It is intended to express the inner feelings (emotions) through tears, enthrallment, sweating, and shivering, so that others can understand their feelings. The physical manifestation of emotions through the physique is known as meyppāṭu.

The same idea is expressed by Tolkappiyar in the following words:

nakaiye aḷ ukai ilivaral maraṭṭi kai
accam perumitam vekuli uvakaiyenṭṟu

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84 Ibid., p. 409.
86 The word meyppāṭu is split into mei (body) and pāṭukal (expression) of actions.
It says that the basic Meyppañu are of eight types. They are described in the following lines:

1. Nakai (laughter) : Teasing others, children’s talk, talking meaningless things, words out of ignorance, pretending not to know fact
2. Ajukai (crying) : Inferiority complex, laziness, poverty, loss
3. Ilivaral (mental fatigue) : Old age, disease, sadness, losing strength
4. Maruṭkai (surprise) : Novelty, pride, humiliation, degradation
5. Accam (fear) : God, animal, thief, government
6. Perumitam (sense of pride): Education, charity
7. Vekuli (anger) : Physical handicap, the king getting high tax from the people, murdering, ignoring their duties the government officials ill-treating the people
8. Uvakai (joy) : wealth, wisdom, game, loving people getting together.89

The above eight are the common feelings. When each of them is explained in terms of four types, they become thirty-two. They are called “common natural feelings.” Akaoḷ ukkam90 (the discipline of one’s personal living) is of two types – kaḷ avu91 (furtive – the erotic state of a woman before marriage) and Kaṟ pu92 (wedded – the erotic state of a woman after marriage). The emotions caused by kaḷ avu and kaṟ pu akaoḷ ukkam form the thirty-two “special natural feelings.” The thirty-two “common natural feelings” and the thirty-two ‘special natural feelings’ make sixty-four meyppañu types which are common for akam93

89 Ibid., p. 99.
91 Ibid., p. 1070.
92 Ibid., p. 1115.
93 Ibid., p. 967.
and puṟ am.\textsuperscript{94} Since the inner feelings expressed (meypāṭ u) by the hero and the heroine in their romantic or amorous life are related to practical realistic life, these meypāṭ ukal are very much relevant to or befitting of the arts of dance and drama.\textsuperscript{95}

The above study of Tolkāppiyam reveals the facts that dance were prevalent in Tamil country in a highly evolved form since the 2nd century BC.

\textbf{2.2.2.5 Cilappatikāram}

\textit{Cilappatikāram} (an ancient epic dealing with the story of Kovalan, Kannaki and Madavi), is one of the earliest Tamil literary works that elaborate on the art of the ancient Tamils. This beautifully rendered book, belonging to the 2nd century AD, is one of the five great epics.\textsuperscript{96} Authored by Ilango Adigal, this text is also known as \textit{Muttamīḷ Kāppiyam} (a book with iyai, icai and nāṭ akam in it). It brings out the essence of icaitamīḷ, iyai Tamiḷ, and nāṭ aka Tamiḷ. By dividing the epic into three parts, namely, \textit{Pukārkkāṇṭ am} (the chapter on the story that took place in the town of Kavirippumpattinam in the Chola country), \textit{Maturaikkāṇṭ am} (the chapter on the story that took place in the town of Madurai, capital of the Pandyas), \textit{Vaṅcikkāṇṭ am} (the chapter on the story that took place in the Chera country), Ilango Adigal attempts to bring the three illustrious dynasties of Tamilnadu into this epic.

The \textit{Araṅkēṟ ṛ ukāṭ ai} (the canto that speaks on dance of Madavi),\textsuperscript{97} \textit{Kaṭ alāṭ ukkāṭ ai} (chapter on the seashore),\textsuperscript{98} \textit{Vēnirkāṭ ai} (the advent of summer),\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., p. 990.

\textsuperscript{95} M. S. Purnalingam Pillai, \textit{Tamil Literature}, p. 25.


\textsuperscript{97} Ilango Adigal, \textit{The Silappāṭikāram}, ed. and trans., V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 97-105. (Henceforth \textit{The Silappāṭikāram}).

\textsuperscript{98} V. P. K. Sundaram, \textit{Tamiḷ icai kalaikkalañciyam}, part 1, p. 79.

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., part 2, p. 93.
Vēttuvavari (a kind of dance of the hunters of the kuriñci tract), Ācciyar Kuṟ avai (a dance of the cowherdess), Kunṟ akkuṟ avai (a dance of the hill-maidens) are a few of the thirty cantos in Cilappatikāram where information on dance is found. Cilappatikāram is the book in Tamil literature that speaks most extensively on dance in ancient times.

Pukārkkāṉṭ am, the third canto of araṅkeṟ ukāṭ ai (the debut), speaks of dance. Pukārkkāṉṭ am means the introduction of Madavi (the dancing girl character of this epic) to the audience. It depicts the previous birth history of Madavi; her training in dance and music for seven years from the age of five to twelve, and her dance venture on stage at the age of twelve. Furthermore, it describes the talents and the intelligence of Naṉṉūl Pulavar (the scholar for good books such as dance, music, lyrics, drums, flute and yaḻ). The formation of the stage and the description of the talaikkōl (title given to dancing girl who is an adept at her dancing profession); the dance performance of Madavi and the due recognition given by Karikala Peruvalatan, the Chola king, by the presentation of a herbal garland, Kovalan buying the garland for one thousand and eight gold coins to acquire Madavi and the life led by them.

S. V. Subramaniyan writes about the details of the dance master. Subramaniyan says that the dance master had knowledge of akakkūtu (to express by gesture and dancing) and puṟ akūt tu (a kind of dance), their grammatical structure and various aspects. He had an understanding of the sixteen kūttus from alliyam to koṭ ukkōṭṭi and their various inner divisions. He was talented in combining within them dance, song and rhythm. He knew the

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100 The Silappadikaram, pp. 180-189.
101 V. P. K. Sundaram, Tamiḻ icai kalaikkalaṅciyam, part 1, p. 130.
102 The Silappadikaram, pp. 275-282.
103 Madavi is said to have descended from the distinguished line of celestial nymphs, especially from Urvasi. Urvasi, the celestial nymph, was dancing once at the court of Indra when her glance met the impassioned gaze of Jayanta, son of Indra. As a result, her mind was diverted and she stopped her dance for a while. Sage Agastya observed this and pronounced a curse on them in anger. His curse was that Urvasi was to be born on earth as a devadasi and Jayanta to be born as a bamboo tree in the Vindhya Mountains. It is believed that this is how the Devadasi community came into existence. Madavi was born in this Devadasi tradition. (The Silappadikaram, p. 97).
quality of pindi (single hand), pinnayal (double hand), el irkkai (to show hand gesture beautifully, dancing to rhythm) and to irkkai (to show in action through abhinaya). During the time of dance, he taught Madavi how the action of single hand is independent without mingling or combining the double-hand action and vice versa. He taught her to bring out the abhinaya without any dance movement and vice versa and also the technique of not mingling kut avai kūttu and variikkūttu with each other. Madavi emerged as a dancer under the guidance of such a perfect dance teacher.\textsuperscript{105} Ilango Adigal describes the stage on which Madavi danced for her arañkeṟṟam (first public performance of a dancing girl or of a play) as a beautiful, glittering, and artistic stage. He also says that it was captivating to the eyes of the audience.\textsuperscript{106}

