



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Challenges In Choreography

Sunila Kaustubh Potdar

Ph. D Scholar, Dance (Kathak)

Shri Jagdishprasad Jhabarmal Tibrewala University (JJTU)

Jhunjhunu, Dist – Churela, Rajasthan, India

Abstract: Choreography is far more than a technical arrangement of movements; it is a profound synthesis of emotion, intellect, tradition, and innovation. This study explores choreography as both a conceptual framework and a practical necessity in classical dance, emphasizing its role as a transformative force that shapes not only performances but personalities. Rooted in the intellectual depth of tradition and the evolving demands of contemporary expression, choreography becomes a medium through which inner vision meets outward articulation. The research focuses on the nuanced challenges of dance direction in the classical idiom, analyzing the interplay between form, narrative, audience perception, and performer readiness. Drawing from the insights of veteran choreographers like Jhelum Paranjape, the study highlights the importance of authenticity, conviction, and creative intent. It examines choreography as a silent dialogue—between dancer and audience, past and present, tradition and experiment. With increasing awareness among parents and students about dance's developmental value, the relevance of structured, meaningful choreography has never been greater. Ultimately, this work underscores choreography's role as the invisible force that breathes life into performance, crafting a space where history, spirituality, and innovation converge in graceful continuity.

Index Terms - Choreography, Dance, Performances, Classical Dance, Audience, Choreographer, Dance Direction, Kathak, Indian Classical Dance, Movement Architecture, Conceptual Framework, Tradition and Innovation, Narrative in Dance, Performance Aesthetics, Expression, Emotions

I. INTRODUCTION

Choreography is a Concept, A Necessity

Choreography is not merely an arrangement of steps, it is the architecture of movement, the visual philosophy of dance rendered in space and time. It is both a concept and necessity, serving as the bridge between abstract intention and embodied expression. As the understanding of dance has evolved beyond pure physically into the realm of intellectual and emotional articulation, so too has the role of choreography expanded. No longer confined to instructive patterns, it now carries the weight of meaning, narrative and symbolism. Despite its frequent invocation in the arenas of contemporary dance and modern theatre, the term 'Choreography' often eludes precise definition floating somewhere between craft and creation. At its core, however, it is a sophisticated discipline : the science and art of envisioning, structuring and breathing life into movement, transforming motion into metaphor and gesture into thought.

Elements of Choreography

Choreography is a multidisciplinary art form shaped by a variety of interconnected elements, each contributing to the visual, emotional, and conceptual impact of a performance. **Costumes** Enhance thematic clarity, character portrayal, and group uniformity, while **Hairstyles** and **Make-up** complement the dancer's presentation and ensure expressive visibility. **Formations**, such as straight or slant lines, create structural balance or dynamic movement patterns that guide audience perception. The **Stage** and its **Levels** influence spatial arrangement and performer interaction, with the **Backdrop** further contextualizing the narrative through visual cues. **Light Effect** design intensifies mood, highlights transitions, and focuses attention on specific choreographic moments. The **Subject of Choreography** serves as the central concept guiding all creative decisions, while **the Choreography Content** consists of the actual movement vocabulary that expresses this idea.

Sound Choices—whether through **Recorded or Live Music**—affect timing, emotional tone, and performer-musician synergy. The **Venue or Place of Performance** alters how choreography is experienced, depending on its scale, architecture, and acoustics, while the **Time of Performance** can enhance or limit technical and atmospheric elements. Finally, the **Audience** plays a pivotal role in shaping performance dynamics through their presence, response, and cultural context. Together, these components form a holistic framework that enables choreographers to transform movement into meaningful, immersive experiences.

Dance – Direction – A Science, A Comprehensive Study

Within the vast and intricate realm of dance, the triad of Performing, Teaching and Choreography forms the essential backbone of its living tradition. Among these, choreography occupies a unique and contemplative space—not merely as a logistical arrangement of steps, but as a profound act of authorship. While the term ‘dance-setting’ has gained popularity as a colloquial substitute, this simplification often dilutes the intellectual and creative gravity embedded in true choreography. It is not simply the act of aligning movements to a melody, but a deep, intentional construction of meaning—one that bridges the inner vision of the artist with the emotional resonance of the audience. Especially in the context of classical dance, choreography demands a scholarly and imaginative rigor: the careful selection of narratives, the cultural and symbolic weight of gestures, the interplay of time, space, and rasa. To choreograph in the classical idiom is to engage in a subtle negotiation between tradition and innovation, between inherited form and contemporary relevance. This intricate dialogue forms the very core of my research focus—**the challenges in classical dance direction**—a subject that seeks to illuminate the invisible artistry behind every visible performance.

