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27.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives set out by us in this Unit are to:

- define the living culture and the performing arts of India,
- provide you details on the different aspects of living culture and performing arts, and
- give you some idea of the ritual arts of India.

This, we hope, would enable you as a professional to understand and promote cultural tourism successfully.

27.1 INTRODUCTION

In the two preceding Units (25 & 26) we discussed the use of history in cultural tourism as well as the significance of India's rich monumental heritage in promoting cultural tourism. Here we are providing you details on two more essential ingredients of cultural tourism viz. the living culture and the performing arts of India. You will understand and appreciate how India's vast and fabled heritage has survived in the form of living arts practised in almost all parts of India both in the countryside as well as in the urban areas. The Unit starts with defining living culture and goes on to mention its various constituents. It also explains what is meant by Ritual and Performing arts along with their relevance in promotion of cultural tourism.

27.2 WHAT IS LIVING CULTURE?

A customary presentation of Indian culture relates it mainly to a study of arts within the tradition bound parameters of styles, chronology or schools. In consequence the creativity inherent in the culture and the throb of life as its central metaphor tend to get into background. **The living culture is essentially this creativity, this throb.** It manifests itself in myriad patterns – all related to a tradition that lives on.

27.2.1 Cultural Life in India

Collective vitality subsisting on a rich repertoire of myth, symbol, and song is an important identifying feature of India's cultural life. It has strong local and regional flavours. Yet its

rituals and reticences possess an underlying commonality. Viewed in its totality, the Indian culture is bewilderingly diverse. But these varied traditions have profoundly influenced each other. Sometimes they merge. Sometimes they mingle inseparably. And in what has come to us as the living culture of India, the rural and tribal vernacular traditions have interacted quite meaningfully with the classical traditions. Even under an incessant pressure of modernity and, economically speaking, the compulsions of employment, the culture of India has lived on. It must be stressed here that much of the living culture has survived outside of the academia and is in the form of art that is practised by its people. For this reason, as also for its eternal value, tourism has an interest in the living culture though serious attempts to understand and document it have so far been lacking.

27.2.2 Handicrafts

Indian handicrafts represent perhaps the oldest tradition of living culture. The continuity of the traditional crafts still offers creative expression to the great mass of our people. The Indian craftsman uses his medium for rendering creative expression of his inner self. The main mediums in which the crafts are practised are stone, wood and metal. Almost all clusters of villages have their own craftsmen who work on these mediums. The diversity of Indian cultural tradition is aptly reflected in the tradition of handicrafts. Some notable centres of handicrafts production have been shown in Chart-1.



CHART - 1

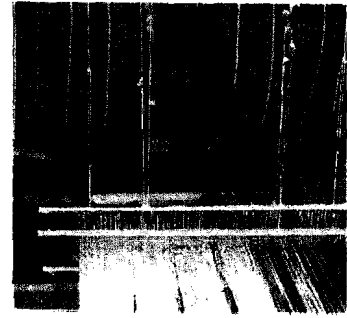
| Region | State | Handicrafts |
|----------------|----------------|--|
| Northern India | Kashmir | Silverware, Carpets, Ivory Items, Paper-machie, Shawls |
| | Punjab | Woodcraft, Metalware |
| | Himachal | Shawl, Woodcraft |
| | Uttar Pradesh | Silverware, Brocades, Pottery, Woodcraft, Embroidery |
| Eastern India | West Bengal | Terracotta, Woodcraft, Embroidery |
| | Orissa | Scroll painting, Woodcraft |
| Central India | Madhya Pradesh | Stonecraft, Embroidery |
| Western India | Rajasthan | Pottery, Stonecraft |
| | Gujarat | Woodwork, Embroidery |
| Southern India | Andhra Pradesh | Metalware, Stonecraft |
| | Karnataka | Ivory Items, Glazed Pottery |
| | Tamil Nadu | Matting, Puppets, Woodcraft |
| | Kerala | Basketry, Masks, Woodcraft |

27.2.3 Textiles:

The textile tradition of India goes back, beyond doubt, to the 2nd millenium B.C. The textual reference to cotton appears in the post-Vedic period, though references to weaving also abound in Vedic literature. The introduction of machine weaving, fortunately, did not result in the death of the very old tradition. The textile tradition in the form of a craft has lived down to our own period and certainly maintains a continuity from its remote past. We shall give you brief notices of some of the more prominent textile forms in existence in India even today.

