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Class VIIth. Subject History. Date 29.12.2020.

Ch: The Making of Regional Cultural (Notes)

Beyond Regional Frontiers: The Story of Kathak

Dance can also be found in different regions in different forms- take the history Kathak-associated with several parts of north India- term kathak is derived from Katha-word used in Sanskrit and other languages for the story-kathaks were originally a caste of storytellers in temples of north India, who embellished their performances with gestures and songs-Kathak evolved into a distinct mode of dance in the 15th and 16th century with the spread of the bhakti movement-legends of Radha-Krishna enacted in folk plays called rasa lila-combined folk dance with the basic gestures of the kathak story-tellers- under the Mughal emperors and their nobles, Kathak was performed in the court-it acquired its present features and developed into a form of dance with a distinctive style-it developed in two traditions or gharanas- one in the courts of Rajasthan (Jaipur) and the other in Lucknow-Under the patronage of Wajid Ali Shah (last Nawab of Awadh) it grew into a major art form- By the third quarter of the 19th century, it was firmly entrenched as a dance form – in these two regions and in the adjoining areas of present-day Punjab, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh-Emphasis was laid on intricate and rapid footwork, elaborate costumes-on the enactment of stories. Kathak, like several other cultural practices, was viewed with disfavour by most British administrators in the 19th and 20th centuries- it survived and continued to be performed by courtesans-was recognised as one of six “classical” forms of dance in the country after independence.

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