II. HYPOTHESIS

The realization that dance serves as a powerful catalyst for personality development is gradually deepening in the collective consciousness of modern parents. As this awareness blossoms, there is a noticeable resurgence in the desire among students to immerse themselves in the disciplined and expressive world of classical dance. Beyond technique and tradition, classical dance becomes a mirror—reflecting not only cultural heritage but also shaping identity, sensitivity, and confidence. Within this evolving landscape, proper choreography emerges as more than stagecraft; it becomes a vital conduit, transforming practice into performance, and giving dancers a stage upon which to translate their inner growth into artistic expression. The art of dance direction, therefore, must embrace this dynamic function—curating and synthesizing diverse experimental elements without losing the essence of tradition. While the stylistic contours of dance direction may have shifted with time, its true calling today is to return to its foundational ideals: to root itself in authenticity while reaching outward with innovation, crafting a vision that is both timeless and timely.

III. Problem Of Study

Choreography, at its core, is a refined dialogue—a layered exchange between the dancer and the audience that unfolds across multiple dimensions. It is not merely the arrangement of movement, but the

orchestration of experience, where each element—scope, venue, number of performers, subject, performance duration, time constraints, intent, audience profile, daily practice, and method of presentation—becomes a distinct thread in an intricate tapestry. The choreographer is both a visionary and a strategist, navigating these interwoven contexts with sensitivity and precision. Yet, the true complexity lies not in assembling these components, but in discerning their subtle undercurrents: the emotional resonance of a theme, the financial and physical capacities of a production, the mental readiness of the performers, and the cultural or spiritual inclinations of the audience. To choreograph, then, is to translate the intangible into motion—to shape not just a performance, but a shared emotional landscape, sculpted in time, memory and presence.

IV. OBJECTIVES

In an age of constant transformation, the true challenge of choreography lies not in merely adapting to change, but in preserving the soul of the art while sculpting it anew. To weave quality, energy, and meaningful innovation into a single performance demands more than skill—it calls for a deep, holistic vision. Choreography becomes an act of balance: honoring the science of past traditions while allowing space for fresh ideas to breathe. It must inspire awareness and evoke elegance, while remaining rooted in authenticity. The pursuit is not only to refine movement, but to cultivate an atmosphere where thoughtful direction, unique expression, and aesthetic grace can flourish. For the new generation to be drawn toward this sacred craft, choreography must speak to both the intellect and the heart—inviting participation, commanding respect, and offering a mirror of cultural continuity and creative evolution. Through such layered intention, choreography transforms into a living legacy, a silent dialogue between eras, and a radiant offering to time.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

While exploring the intricate dimensions of dance composition, I encountered a deeply insightful reflection by the renowned Odissi senior dancer, teacher, and choreographer, Jhelumtai Paranjape. Her words, rich with experience and artistic depth, resonate profoundly with the essence of this discourse. It feels both meaningful and necessary to weave her voice into this narrative, as her perspective offers a luminous thread in the evolving tapestry of choreographic thought from evocative choreographic works like *Draupadi's Vastraharan*, *Swadhin Patika*, the soulful journey of the *Narmada River* and its dam, to the poetic reflection on *India's coastline* and the tender miracle of a *newborn's birth*, Jhelum Tai has painted powerful narratives through movement. Yet, beyond the grandeur of themes, she offers a simple, profound truth—a mantra for every aspiring choreographer: to truly birth a meaningful composition, one must first *love* what they are creating, *believe* in it with conviction, *focus* with unwavering intent, and *think* deeply from within. Her words illuminate the inner path of creation, where emotion and intellect intertwine. For the new generation of dance-makers, this guidance is not just advice—it is a philosophy, a gentle torch to carry into the sacred space of choreography. **In her own words, 'Choreography is something I simply love to do. Be it in classical dance, folk dance, free contemporary movements... or as my son says arranging the vessels in the kitchen or furniture in the house...everything simply has to be choreographed.'**

For better understanding of the topic, following literature reviews have a significant impact-

1. Bhavna Grover (2015) – The review study of “Innovative Experiments in Kathak: An Analytical Study”, explores the evolution and transformation of Kathak, one of India's rich and classical dance traditions through stylistic and thematic innovations across centuries. From its devotional origins to its transformation under royal patronage and the emergence of distinct gharanas, Kathak has continually adapted to cultural shifts. In the post-independence era, experimentation with rhythm, narrative, and presentation brought new dimensions to the form. While these innovations sparked debate about tradition versus modernity, the study concludes that such changes have revitalized Kathak—keeping it both rooted and relevant in contemporary times.