1) **Patola:**

Patola is the double-**ikat** silk fabric, mainly of Gujarati origin. It was a popular item of Indian export around the 13th century. The name **patola** seemingly derives from **pattakula** (Sanskrit, meaning silk fabric). The patterns of **patola**, a precious silk **sari**, were considered to be clear and reasonably permanent. "Here the weaving is done so that the elements of pattern and colour on the warp are made to juxtapose exactly with those of the weft so that the colour combination and design sequence of the predetermined pattern are kept intact. A slight irregularity in outline creates the 'flame-effect' which forms the essence of the beauty of **patola**." (Jyotindra Jain, Aarti Aggarwala, **National Handicrafts and Handlooms Museum, New Delhi, Ahmedabad, 1989**). **Patolas** were once woven in several centres in Gujarat such as Ahmedabad, Surat, Cambay and Patan. Today true **patola** is made only in Patan by a couple of Salvi families.



2) **Jamdani**

Jamdani is "figured-muslin". It was traditionally woven in Dacca, West Bengal and Tanda in Faizabad, Uttar Pradesh. The cotton fabric in **jamdani** is brocaded with cotton and sometimes with **zari** threads. Today **jamdani sari** is woven in West Bengal.

3) **Kantha**

Kantha is "patched cloth" embroidery of Bengal. **Kanthas** are filled with lively motifs of birds, animals, trees etc. The making of **Kantha saris** is practised in West Bengal even today.

4) **Bandhej**

Bandhej is tie-dyeing practised in Rajasthan and Gujarat by Hindu and Muslim **Khatris** even now. Jaipur and Jodhpur are big centres of production as well as markets for this craft produce.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 1

1) Write 50 words on the handicrafts of India.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2) To which states/places do the following belong:

- a) **Patola**
- b) **Jamdani**
- c) **Kantha**
- d) **Bandhej**



27.3 THE RITUAL ARTS

The ritual art in India is located mostly within the confines of domestic ambience. It is infact an essential aspect of the celebrations in the family. Almost invariably the ritual art is practised only by women and takes the form of drawings on the floor or on the walls of the house. Some of these drawings are a daily ritual (such as the **Kolam** of South India) while others are made only on religious festive occasions.

"These purely abstract drawings are known under different names in the different parts of the country: **mandna** in Rajasthan, **rangoli** in Gujarat and Maharashtra, **sathya** in Saurashtra, **aripan** or **aypan** in Bihar, **aipan** in the Kumaon, **alpana** in Bengal, **jhunti** in Orissa, **cauka rangana** or **cauk purna** or **sonarakhna** in Uttar Pradesh, **muggu** in Andhra Pradesh, **kolam** in South India." (Stella Kramrisch in Aditi, *The Living Arts of India*, Washington, 1986).

The ritual art is a tradition handed down from mother to daughter in succeeding generations. The drawings are without image, figure, or narrative. The material used is mostly rice powder coloured in different shades and believed to possess magical powers.

Different from the traditional floor drawing, the drawings made on the walls of the houses have figurative character. They are colourful, rich in symbols and full of mythical elements. The **madhubani** painting of Bihar is a fine specimen of this kind of figurative ritual art.

27.4 PERFORMING ARTS

The tradition of the performing arts in India goes back to the most ancient past and India has a rich heritage of the same – dance, music and theatre. In the following Sub-Sections we take a look at this heritage and explore its relevance to the promotion of tourism today.

27.4.1 A Definition

A simple and obvious definition of the performing art would make it an art that lives / survives only when it is performed. "You can write down a piece of music, you can tape it and give it a new, altogether different, lease of life. But the music is really in the hearing, not in the score or the tape A dance can be video-taped or filmed, but the real magic is in the dancing itself, ... and so with theatre. Theatre is not cinema. Both are legitimate and exciting forms. But the theatre is a living thing." (Narayana Menon, "The Performing Arts - a definition" in *Aspects of the Performing Arts of India*, ed. Saryu Doshi, Marg Publications, 1983).

The performing arts provide a different kind of experience in which the audience begins to feel some kind of a union with the performer/s. The performing arts are not mere spectacles. They certainly strike at an inner cord located in the realm of emotion and feeling.

There has been a close connection between the performing arts in India and the religion. It is the mythology with enduring cultural patterns that has sustained the tradition of performing arts. Its strength lies in the fact that the performing arts in India have an almost uninterrupted tradition spanning several centuries.