Talaikkōl or the staff (title given to dancing girl who is adept at her dancing profession) is treated with great respect and this is explained in Cilappatikāram. When a reputed king is defeated and runs away from the battle field, the central shaft of the splendid white umbrella of the monarch is taken. The seven feet shaft is covered with purest jāmbunāda pon\textsuperscript{107} (gold) while its joints are decked with nine gems. This shaft, which represents Jayanta, the son of Indra, is worshipped in the palace of the protecting king of the white umbrella. The talaikkōl should be purified with water brought from the holy river in a golden pitcher. It should then be garlanded and, on an auspicious day, given to be blessed by the state elephant, adorned with a plate of gold ornaments on the forehead. Then, to the accompaniment of the drum, proclaiming victory, and other musical instruments, the king, along with his ministers, the Brahmins, the colonels of the war, the messengers and the soldiers who are the members of state advisory, goes in procession around the chariot street and then hands over the shaft to the poet. The poet will then bring this honoured talaikkōl to the stage and place it in front of everyone in its respected position.\textsuperscript{108}

Madavi was not only beautiful, but also an expert in music and dance. The third canto of Arañkeṟṟam ukāṭai in Cilappatikāram vividly describes Madavi’s proficiency in dance, strictly adhering to Nāṭ ya Naṉṉūl (rules and regulations of dance). According to hierarchy,
the Chola King Karikala Peruvalatan and his officials were seated in their respective seats to witness the show. The orchestra stood in order. Madavi placed her right foot out first and entered the stage, went and stood near the right-side pillar of the stage, according to the tradition. The *toriya makalir* (experienced dancers) stood near the left pillar of the stage. Then they sang the song of benediction for invoking the blessings of the God and for removing the evils. At the end of this song, the instruments were played together.\(^{109}\)

In the orchestra, flute was followed by *yaḷ* (stringed musical instrument); *yaḷ* was followed by *mattalam* (drums); *mattalam* was followed by *kuṭ amuf a* (a kind of wind instrument). *Muḷ a* was followed by *āmantirikai* (kind of drum). The above mentioned instruments blended with each other. *Tēci kūṭtu* built on *pañcatāla prapantam* (a compilation of five rhythms) has two *svaras* for one beat. She danced *tēci kūṭtu* (a mode of dancing) with eleven beats. She danced according to the rhythm of *antarakkōṭṭu* (a kind of instrumental beat at the commencement of a play) and *mukam* (a type of rhythm).\(^{110}\) When the orchestra reaches crescendo and settles, *pālaippan* (melody type of the arid tract) was hummed, within its limit. Madavi sang and danced with the four parts, *ukkiram* – first line, *turuvai* – second line, *ābokam* – third line, *prakalai* – last line, playing the rhythmic syllables in the right order, adding music.\(^{111}\) Then she started with *ata tala* (rhythm with three beats) having three *svaras* in every beat, and then she finished in *eka tala* (rhythm with one beat) which has one *svara* for one beat. In *vaiśāka* posture and in *kuṭ ai naṭ ai* (dance of Skanda), she performed the dance within five *āvartanams* (metrical steps). She is compared to a golden creeper dancing. Without deviating from the sixteen *viḷ akku uruppu* (a section in drama), she danced with beautiful facial expressions.\(^{112}\)

The Chola King Karikala Peruvalatan, after witnessing and enjoying the dance of Madavi, without deviating from the norms of the royal ways, gave the green garland and bestowed the honoured title *Talaikkōl* on Madavi. Since that was the *araṅkēṟ ṭ am* for

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110 Ibid., pp. 118-119.

111 Ibid., p. 119.

112 Ibid., pp. 119-121.
Madavi, as per the rules, she was presented with one thousand and eight poŋ kalańcu (gold coins). Thus, in the beautiful town of Pumpukar, Madavi, adorned with golden bangles, exhibited her talent of dance, combining words with letters, bringing out the five iyals (literatures) and the four pans (melodies) of music and the eleven kūttus (dances) of the dramatic art. Madavi’s reputation spread around the world. From the references it is clear that around the 2nd century AD, during the time of Cilappatikāram, the eleven dance forms were performed in a vēttiyal (a kind of dance performed in the presence of a king). It is also understood that each dance had its own composition of songs; and the songs which synchronized with the dance were limited within its rhythm and systematized according to the musical forms of the dances.

Kaṭ alāṭ ukkāṭ ai speaks of the eleven dances of the gods and the goddesses in the sixth canto. The eleven dances were danced by Madavi in the Indra Vīḻa (the festival celebrating the victory of Indra). After praising Viṣṇu, four varuna bhutas and tiṅkal (moon in the sky, moving for the benefit of others), the patinoraṭal (eleven dances) is said to begin. They are described as given below:

**Koṭ ukoṭṭi:** The devas requested Śiva to burn Tiripura (the three cities of the asuras). Lord Śiva, with Uma on one side and Tirumal as bow, danced in victory on the burial ground, clapping his hands. The burnt ashes were the stage and he used a faultless rhythm. This is called koṭ ukoṭṭi dance. Cilappatikāram speaks of Madavi’s dance dressed as Śiva on one side and as Uma on the other.

**Panṭ araṅkam:** Nāṉ muka (Brahma with four heads), who stood in front of the chariot, could see Śiva in the image of Bharati, with the devas as chariot, and the four Vedas as four horses. He danced smeared with vennir (the sacred white ash) wearing a long dress and holding a sharp thorny stick while he danced.

**Alliam:** This is a war dance danced by Kannan (Kṛṣṇa) in order to defeat the deceitful Kamsa who came in the form of an elephant.

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113 Ibid., pp. 120-121.
114 Ibid., p. 120.
115 Ibid., pp. 72, 74.
116 Bhārati is referred to as Sarasvatī.
Mallāṭal: It was danced by Māyon (Krṣṇa), after defeating Vānāsura in wrestling.

Tuṭi: Knowing the deceit of Sūra (demon), who stood in the middle of the sea in some strange form, Murukṣṇa defeated him and danced, making the waves the stage, beating the musical instrument called tuṭi.

Kuṭai: When the āvunars (demons), unable to fight, dropped their weapons on the floor, Murukṣṇa fixed his kuṭai (umbrella) in front of them as a single screen and danced the umbrella dance.

Kuṭam: It was danced with kuṭam (pot) by Māyōn, who measured the long earth when he went to Chou (the city) of Vanasura. Yama captured Anirudhan, the son of Kama, because of his daughter Usa. In order to redeem him from his captivity, Māyōn danced this pot-dance with vessels made of mud and paṅca loha (five metals).

Peṭi: This dance was danced by Manmatan in the form of a hermaphrodite (guise of a woman). Redeeming his son, Anirudhan, from captivity, Manmatan danced in Chou (city).

Marakkāl: This dance was danced by Koṟṟavai (Durga) with wooden legs in order to destroy the demons who waged a deceitful war in which they came in the forms of scorpions and snakes.

Pāvai: In order to make the demons stop fighting in enchantment, Tirumakal or Lakṣmi danced this dance in the form of kollippāvai.

Kaṭayam: Lady Indrani (wife of Indra) danced this dance in the form of a farmer standing in the green fields at the northern gate of the city Chou (Bāna’s city).\(^{117}\)

The eighth canto of Vēnirkāṭai describes the envakai varikal (eight kinds of dancing). Vari means acting. It depicts the nature of the land each one was born in and the profession according to their birth. This vari is of eight types. They are also classified as the eight varikkūṭtu of the dramatic features. Separated from Kovalan, Madavi sends through her friend a letter calling him back. Kovalan thinks of the eight types of varikkūṭtu she once danced. It is known from Cilappatikāram that Madavi had danced these eight varikkūṭtu, following their context, in front of Kovalan. But the complete dance features of these eight vari are not known. Yet, it is believed that these dances had been performed with music and rhythm and full of expressions in order to appease Kovalan’s anger.\(^{118}\)

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\(^{117}\) Cilappatikāram, pp. 72-75.