2. Monika Singh (2015) - The review study of “*The Changing Face of Kathak Dance*”, explores the evolution of Kathak from a devotional art form to a dynamic mode of classical expression. While rooted

in spiritual and cultural tradition, Kathak has embraced modern themes, stage presentations, and creative experimentation. The research highlights the unique styles of major gharanas, particularly Lucknow and Delhi, and examines how contemporary influences like music and fashion blend with traditional values. The study concludes that Kathak's transformation reflects both continuity and innovation, preserving its essence while resonating with modern audiences.

3. Anita Rani (2017) - The review study of *"Music and Rasa – A Rich Poetic Dialogue"*, explores the deep connection between Indian classical music and the concept of *rasa* (aesthetic essence). It highlights how elements like melody, rhythm, raga, and instrumentation work together to evoke specific emotional states in listeners. Drawing on classical theory, especially Bharata Muni's *Natya Shastra*, the research emphasizes that *rasa* is the soul of music—without which it remains incomplete. Through the harmonious blend of tradition and expression, music becomes a powerful medium for emotional and spiritual experience.

4. Prabha Vashnery (2018) - *"The Role of Laya and Tala in the Context of Rasa: The Importance of Rhythm and Aesthetic Experience in Indian Music"*, explores the intrinsic relationship between rhythm (*laya*), time cycles (*tala*), and aesthetic essence (*rasa*) in Indian classical music. Drawing from the philosophical idea that *shruti* is the mother and *laya* the father of music, the study highlights how rhythm brings structure and discipline to melodic expression. It analyzes how variations in tempo—*vilambit*, *madhya*, and *drut*—evoke different *rasas* such as *shanta*, *veera*, and *karuna*. The research concludes that the synthesis of *shruti*, *laya*, and *tala* is essential to awaken *rasa*, which in turn transforms musical experience into a deeply emotional, spiritual, and aesthetic journey.

5. Vandana Agrawal (2018) – The study of *"Components of Rasa Realization in Music"*, presents a comprehensive analysis of the concept of *rasa*—a central aesthetic principle in Indian art, particularly in music and dramaturgy. Grounded in Bharata Muni's *Natyashastra*, the review highlights how *rasa* is not merely an emotional reaction but a refined psychological and cultural experience. According to Bharata's theory, the synthesis of *vibhava* (determinants), *anubhava* (consequent expressions), and *sanchari bhavas* (transitory states) is essential for the realization of *rasa*. Agrawal emphasizes the dual role of *vibhava*—*alambana* (personal reference) and *uddipana* (stimulating factors)—in evoking emotional depth in both performance and perception. The review offers a focused discussion on the relationship between emotion (*bhava*) and aesthetic experience (*rasa*), suggesting that true *rasa* emerges only when inner emotional engagement reaches a heightened, shared state. It underscores the idea that *rasa* is a transformative force, enhancing not just the appreciation of art, but also deepening human emotional understanding. Overall, the work contributes meaningfully to the discourse on aesthetics in Indian music and literature, reaffirming the enduring relevance of classical theory in modern interpretations of emotional expression.

6. Prabhdeep Kaur (2019) – The study of *"The Use of Music in the Presentation of the Heroine in Kathak"*, offers a critical exploration of the role of music in enhancing the *sr̥ṅgāra rasa* (the aesthetic of romantic love) through the portrayal of the *nāyikā* (heroine) in Kathak dance. The research emphasizes that in classical Indian dance, especially Kathak, the feminine character is central to emotional expression. The study draws upon *Nāṭya śāstra* principles to highlight how the heroine is not merely a symbol of beauty but a nuanced emotional figure whose inner states are conveyed through a thoughtful blend of music, rhythm, and movement. Kaur critiques superficial depictions of 'shringara' advocating instead for an approach that foregrounds the heroine's emotional and psychological depth. The effective selection of *rāga*, *tāla*, and accompanying instruments is shown to be crucial in art.

