



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Natyashastra: Synthesis of Theory and Praxis

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Subject: GS Paper I (Indian Heritage and Culture) **UPSC Relevance:** Evolution of performing arts and ancient scientific treatises.

- **Historical Context:** Composed by **Bharata Muni** (c. 200 BCE – 200 CE), it is a comprehensive manual of 36 chapters and 6,000 verses. It was created at a time when society needed a medium of instruction that combined the essence of the four Vedas but was accessible to all (*Sarvavarnika*).
- **The "Vedas" Connection:** It is called the **Fifth Veda** (*Natya Veda*) because it borrows **Pathya** (Recitation) from Rigveda, **Gana** (Music) from Samaveda, **Abhinaya** (Mimicry) from Yajurveda, and **Rasa** (Aesthetics) from Atharvaveda.
- **Theory (Shastra) vs. Praxis (Prayoga):**
- **Shastra:** The rigid linguistic and mathematical rules of rhythm (*Tala*), scale (*Laya*), and stage geometry.
- **Praxis:** The living application. The IGNCAs recent session emphasized that "Theory is the body, but Praxis is the breath." In the 20th UNESCO session, India argued that classical forms like *Kudiyattam* or *Kathakali* are scientific applications of these 2,000-year-old rules.
- **Key Concept: Rasa Theory:** The ultimate goal of any performance is to evoke a **Rasa** (an aesthetic flavor or sentiment) in the audience. There are 8 original Rasas (Love, Humor, Pathos, Anger, Heroism, Terror, Disgust, and Wonder), with *Shanta* (Peace) added later.
- **Relevance for 2025:** The UNESCO focus highlights India's use of **Soft Power** to bridge ancient wisdom with modern cultural diplomacy.

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