\(^{118}\) Cilappatikāram, pp. 72-75.
The twelfth canto in Maturaikkāṭṭam speaks of the vēṭṭ tuva vari. It explains the kūttu danced by the vēṭṭ uvar of the pālai land. A certain Salini, belonging to vēṭṭ uvar (hunter) community who worship Koṟavai (Durga as the goddess of victory), gets god-spirited and dances thrilled, keeping her hands on her head, on a stage where maravar (hunter) used to sit together and eat. We have to consider this dance as veṭṭ iyāṭ al. Unlike the veṭṭ iyāṭ al described in the Pattupāṭṭu, and Eṭṭ utokai of Tolkāppiyam, this veṭṭ iyāṭ al is said to have been danced by Koṟavai with the god-spirit in order to emphasize the grievances of the people.

Valikkūttu comes in vēṭṭ tuva vari. The maravar dress a young girl as Koṟavai and make her dance, while they also dance. This dance was done amidst the sounds of parai (a kind of skinned percussion instrument), kuḷ al (long flute), kompu (a kind of wind instrument), flute, and bronze bell by a girl dressed like Koṟavai. This was danced in order that the Pandya king would wear the veṭṭ ci garland for having defeated his enemies. The marakkāl kūttu is danced by the maravars. They dance in praise of goddess Koṟavai. While the dancer dances, her anklets and waist ornaments make jingling sound. Koṟavai holds a sword in her hand to denote the destruction of the demons, and dances on wooden stilts. When she dances to the delight of the devas and to the distress of the asuras, she is adorned with flowers and she sings in praise of Koṟavai. This message comes in the song of vēṭṭ tuva vari (the hunter’s song).

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118 Ibid., pp. 119-130.

119 A woman possessed with divinity. Generally an old lady of the family of the hunters who considered herself and spoke out as if she were herself a goddess.

120 Cilappatikaram, p. 179.

121 Ibid., pp. 187-189.

122 Veṭṭ ci the country geranium or the flame of the forest bears a profusion of bright, deep red flowers, which are associated in idea with bloody action. Cf. M. S. Purnalingam Pillai, Tamil Literature (Tirunelveli: The Bibliotheca, 1985), p. 27.


124 The Silappadikāram, p. 185.
The seventeenth canto of Ācchiyar Kuṟ avai speaks of the kuṟ avai kūttu (a dance performed in a circle prevalent among the woman of hill tracts). Seven or nine girls, holding hands, standing in a circle, dance kuṟ avai kūttu on themes of bravery and love. Seven girls, who stood like this, garlanded Kannan with the sacred tulasi garland. They danced without deviating from the rules and regulations mentioned in the literature of kūttu. Madari, an elderly woman in the group, exclaimed ai in such a way that Tirumal (Viṣṇu) did not look at Tirumakal (Lakṣmi) who resides in his chest, because of Nappinnai (a woman in the dancing group) who has worn bangles in her hands. They danced kuṟ avai standing evenly and then holding hands like a crab and singing mullaippan. This kūttu starts from Māyavan’s talents in playing the flute and ends in praise of their Pandya king. This belongs to sāttvati (conception of the mind) vṛtti (style).\(^{125}\)

It is written in Cilappatikāram that they have danced this kūttu often and hence it was very familiar to them. This kūttu has been danced without deviating from music and dance literature. The existence of kuṟ avai kūttu is found in Tolkāppiyam. In Pattupāṭu and Eṭṭutokai, kuṟ avai kūttu changes into makkal (people) kuṟ avai. In Cilappatikāram, the kuṟ avai kūttu further changes into nilamakkal kuṟ avai. Vaṅcikkāṭam speaks of the kunṟṟakkuṟ avai in the twenty-fourth chapter as people living in mountainous areas joining together and singing the praise of the goddess of chastity (Vāḷḷi) and Lord Muruka.\(^{126}\)

The koṅkanar kūttu is described in the twenty sixth canto of Kālkōl Kāṭai. It is mentioned that Cheran Chenguttuvan (the Chera king) invaded northward and stayed in the Nilgiris.\(^{127}\) At that time, in order to praise him, kūttar belonging to Koṅkanar land and Karnataka land came in costumes and make-up according to their tradition. They danced, wearing garlands and pearl necklaces, singing kuṟ avai songs in the rainy season and they sang beautiful vari songs.\(^{128}\) This could be the group dance of the people of the hilly region. Naṭ ukalkkāṭai (chapter on the sight of the statue established for Kannaki), in its twenty-

\(^{125}\) Ibid., pp. 275-290.
\(^{126}\) Ibid., pp. 353-354.
\(^{127}\) Ibid., pp. 25-26.
\(^{128}\) Ibid., pp. 396-397.
eighth canto describes koṭṭi icetam. With the taṇḍai (anklet) making sound, playing paṇai, the jaṭa (hairlock) swinging on one side represented Śiva while the cilampu (leg ornament), vaḻa, hip chain, ear-drop, and hair do not move or make sound representing Uma on the other side. This dance of Śiva was danced by the Kūṭta Cākkayars representing ardhanāri (half woman and half man) in front of Cheran Chenkuttuvan and his queen Venmalai while they were seated in the moon light.

*Cilappatikāram* in Naṭukalkkṭai explains koṭṭi icetam dance. It says that it is astonishing to see this dance in which the male portion moves while the female portion does not move, and likewise the female portion moves while the male portion does not move. It is full of artistic nuances. In this dance, the male portion is danced in the taṇḍava style while the female portion is danced in the lāsyā style. It is mentioned that not only Madavi but also the Cākkayars were well versed in this dance. Later Koṭṭukṭi dance came to be known as koṭṭi i and koṭṭi icetam. Since the Cākkayars danced it is also called cākkayar kūttu.

It is clear from the above descriptions that dance existed during the 2nd century AD in an advanced form. Though there is no use of the word “Bharatanatyam” found during the 2nd century, there are terms such as kūttu, aṭal, aṭṭam used for dance in the Sangam period. The Tamil texts, namely Pattupṭṭu, Eṭṭuṭokai, Kūttanūl, Paṅcamarapu, Tolkāppiyam, and Cilappatikāram, speak elaborately of the existence of dance, giving details of the techniques of dancing, the dancing stage, the dancers, the kings who patronized dance, the dance teachers and the rhythms used in musical compositions and dance choreographies. The reason behind studying the five Tamil texts is that these are considered to be ancient and valuable Tamil literature which give abundant information on dance.

It could be said here that the mythological origin of dance from the various Sanskrit texts and the historical accounts on the art of dance from the famous Tamil texts of the *Sangam* period highlight the existence of dance in society. Various names are used for dance.

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130 *Cilappatikāram*, pp. 440-442.
131 Ibid., pp. 441-442.
in different periods of history. During the course of time the names have changed and the movements have been modified. The mythological origin of dance stresses the existence of the Indian classical dance since centuries and the historical account of the origin of dance brings out the details of the dance forms that were prevalent in the land of the Tamils in ancient times. So the dances mentioned in the Tamil texts may have slowly changed and evolved into kūttu, then satir, then, in the last few centuries, into Bharatanatyam. The present form of Bharatanatyam began to emerge in South India during the 15th and 16th centuries AD, but the tradition of the dance form is traceable to the distant past.