27.4.2 Dance

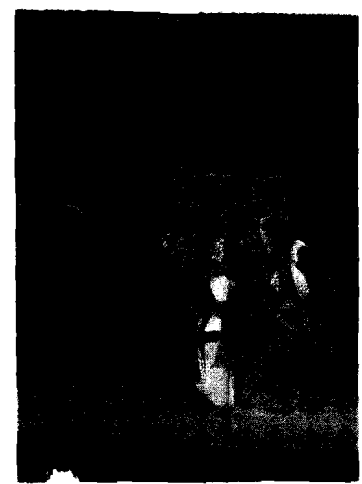
The Indian mythology suggests that the dance originated with Siva's **tandav**. Thus dance as a performing art has an age old tradition. Almost all classic dance forms in India have originated from folk traditions. The classical dances of India revolve around a few cardinal principles. "They have elements of facial expression (**sattvik**), verbal expression (**vachik**), manual gestures (**angile**) and costumes and jewellery (**acharya**)". (Utpal K Banerjee, *Indian Performing Arts*, New Delhi, 1992). These are reflected in the classical dances of all regions of India. Some important dance forms have been listed below:

1) Bharatnatyam

From Tamil Nadu with centres in Thanjavur and Kanchipuram. Performed by women and men both as a solo item.

2) Odissi

From Orissa with centres in Puri and Bhubaneshwar. Performed as a solo dance.



3) **Katthak**

From Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan with centres in Lucknow, Mathura - Vrindavan and Jaipur. Performed by men and women both as solo item.

4) **Kathakali**

From Kerala with centres in the temples there. Performed by men wearing make-up and emphasising on facial expressions.

5) **Kuchipudi**

From Andhra Pradesh centering around the town of Kuchipudi. Performed by men in the form of dance-drama.

6) **Manipuri**

From Manipur. Performed by a group of men and women enacting the drama of Krishna and Radha's lives.

The country is also extremely rich in the dance forms that are inspired by folk traditions. In fact an inventory of such folk dances may run into several sheets of paper. We shall, therefore, mention only two of the more important folk dances here.

1) **Bhangara**

Bhangara, interestingly, has become the flag-bearer of Indian folk tradition. This dance form belongs to the region of Punjab and is performed by both men and women attired in colourful costumes in a group form. The drum is an important musical instrument used in this dance to increase the tempo of the participant.

2) **Garba**

Of late, Garba has gained tremendous popularity as a group dance mainly in the region of Gujarat. Performed during the nine nights of Navratri, both men and women participate quite enthusiastically in this dance. The songs sung during the dance are mainly in honour of goddess Durga.

27.4.3 Music

Music, considered a vehicle for communion with God, has been an essential ingredient of our culture. Emanating from folk tunes and attaining the status of a classical art, music has been in vogue from times immemorial. Later two distinct forms of musical style developed in India. The more codified and text based form came to be called the **Carnatic** system of music. On the other hand a loose and flexible musical form practiced mostly in the northern parts of India came to be identified as the **Hindustani** system of music. A great fillip to this art form was given by Turkish and Mughal rulers in the medieval period, many of whom were themselves great connoisseurs of music.

The classic music has gained a lot of popularity in recent times. It is being practised in North India under the guardianship of a few great performers claiming descent from traditional houses called **gharanas** of music. Some of the more important **gharanas** have been listed here:

1) **Maihar**

Set up by the doyen of classical Indian music Ustad Alauddin Khan. Famous artists of the **gharana**; Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Pandit Ravi Shankar, Late Pandit Nikhil Banerjee.

2) Kirana

Set up by Sawai Gandharva. Famous artists: Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, Smt. Gangubai Hangal, Pandit Jitendra Abhisheki.

3) Atrauli

Set up by Ustad Faiyyaz Khan. Famous artists: Late Ustad Sharaft Husain Khan, Ustad Mohammad Shafi.

4) Patiala

Set up by Ustad Chand Khan. Famous artists: Late Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Late Ustad Munawwar Khan.

The Carnatic Music too has a host of eminent artists as listed below:

1) Vocal

Ms M.S. Subbulakshmi, Sri. M. Balamurlikrishna, Late Maharaj Kumar Santhanam.

2) Instrumental

Smt. N. Rajam (Violin), Late Sri. S. Balachander (Veena), Late Sri T. Mahalingam (Flute).