2.3 Bharatanatyam

Performing arts in India have always encapsulated, both in structure and content, the metaphysical aspirations of the Indian mind. The classical dance form of Bharatanatyam appears as a subtle synthesis of philosophy, religion, sculpture, dance, music, and literature. It gathers all these strands and sets them in motion. Bharatanatyam includes ethics, aesthetics, and social reality in it. To quote Prathibha Prahlad, “Bharatanatyam is by fact a socio-aesthetic phenomenon, embedded in Hinduism that detaches beyond dance proper.”

Bharatanatyam is special to Tamilnadu. It was known by several names such as kūttu, satir, cilampam, chiṉṉa mēḻam and dāsiattram. Today the term “Bharatanatyam” has replaced satir. The word “Bharatanatyam” consists of a noun nāṭya and an adjective bharata. Nāṭya is the representation of rasa through the four-fold modes of abhinaya or acting. They are: aesthetic expression (sāttvika); gestural expression (āṅgika); vocal and literary expression (vācika); and, expression through costumes, make-up and stagecraft (āhārya). Bharatanatyam is said to be a science amongst the performing arts. It places equal emphasis on the different aspects that go to make dance composite, namely bhāva (expression), rāga (melody), and tāla (rhythm). The prefix Bharata is commonly explained as an acronym composed of the first letters of bhāva, rāga, and tāla; and the suffix nāṭyam in Tamil means dance. The two terms, “nāṭya” and “bharata” were combined to make the term Bharatanatyam. This classical dance tradition found a new form and structure in Tamilnadu in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Tanjore brothers namely Chinnayya, Ponnayya, Sivanandam and Vadivelu codified the dance

steps in a proper sequence. They propagated the dance in the temples and formulated the \textit{naṭa mārgam} (dance repertoire). Only after their efforts, Krishna Iyer and Rukmini Devi came forward with their innovative ideas to cherish the dance tradition in a positive way.

Bhagavati is of the opinion that the word \textit{bharata} generally refers to a class of dancers. Siva, the lord of dance, taught \textit{abhinaya} to one of his disciples, Tandu, who taught this art to sage Bharata.\textsuperscript{133} “Bharatanatyam is in essence an offering to the Almighty through mime, gesture, and the rhythm of the dancing feet,” says Manjula Narasimhan.\textsuperscript{134} Bharatanatyam has a grammar of its own, with \textit{tāṇḍava} and \textit{lāsya} as important parts. In general, the main elements of Bharatanatyam are \textit{nṛtta} and \textit{nṛtya}. The \textit{nṛtta} sequences are based on the \textit{aḍavu} system and the \textit{nṛtya} sequences are based on the \textit{abhinaya} portions. A detailed study of the \textit{nṛtta} and the \textit{nṛtya} aspects is made in this chapter. The texts selected for the study are mentioned in the following pages.

\section{2.4 Selected texts on Bharatanatyam}

\subsection*{2.4.1 The \textit{Abhinayadarpaṇa} (about A.D. 1000)}

The \textit{Abhinayadarpaṇa} is an important treatise on dance by Nandikeśvara. Other treatises like \textit{Yogatārāvali} (book on yoga), \textit{Liṅghadāraṇa Candrika} (book on the \textit{Liṅga} and Saivism), \textit{Prabhākaravijayam} (book on philosophies) are also ascribed to Nandikeśvara.\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Abhinayadarpaṇa} deals mainly with the \textit{āṅgikābhinaya} (bodily expression) and \textit{hastābhinaya} (expressions based on the hand gestures) in particular. It is full of complex technical information meant for dance teachers and performers. It is closely followed by Bharatanatyam dancers.

The introduction of the text begins with the origin of \textit{nāṭya}, \textit{nṛtta} and \textit{nṛtya}, the characteristics of a dancer or an actor, \textit{pūrvaraṅga} (pre-presentational rituals), the four-fold \textit{abhinaya} namely \textit{āṅgikābhinaya} (to express through body), \textit{vācikābhinaya} (to express


\textsuperscript{134} Manjula Lusti Narasimhan, \textit{Bharatanatyam}, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Abhinayadarpaṇa}, p. 15.
through speech), āhāryābhinaya (to express through costumes, make-up, ornaments) and sāttvikābhinaya (to express through the sāttvika bhāvas) and highlights āṅgikābhinaya (bodily expressions). The detailed study of the āṅgikābhinaya giving importance to the hastābhinaya is dealt in the following chapters. This section includes the nine types of head movements, eight types of eye movements, and four movements of the neck, twelve hasta prāṇas (movements of the hands), twenty-eight single-hand gestures and twenty-four double-hand gestures. The abhinaya for gods, goddesses, dīkpalas (directions), daśāvatāra (ten incarnations of Viṣṇu), varnas (castes/colours), relatives, nine planets, kings, seven oceans, rivers, worlds, trees, animals, birds, and aquatic animals are illustrated in this text. In addition to this, thirteen nṛtta hastas (decorative hand gestures), four types of foot movements, ten maṇḍalas (body postures), six sthānakas (postures taken at the beginning and end of dance), five uplavanās (ways of jumping), seven bhramaris (circling movements), eight cāris (movements of one foot) and ten gatis (ways of walking) are discussed.

The Abhinayadarpana, translated from Telugu to English by Ananda Coomaraswamy and Duggirala Gopala Krishnayya, titled The Mirror of Gestures was published in 1917; and Manomohan Ghosh translated it in 1934 giving the title Abhinayadarpana. Apparao’s version of the text contains 814 verses. It is a reconciled version of the Nida version containing 718 verses. Ghosh’s version contains 328 verses.

2.4.2 Bharatārṇava (A.D. 1957)

The author of Bharatārṇava is Nandikeśvara. The original text has been added to form other valuable sources, namely, Guheśa Bharatalakṣaṇam, Sumati Bodhaka Bharatārṇava and Pārvatī Prayukta Bharatārtha Candrika. It is said that this text consists of four thousand ślokas. But the available ślokas are only those taken from one hundred and one to eight hundred and ten. The text of Bharatārṇava, edited by K. Vasudeva Sastrī that is now available has been gathered from a number of sources. Chapters one to four contain twenty-seven hand gestures, nineteen head movements, thirty-six eye movements, and thirty four feet movements. Chapter five and six deal with thirty-two sthānakas (standing poses), and the uses of the sthānaka and the hand gestures in different poses respectively. Chapter seven deals with

the tālas (rhythms) and their varieties. Chapter eight and nine deal with the description of limbs below the hip and the aṅgahāras (movements of limbs) respectively. Chapter ten covers the hand gestures for seasons, time, tenses, etc. Chapter eleven, twelve and thirteen deal with the śṛṅga nāṭya (graceful dance), its techniques, and the seven lāṣyas, respectively. Chapter fourteen covers the gatis (ways of walking), karaṇas, cāris, tālas (rhythm) and śabdas. The fifteenth chapter deals with puṣ pāñjali (the preliminary offering of flowers).

2.4.3 Abhinaya Navanita (A.D. 1886)

The Abhinaya Navanita was compiled jointly by Chetlur Narayana Ayyangar and Tanjore Panchapagesa Nattuvanar in 1886. The text deals with the hastābhinaya that includes twenty-eight single hand gestures, twenty-four double hand gestures, and hand gestures for relatives, gods, nine planets, Viṣṇu’s daśāvatāra (ten incarnations), rākṣasas (demons), and four castes.

2.4.4 Abhinaya Sāra Sāmputa (A.D. 1961)

Chetlur Narayana Ayyangar is the author of Abhinaya Sāra Sāmputa. This text was compiled with the help of Needamangalam Tiruvenkatacharya. The book explains the bhāvas; the rasas and the types of heroines and heroes whose moods have to be portrayed; abhinaya in all its aspects, and lastly, interpretation of padams (dance pieces where the expression is concentrated) through abhinaya. Nandikeśvara’s Abhinayadarpāṇa serves as the basic text for this book. The book comprises of six chapters in which the first chapter speaks of the teaching on wisdom and enlightenment, the characteristics of a teacher, the qualities needed for a student, the importance of education, the methods involved in teaching and listening and the reason for the widespread of education.

The second chapter of this text covers the characteristics of the heroes and the heroines, the characteristics of the aṣṭavidanāyika (eight types of heroines), the qualities of the three types of heroine based on their character and the classification of the heroes. The details of the rasa parimalam (the essence of the sentiments) that includes rasas, sthāyibhāvas, vibhāvas, saṅcārībhāvas and anubhāvās, and upamāna cintāmaṇi, a series of objects of comparison for
the different physical features of the hero and the heroine described in the songs to be interpreted, are explained in the third and the fourth chapters respectively.

The fifth chapter speaks of abhinayāṁṛ tam in which the four–fold classification of abhinaya is clearly explained and the three–fold classification of āṅgikābhinaya is focused on. This section explains the three divisions of the āṅgikābhinaya, namely, the āṅgas, pratyāṅgas and upāṅgas. These three divisions are dealt with in detail. It covers nine movements of the head, eight movements of the eyes, four movements of the neck, twenty–eight single hand gestures, twenty–four samyuta hastas, padārtha viniyogas (meaning of each word of a stanza) for the hand gestures, the hand gestures for the forty–three relationships, nine planets, eight quarters, and the hand gestures for the gods and goddesses. The last chapter titled Bhāva Prakāśam (emotional significance) covers the details of bhāva (emotion). In this chapter, twenty padams in Tamil and Telugu are selected and their emotional significance is explained by showing an analytical way of elaborating bhāva and kalpana abhinaya (improvisation).

2.5 Some Basic Concepts in Dance

2.5.1 Nṛta, Nṛtya, Nāṭya

Nṛta, Nṛtya, and Nāṭya are the three important technical terms that are very often used in Indian classical dance. The Nāṭyaśāstra describes nṛta and nāṭya in Chapter 1V and Abhinayadarpana discusses nṛta, nṛtya and nāṭya in the introduction itself. Abhinayadarpana gives comprehensive definitions of these three components of dance:

\[ Etat caturvidhopetam nāṭ anam trividham smritaṃ/ nāṭ yam, nṛttam nṛtya miti munibhiḥ bharatādibhiḥ \]\(^{137}\) (Abhinayadarpana, verse 19)

The meaning of the above verse is that nāṭ anam (the art of acting or communication) is categorized by sages like Bharata into three types namely nāṭ yam, nṛttam and nṛtyam.\(^{138}\)

\(^{137}\) Abhinayadarpana, p. 17.

\(^{138}\) Ibid., p. 18.
**Nṛta:**

bhāvābhīnayāhīnaṁ nṛta mityabhīdhiyateś
(Abhinayadarpaṇa, verse 15).

This is literally translated into, “That (dance) which does not relate to any Psychological State (bhāva) is called nṛta.”

*Nṛta* is that form of dance which does not have flavour (rasa) and mood (bhāva). Even the gestures, rhythm and limb movements do not convey any specific mood, meaning or message. It is a form of pure movement in dance, which does not express any mood or sentiment. It is full of poses, stances, leaps, turns, twists and intricate foot work. It is full of rhythm and motion that create joy and ecstasy in the dancer as well as the spectator. The expression of emotion in *nṛta* is negligible.

*Nṛtya* is movement in rhythm with the feet and the hands. In Bharatanatyam, the techniques of the aḍavus and the rhythmic dance patterns that are included in alārippu, jatisvaram, varnam, kīrtanam, and tillāna come under the category of *nṛtta* or pure dance. The dance pieces varnam, kīrtanam and tillāna mentioned above are profused styles of *nṛtta* and *nṛtya*. Dhananjaya, in his Daśarūpaka 1, 14, speaks about *nṛtta* as the popular (deśī) style.

**Nṛtya:**

Rasa-bhāva vyañjanādiyuktam nṛtya mitīryaṭēl
Etannṛtyam mahārāja sabhāyām kalpayēt sadāll (Abhinayadarpaṇa verse 16)

This means, “That (dance) which relates to Sentiment (rasa) and Psychological State (bhāva) is called nṛtya. This dance is always fit to find a place in the court of great kings.”

*Nṛtya* is that manifestation of dancing which possesses aesthetic flavour (rasa), mood or emotion (bhāva) and suggestion (vyāñjana).

Yasmat panceṇḍriya pritihi bhavet ca, duhkha vismṛtih, sada soukhyakaram tattu nṛtyam (Saṅgītōpanishad, verse 2).

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139 Ibid.


It means Nrtya pleases all the five senses, makes one forget misery and provides pleasure at all times. Nandikeśvara declared that the aesthetic pleasure experienced on witnessing Nrtya is greater than the supreme bliss enjoyed by the sages; otherwise it could not have attracted sages like Narada.\(^{143}\) Nrtya expresses bhāvas and produces rasas. It is that aspect of dance performed with some special subject accompanied by varied gestures. To be precise, it brings out an idea, message or story through codified gestures of the hands and postures of the body. Nrtya is especially seen at coronations, celebrations, processions, marriages, the birth ceremonies, auspicious occasions and many other festivals. It used to be watched by a royal audience in the courts of kings. Nrtya interprets a story in rhythmic movements. The theme may be erotic, epic, religious, philosophical, or secular. In Nrtya, the theme or the literary compositions are set to a particular musical pattern called melody (rāga) and rhythmic pattern (tāla), which are needed for the dance representations and are interpreted through the dance sequences.\(^{144}\) The mode of dancing uses mime, (abhinaya), and a theme includes śabdam, varnam, padam, jāvali, aṣṭapadi. Such dance items performed in Bharatanatyam and other classical dance styles also come under this category.

**Nrtya:**

\[
nṛtvyaṁ tat-nṛtyaṁ caṁva pūjyanṁ pūrwakathāyuktam\textbf{m} \quad (\text{Abhinayadarpaṇa, verse 20})
\]

“Nṛtya or nṛtya, which has some traditional story for its theme, is an adorable [art].”\(^{145}\) The word nṛtya is derived from ‘nṛt ’ meaning to move or to act. It is a presentation on the stage of a play full of ancient stories and is adorable with all the four elements of abhinaya (histrionic representation) – āṅgika, āhārya, sāttvika and vācika.\(^{146}\) It also indicates a dance drama through the medium of any classical dance style. The use of speech makes nṛtya the most comprehensive part of the three. Nṛtya means dramatic

\(^{143}\) Abhinayadarpaṇa, p. 7.

\(^{144}\) Cf. Saju George, “The Religio-Philosophical Foundations of Indian Classical Dance with Special Reference to the Saiva Tradition,” p. 93.


\(^{146}\) Abhinaya and its four divisions are dealt with in detail in no. 2.4.2 of this chapter.
representation with speech, music, and dancing. In Bharatanatyam, the use of nṛtta is found in basic movements and a few dance pieces. Nṛtya is seen in expressional dancing pieces and nāṭya is found in the dance-dramas of classical dances.