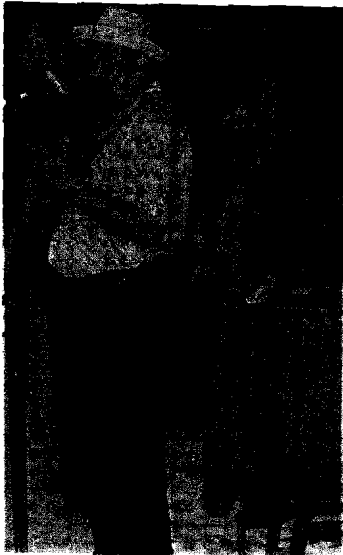
27.4.4 Theatre:

India has a unique theatre tradition which is marked by both, its antiquity and aesthetics and imagination. Ever since primitive and mythic ages the theatre has been an integral part of Indian life. Probably the art of theatre began with religious or social rites and ritualistic festivals, and gradually progressed into becoming a distinct art form. During the past two-three thousand years the theatrical arts have undergone fundamental changes. An important phase in this development was during the 19th century when as a result of an encounter with the West certain profound changes came about in the art. This theatre was "almost entirely an imitation of the western theatre". (Nemichandra Jain, *Indian Theatre*, New Delhi, 1992).

The concerns of the post-independence India were, however, different. What we have today as Indian theatre is in fact a sequel of this concern. By the sixties of the post-independence period a national theatre movement was born. Slow disintegration of the family as a viable social unit, new and demystified political stances, disillusionment of the urban middle-class, etc. were some important new themes that gained precedence in the plays written during this period. Some land-mark plays of this period were:

- Adhe Adhure - Mohan Rakesh
- Evam Indrajit, Pagla Ghoda - Badal Sircar
- Tughlaq - Girish Karnad
- Sakharam Binder - Vijay Tendulkar

In recent times there has again been a shift. "At the moment, it appears that the preparation for a new stage is on in many ways, in many forms and at many levels. The main factor in this situation is the increasing contact, and familiarity with an assimilation of the theatrical methods of the ancient Sanskrit and medieval theatres in our contemporary activities" (Nemichandra Jain, *op.cit.*). Evidently the contours of this newly emerging form have not been shaped yet. But perhaps in the next five or six years, it may take place. Another theatre form gaining popularity is the "street plays" or "street theatre".



1) Match the contents of List A with List B:

- | List A | List B |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| a) Mandna | a) South India |
| b) Rangoli | b) Andhra Pradesh |
| c) Sathya | c) Uttar Pradesh |
| d) Jhunti | d) Saurashtra |
| e) Kolam | e) Gujarat |
| | f) Rajasthan |
| | g) Orissa |

2) Name the states to which the following dance forms belong:

- a) Bharatnatyam
- b) Kathak
- c) Odissi
- d) Kuchipudi

3) Write the names of the **gharanas** to which the following exponents of classical music belong:

- a) Ustad Alauddin Khan
- b) Pandit Ravi Shankar
- c) Smt. Gangubai Hangal

4) Give the names of the playwrights in each of the following case:

- a) **Pagla Ghoda**
- b) **Tughlaq**
- c) **Sakharam Binder**

27.5 LET US SUM UP

India's rich and varied heritage makes it a fabled land for living culture and performing arts. We gave you details about the different kinds of this cultural tradition and their prevalent forms. We also defined for you the meaning of living culture and performing arts. In one section we dealt with the ritual arts of India. All this information is a valuable tool for a practicing tourism professional. You will appreciate the significance of using these tourism products for promoting both domestic as well as foreign tourist.

27.6 KEYWORDS

Eternal: everlasting

Fable : story

Fabric: cloth

Manifest: to show

Metaphor: application of special name to an object

Ritual: religious rites

Repertoire: regularly performed pieces of drama

Throb: show pulse beat

Vital: essential

27.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress - 1

- 1) See Sub-sec.27.2.2.
- 2) a) Gujarat; b) Dacca, West Bengal and Tanda (Uttar Pradesh);
c) West Bengal; d) Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Check Your Progress - 2

- | | List A | List B |
|----|--------|--------|
| 1) | a | f |
| | b | e |
| | c | d |
| | d | g |
| | e | a |
-
- 2) a Tamil Nadu
b Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan
c Orissa
d Andhra Pradesh
 - 3) a **Maihar**
b **Maihar**
c **Kirana**
 - 4) a Badal Sircar
b Girish Karnad
c Vijay Tendulkar