The above three composite elements of dance are further divided. Nṛtta is of three kinds: viṣama, vikāṭa and laghu. Viṣama consists of many acrobatic feats like rope dancing, and intricate foot work. Vikāṭa consists of movements of a person in dress that strikes awe and terror in the hearts of the viewers. Laghu consists of graceful upward tripping and movements. Nṛtya is of two kinds: mārga and deśī. Mārgi is systematically composed of both music and dancing. Deśī is more spontaneous and popular among people, and is performed before the public for entertainment at various social functions. Nāṭya has a two-fold division: tāṇḍava and lāsya.147

2.5.2 The four-fold Abhinaya

The term abhinaya is referred to by many scholars as “the gesture expression,” “histrionic representation,” “histrionic expression,” “the art of dramatic expression,” “the art of communication,” “the body language” and “acting.” The Sanskrit root ni with the prefix abhi forms the word abhinaya, which means to convey or lead towards.148 It is the conveyance of an idea, an emotion, or an event.149 Abhinaya evokes the flavour in the audience. There is a continuous chain of action and reaction taking place in the process of abhinaya. In the performance of a dramatic production, together with major and minor bodily limbs, the actor or the dancer, through abhinaya, conveys the meaning of a play or a song or a verse to the cultured spectator.

The expression of abhinaya through various facets is categorized into four kinds. Bharata mentions the four-fold abhinaya in verses 9 and 10 of chapter 8 of the Nāṭyaśāstra. The concept of abhinaya forms the main theme of the treatise. The four kinds of abhinaya evoke rasa in the audience.

147 Cf. Saju George, “The Religio-Philosophical Foundations of Indian Classical Dance with Special Reference to the Saiva Tradition,” p. 94.
148 Abhinayadarpaṇa, p. 9.
149 Saroja Vaidyanathan, Bharatanatyam: An In-depth Study, p. 16.
Nandikeśvara, in his *Abhinayadarpana* speaks of the four kinds of *abhinaya* as follows:

\[
\text{Āṅgiko vācikaḥ tadwadāhāryaḥ sāttwikō aparaḥ/}
\text{Caturdhābhinaḥ tatra cāṅgikō angaiḥ nīdarśitaḥ/}
\text{Vācāviracitāḥ kāvyā-nāḥ akādīshu vācikaḥ/}
\text{Ahāryō hārakēyurā-vēshādihiraḥraṇkrītaḥ taḥ/}
\text{Sāttwikāḥ sāttwikaiḥ bhāvaiḥ bhavaiṇēna vibhāvitaḥ/} \]  

*Abhinaya* is four-fold: (1) āṅgika, (2) vācika, (3) āhārya, and, (4) sāttvika. Expression through the body and its limbs is āṅgikābhinaḥ. Expression through voice and speech is vācikābhinaḥ. Decorating the body with garlands, make-up and costume is āhāryābhinaḥ. Expression through sāttvika bhāvas or conscious mind is sāttvikābhinaḥ.\(^\text{151}\)

2.5.2.1 Āṅgikābhinaḥ:

Āṅgika means that which is derived from the aṅga – the body limbs. Āṅgikābhinaḥ is the gesture language of the limbs. Dance is an art that expresses itself through the medium of body, and therefore, āṅgikābhinaḥ is essential for any dance and especially for any classical dance of India. The whole body is the sole medium of expression in dance and hence each part of the body, from major limbs to minor limbs, is minutely concentrated on. The āṅgikābhinaḥ is elaborated in the chapters 8 – 13 of Bharata’s *Nāṭyaśāstra*, chapters 2 – 6 of Nandikeśvara’s *Abhinayadarpana*, chapters 1 – 6 and 8 – 10 of *Bharatārṇava*, chapters 1 – 11 of *Abhinaya Navanita* and chapter 5 of *Abhinaya Sāra Saṁputa*. These texts give detailed information on the śirō bhēdas (head movements), dṛś ti bhēdas (glances of the eyes), grīva bhēdas (neck movements), single hand gestures, combined hand gestures , and nṛ tta hastas (decorative hand gestures), different pāda bhēdas (foot movements), bhramari (ways of moving round), utplavana, cāri, sthānaka (standing postures), and karaṇa.

\[
\text{Tatrāṅgikō-aṅga pratyaṅgōpāṅ gaiḥ trēdha prakśitaḥ.} \]  

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\(^{150}\) *Abhinayadarpana*, p. 47.

\(^{151}\) Ibid., p. 48.

\(^{152}\) Ibid., p. 50.
Āṅgikābhinaya is of three types: 1. Āṅgas or major limbs, 2. Pratyāṅgas or minor limbs, and 3. Upāṅgas or subsidiary limbs.¹⁵³

Āṅgas or major limbs include the head, hands, chest, sides, waist, and feet; at times the neck is also used as a separate limb. Pratyāṅgas or the minor limbs consist of shoulders, shoulder blades, arms, back, thighs and calves. Upāṅgas or the subsidiary limbs consist of the eyes, the eye-brows, pupils, cheeks, nose, jaws, lips, teeth, tongue, chin, face, and the head. The appendages to these are the heels, ankles, fingers, toes, palms, and the insides of the feet.

Thus one can find that āṅgikābhinaya is not an exercise or rigid movement of the body, but it brings out the aesthetic sense in the spectator when it is combined with the other three elements of abhinaya.

### 2.5.2.2 Vācikābhinaya

Vācikābhinaya is the art of verbal or vocal expression in dramatic presentation. Bharata speaks of vācikābhinaya and the rules needed for it in the Nāṭyaśāstra chapters 15 – 20. The main subjects discussed cover speech, vowels, consonants, recitation, prose, verse, metre, pause, pitch and many more aspects that are needed for nāṭya. The thirty-six characteristics or lakṣaṇas¹⁵⁴ for a dramatic composition, the ten merits or guṇas,¹⁵⁵ the ten demerits or doṣas¹⁵⁶ in a poetic composition, rules regarding the use of languages or bhāṣā-vidhāna¹⁵⁷ and the six embellishments or ornamentations or alankārās¹⁵⁸ are discussed in detail.

In classical dance, the dancer does not use the form of dramatic speech pattern as done in dramas. The main singer gives expression to the words of each song and the dancer interprets the meaning through the language of gestures and bodily movements set to rhythmic

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¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 51.
¹⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 317-320.
¹⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 315-317.
¹⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 323-354.
¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 350.
patterns. The combination of the dancer and the vocalist, the vocalist and the instrumentalists, the instrumentalists and the dancer are very important so that there is a perfect synchronisation among them. Thus one finds that *abhinaya* in dance includes *gīta* or vocal music, *vādyā* or instrumental music and *tāla* or rhythm. Clarity is essential in *abhinaya* and *vācikābhinaya* acts as a bridge between the spectator and the performer. Without *vācikābhinaya*, the dance performance would remain incomplete.

### 2.5.2.3 Āhāryābhinaya

*Āhāryābhinaya* or extraneous representation is the art of expression through decoration such as make-up, jewellery, costumes, stage settings and scenery. Indian classical dances have always been costume oriented because of the rich heritage of India in textiles. Chapter 23 of *Nāṭyaśāstra* speaks of the āhāryābhinaya in detail. From these details one comes to know of the knowledge Bharata had and the importance he gave to āhāryābhinaya in dramatic representation. In a solo dance performance, the āhārya often remains the same throughout the recital. The āhāryābhinaya should not dominate the performance but it should act as a support to the dance. In a dance drama each character is dressed up in appropriate costumes and physical decoration. This helps the audience to trace the character as soon as the artist enters the stage without the use of the other three *abhinayas*.

### 2.5.2.4 Sāttvika-abhinaya

The word *sāttvika* is derived from the word *sattva* which means “originating in the mind.”\(^{159}\) *Sāttvikābhinaya* is the art of expression through acting out the different states of mind. It is also defined as “abhinaya involving *sāttvika bhāvas*.”\(^{160}\) Through mental concentration *sattva* is evolved. Thus, the mental involvement of the performer is brought out before the performer. The face reflects the mind of the performer. In chapter 7 verse 145 of *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Unni says that not only the face, but also the whole body exhibits the *sāttvika bhāvas* or “the mental or internal feelings.”\(^{161}\) This *abhinaya* is said to be the most difficult one, yet it is the most important mode of dramatic representation. *Sāttvikābhinaya* and āṅgikābhinaya always go

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\(^{159}\) A Board of Scholars, *The Nāṭyaśāstra*, p. 109.

\(^{160}\) *Abhinayadarpaṇa*, p. 53.

together, that is, the mental emotions of the character are expressed through the physical actions.

The Nāṭyaśāstra chapter 7, titled Bhāvavanyjaka (the exposition of emotion), explains sāttvikābhinaya in detail. Sāttvikābhinaya includes bhāva and rasa. The word bhāva is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘bhāvayanti’ to mean pervade or infuse. Bhāvas are psychological states of the mind. Bhāva infuses the meaning of the play into the hearts of the spectators. There are three states in bhāvas. They are vibhāva (determinant), anubhāva (consequents) and vyabhicāribhāva (transient state). The vibhāvas and the anubhāvas are closely connected to the world that is the human nature. There are two more bhāvas namely sthāyībhāvas (dominant) and sāttvika bhāvas (temperamental states). In total, there are forty–nine bhāvas. They are the eight sthāyībhāvas, thirty–three vyabhicāribhāvas and eight sāttvika bhāvas. Rasa means sentiment or flavour or aesthetic sense that is in the performer. In Indian aesthetics, rasa is the tasting of the flavour of a work of art. Bharata explains the eight rasas in the chapter 6 of Nāṭyaśāstra, titled Rasādhyāya or the “chapter on sentiments.” The eight rasas are: (1) śṛṅgāra (the erotic), (2) hāsyā (the comic), (3) karuṇa (the pathetic), (4) raudra (the furious), (5) vīra (the heroic), (6) bhayānaka (the fearful), (7) bibhatsa (the disgusting), and (8) adbhuta (the wondrous). The ninth rasa is called (9) śānta (the peaceful). Thus the rasas together are called navarasas (the nine sentiments). Abhinavagupta mentions the śānta rasa as the major and basic rasa.

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162 A Board of Scholars, p. 86.
163 A Board of Scholars, pp. 88-92.
164 Ibid., pp. 93-109.
165 Ibid., pp. 110-111.
166 Ibid., pp. 75-83.
168 Abhinavagupta (A.D. 940-1015) talks about two recessions of the Nāṭyaśāstra: one, which recognizes eight rasas only, and the other, which recognizes nine rasas including śānta rasa. Abhinavagupta gives recognition to śānta rasa both in poetry and drama and also treats it as the basic rasa. Cf. Saju George, “The Religio-Philosophical Foundations of Indian Classical Dance with Special Reference to the Saiva Tradition,” p. 110.
It is clear from the above brief explanations that without these four–fold abhinaya no drama or dance can be performed. This thesis emphasizes the āñgilābhinaya.

2.5.3 The Characters of the Nāyaka and the Nāyika

In the depiction of any mood or sentiment, a dance performance or a dramatic representation takes the medium of the hero and the heroine. A performance includes the role of the heroes and the heroines who are called in Sanskrit the nāyakas (heroes) and the nāyikas (heroines). Quite often, the hero’s role may be that of gods or divine personalities and the heroine’s role may be of goddesses or devotees of the gods and the goddesses. In a solo dance recital, an individual dancer depicts the roles of both the hero and the heroine and all the characters that are present in the song are also portrayed by the individual through his/her gestures, actions, emotions and the song. The costume used by the solo dancer would often be the one specific to each classical dance. It does not change with each character, whereas, in a dramatic representation, each character is depicted by different actors using appropriate costumes, make up, speech, actions and emotions.

The roles of the heroes and the heroines are very important for Indian classical dance. The dancer is considered the devotee/individual soul (jīvatmā) longing to get united with the Supreme Soul (paramātman). The songs for which the dance is performed are composed with the base of the heroes and the heroines. Either the hero is conversing with the heroine or vice versa. There are different types of heroes and heroines depending on their marital status, their relationship with each other, their social status, and their age. The following division deals with these categories in detail.

2.5.3.1 The Nāyaka and His Classification

The nāyakas (heroes) are classified into three types depending on their relationship with the nāyikas (heroines). They are: (1) Patī (hero married to a woman), (2) Upapatī (hero married to a woman and also attracting the attention of another woman), and (3) Vaiśika (hero who spends his money on women to buy love).169 The heroes are again classified on the basis of their erotic sentiments into four types. They are: (1) Anukūla (hero who is faithful and pleasing

and is pleased only by his wife). (2) Dakṣa (hero who has several wives and treats each one equally without partiality). (3) Śatha (hero who is cunning and lives openly with any number of women and does not keep any secret about himself), and, (4) Drṣṭa (hero who is shameless and unfaithful to his beloved and secretly harms her).\textsuperscript{170}

The heroes are once again classified on the basis of their nature into four types. They are as follows: (1) Dhīrodātta (hero who is passionate and ambitious; sāttvāṭī vr̥tti); (2) Dhīroddhata (hero who is high-spirited, firm and balanced; ārabhatī vr̥tti); (3) Dhīralalita (hero who is interested in fine arts and always happy and carefree; kaiśikī vr̥tti); and (4) Dhīrośānta (hero who is virtuous and kind; bhāratī and kaiśikī vr̥tti). There is another classification of the heroes on the basis of their characters in the song or the play. They are three in number, namely (1) Uttama, (2) Madhyama, and (3) Adhama.\textsuperscript{171} These classifications are described in brief below:

(1) \textit{Uttama}: The word \textit{uttama} means “supreme.” The hero who is of \textit{uttama} character possesses the following characteristics. He does not do anything that is displeasing to women and is courageous, soft tempered, understanding, well mannered and liberal minded.

(2) \textit{Madhyama}: The word \textit{madhyama} means “middling.” The hero calmly accepts the different emotional states of the woman. He does not get angry even when slightly insulted by the woman, but gets disgusted with her on finding her deceitful behaviour.

(3) \textit{Adhama}: The word \textit{adhama} means “inferior.” The hero of this character shamelessly approaches a woman with steady love even when insulted by her. Even after knowing her deceitful behaviour, he perserves in his advances towards her.

The above three classifications of the heroes are very important as they form the main part in choreography. When a song is heard, the first analysis is whether the hero is \textit{uttama} or \textit{madhyama} or \textit{adhama}. The next thought goes to his nature, then to his marital status and finally to his erotic sentimental type.

\subsection*{2.5.3.2 The Nāyika and Her Classification}

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., p. 21.

\textsuperscript{171} A Board of Scholars, pp. 359-360.
The nāyikas (heroines) are generally classified into three types: (1) Svakīya or Svīya, (2) Parakīya or Anya, and (3) Sāmānya or Sādhāraṇa.\textsuperscript{172}

(1) Svakīya or Svīya: The heroine is called svakīya when she possesses good character and is upright. She is again classified into three types: mugdha, madhya and pragalbha.

*Mugdha:* The heroine of this type is tender, youthful, and young. She is a girl who is shy in love, gentle in anger, and silent even though offended by anyone. Mugdha nayika is again divided into two types: *jñāta-yavana* (the young heroine who is aware) and *ajñāta-yavana* (who is unaware of what is happening around her).\textsuperscript{173}

*Madhya:* The heroine of this type is an adolescent and partly experienced. She possesses desire and shyness in equal measure and is intoxicated by her lover. Madhya is divided into three types: *laghu* (light annoyance or fury on seeing other women), *madhya* (medium indignation on hearing the name of another women), and *guru* (intense anger on seeing the marks of another woman’s love for her lover). There are three activities of the nāyika in this indignation: *dhīra* (a self-controlled heroine who greets her deceitful lover with sarcastic words), *dhīradhīra* (partly self-controlled heroine, who rebukes her lover in tears), and *adhīra* (the heroine who lacks self-control and scolds her lover harshly).\textsuperscript{174}

*Pragalbha:* The heroine of this type is very mature and is able to express her feelings to the full extent. There are three activities of this heroine. They are: *dhīra* (one who is indifferent towards love due to anger but respectful to the lover), *dhīradhīra* (who vexes her lover by sarcasm when angry), and *adhīra* (who expresses her hurt feelings openly to her lover by putting him to shame).\textsuperscript{175}

\textsuperscript{172} Chetlur Narayana Ayyangar, *Abhinaya Sara Samputa*, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., p. 13

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., p. 14.

\textsuperscript{175} Ibid.
The "mugdha, madhya and pragalbha nāyikas" are divided into three types depending on their relationship with the hero. They are: (1) jyeṣṭha (the older wife to the hero) and (2) kaniṣṭha (the younger wife to the hero).

(2) Parakīya or anya: The parakīya heroine is married to a person and at the same time she is another man’s lover also. She is of two types: kanya (maiden) and praudha (mature). 176

(3) Sāmānya or sādharana: The heroine of this category is a courtesan who belongs to everyone. She is well versed in arts and tries to secure her life financially by the support of the lover’s attachment. 177

The above general classifications of the heroines depend on their age or maturity and their relationship with the heroes. The following paragraphs deal with the aṣṭanāyikas (the eight heroines), who are separately described in eight ways according to their different emotional states or moods towards the hero. Chapter 24 of the Nāṭyaśāstra and chapter II of Abhinaya Sāra Sāmputa speak of these aṣṭanāyikas in detail. The aṣṭanāyikas are: (1) Vāsakasajjā (readily dressed up for union), (2) Virahotkaṇṭhitā (distressed due to separation), (3) Svādhīnabhartya (one who has her husband under her control), (4) Kalahantaritā (one estranged due to quarrel with the lover), (5) Khaṇḍitā (one annoyed with her lover), (6) Vipralabdhā (one jilted by the lover), (7) Proṣitabhartīya (one whose husband is abroad), and (8) Abhisārikā (one who approaches the husband or lover herself). 178

In a dance performance, the heroines play a vital role. Most of the songs are composed as if the heroine is expressing her feelings towards the hero. So there is wide scope for the dancer to exhibit his/her talents by bringing to mind the different classifications of the nāyika. The heroines are again classified into three types, depending on the characters in a song or the

176 Ibid., p. 13.
178 A Board of Scholars, p. 344.
play. They are: (1) *Uttama* (the superior), (2) *Madhyama* (the mediocre), and (3) *Adhama* (the inferior).  

The classifications of the heroines are based on their maturity, their relationship with the heroes, their character and their different emotional states. When a dance is choreographed the first point that comes to mind is what type of *nāyika* is present in the song, whether she is married or unmarried. The next point that comes to mind is what the emotional state of the *nāyika* is and, depending on that, the type of *nāyika* is determined on for the choreography.

2.6 The Divisions in Āṅgikābhīnaya

Āṅgikābhīnaya is three-fold: (1) *Arṇgas* (major limbs), (2) *Pratyāṅgas* (minor limbs) and (3) *Upāṅgas* (subsidary limbs). The postures of each part of the body with regard to Bharatanatyam are studied elaborately. This portion of the study probes into the body postures of the deities with regard to sculptural techniques.

2.6.1 *Arṇga*

*Angānyatra śirō hastau vākṣhaḥ pārswou kaṭ itaṭ oul*

*Pādāviti shaduktāni grīva mapyarē jaguḥ∥*  

(*Abhinayadarpana* verse 65)  

*Arṇgas* are said to be six in number. They are: (1) *Śiras* (head), (2) *Hastas* (the palms), (3) *Vakṣas* (chest), (4) *Pārśvas* (the two sides), (5) *Kaṭi* (the two sides of the waist) and (6) *Pādas* (the feet). Some others consider *grīva* (neck) also as an *aṅga*. These are discussed in detail in the fourth chapter.

2.6.2 *Pratyāṅga*

*Pratyangānyatha ca skandhē bāhu pṛṣṭhaḥ ham tathādaram/
Ūru-janghē shaḍityāḥu raparē maṇibandhakou∥*  

(*Abhinayadarpana* verse 66)

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179 Ibid., p. 19.

180 *Abhinayadarpana*, p. 50.

181 Ibid., p. 51.

182 Ibid.
Pratyāṅgas consists of six minor limbs. They are (1) Skandha (shoulders), (2) Bāhu (arms), (3) Pṛśtham (back), (4) Udaram (stomach), (5) Ūru (thighs) and (6) Jaṅga (shanks).

Jānuni kūrpara vētat traya mapyadhikam jaguḥ/ 184

Some others considered three more, that is, maṇibandha (wrists), jānu (knees) and kurpara (elbows) as pratyaṅgas.185 The parts that are mentioned above are involved while dancing; whereas in iconographic figures these parts are found in a figure to make a full human form. But there is no distinct division of postures for the figures. So, the pratyaṅgas are not studied in detail in this study.

2.6.3 Upāṅga

Dṛṣṭi i bhrū puṭ a tārāśca kapōlou nāsika hanuḥ (Abhinayadarpaṇa verse 67)
Adharō daśana jihwā cubukam vadanam tathāl
Upāṅgani dwadaśaiva śirasyangantarēśhu ca/i (Abhinayadarpaṇa verse 68)
Pārshṇi-gulphou tathāngulyaḥ karayōḥ pādayōḥ talē/
Ētani pūrwaśāstranusārēnōktā vai mayāl/186 (Abhinayadarpaṇa verse 69)

Upāṅgas consist of twelve subsidiary limbs. They are: (1) Dṛṣṭi (eyes), (2) Bhrū (eyebrows), (3) Puta (eyelids), (4) Tāra (pupils), (5) Kapola (cheeks), (6) Nāsi (nose), (7) Hanu (jaws), (8) Adhara (lower lip), (9) Daśana (teeth), (10) Jihwa (tongue), (11) Cubukam (chin) and (12) Vadanaṃ (face).187 All these parts of the face are essential for a dancer while exhibiting bhava. But in an image one finds the positions of the eyes of the gods and goddesses in a static form. But there is a feel of grace in the eyes of the deity. The eyes speak of the situation and the purpose of the deity installed in the temple. So it is essential to study the movements of the eyes.

183 Ibid.
184 Ibid.
185 Ibid., p. 52.
186 Ibid.
187 Ibid., pp. 52-53.
2.7 Conclusion

Bharatanatyam pleases the senses and affects the mind and intellect through music, rhythmic movements, facial expression, and symbolic gestures. It is a composite art, expressing the inner feelings. It brings out the spiritual awakening of the human soul and its longing for enlightenment. It occupies a place of distinction, and carries the qualities of the social, religious, artistic traditions of the ancient Tamil country. Bharatanatyam has been a Tamil heritage and existed in a state of perfection in pre-Aryan times. The science of Bharatanatyam has attracted and excited great artists who have written extensively about it and in the process, defined and refined it. The present thesis has been guided by these texts, which deal with every aspect of Bharatanatyam and its nuances.