7. Ruchi Mishra (2020) - The study of *"The Indian Tradition of Aesthetics and the Interpretation of Rasa"*, offers an insightful exploration of Indian aesthetic philosophy through the lens of spirituality, metaphysics, and emotional experience. Centered on the classical notion of *satyam*, *shivam*, *sundaram* (truth, auspiciousness, beauty), the work expands the definition of beauty beyond physical appearance to encompass inner elevation, divine joy, and the expansion of consciousness. The review traces the etymological roots of beauty in Indian philosophy and highlights how aesthetic experience (*saundarya*)

is intrinsically tied to *rasa*—the emotional essence central to Indian art and literature. Mishra emphasizes that beauty, as perceived in this tradition, is dynamic and transformative, not fixed or static. Through references to Vedic and classical texts, the work illustrates how *rasa* evolves with context, emotion, and perception, reflecting a living aesthetic consciousness. Ultimately, the study affirms that Indian aesthetics views beauty as a multidimensional experience—spiritual, intellectual, and emotional—grounded in harmony with the self and the cosmos. This approach continues to influence Indian art, music, and cultural expression in profound ways.

8. Ranjana Govar (2022) - The study of "*Rasasvada in Indian Classical Music*" examines the deep aesthetic and philosophical concept of *rasa* as experienced through Indian classical music. The research highlights that *rasasvada* is not merely a source of sensory pleasure but a refined emotional, mental, and spiritual experience. Drawing from classical Indian aesthetics and the theories of Bharata Muni, the study distinguishes between ordinary enjoyment and the selfless joy of artistic beauty (*saundarya*). It emphasizes that music, when aligned with *rasa*, serves as a medium for inner upliftment and aesthetic realization. The paper concludes that *rasa* is the soul of Indian music, offering both artistic fulfillment and spiritual depth.

9. Tamasa (2023)- The study of "*The Significance of Rasa in Classical Music*" presents a critical analysis of the *Rasa* theory within Indian classical arts. It explores how *rasa* transcends mere aesthetic pleasure to become a profound emotional and spiritual experience. The study emphasizes that while the theory appears simple, it involves a complex interplay of emotion, beauty, and spiritual elevation. Drawing from the works of Bharata Muni and Acharya Vishwanath, the paper highlights how elements like *vibhava*, *anubhava*, and *sanchari* contribute to the creation of *rasa*. Ultimately, the research affirms that *rasa* is not just the soul of music, dance, and poetry but also a pathway to inner transformation and the realization of deeper existential truths.

VI. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY TO ME AS RESEARCHER AND CHOREOGRAPHER

What is the true essence of choreography—its distinct presence, its undeniable necessity, and its magnetic pull upon the artist's soul? This question, layered with nuance, forms a vital inquiry for any serious study of dance direction. According to me as a Choreographer, Choreography is not merely a structural tool; it is the unseen pulse that shapes the visible body of a performance. Whether in the fluid interplay of a duet or the intricate geometry of group formations, in the careful alignment of the dancer's body structure, or in the emotional weight carried by themes such as *Lakshmi Agarwal's* journey through acid attack survival, or the divine invocations of *Shiva Stuti* and *Durga Stuti*—choreography is the breath that animates thought into movement. Its power is further revealed in thematic presentations—like the stirring patriotism of *Swatantryaveer Savarkar's "Ne Majsi Ne"*, or the cultural resonance of *Geet Ramayana* through *Saath Sangat*, composed by A. Shridhar Phadke. Each presentation becomes a layered canvas where history, mythology, and contemporary life converge.

Even the choice of performance space—whether within the sanctity of a temple as a sacred offering, the openness of a field for the valorous spirit of *Veer Shivaji Maharaj*, or the formal stage of a state-organized festival like the *P. L. Deshpande Mahotsav*—influences the choreographic soul of the piece. It is in navigating these diverse elements that the choreographer finds their calling, and perhaps this is why choreography, in all its quiet complexity, draws the artist in like a sacred fire—demanding reflection, passion, and purpose. (mentioned in this paragraph are researcher's own choreography Projects choreographed by researcher herself)

VII. CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that when music is composed with deep poetic meaning, and dance is crafted upon it with thoughtful precision and disciplined artistry, the result is nothing short of magic—it gently but powerfully captures the hearts of its audience. True dance direction cannot exist in a vacuum; it must pulse with impact, flow with rhythm, and move with purpose. Without a unifying vision, without the heartbeat

of intention and the architecture of discipline, a performance remains incomplete, merely movement without meaning. Dance, at its finest, is a sublime fusion—where literature whispers its stories, music breathes its melodies, and the dancer becomes the living bridge between them. It is this harmonious interplay of word, sound, and movement that elevates choreography into an art form that not only delights the eye, but speaks directly to the soul.



VI. VIII. My opinion

The availability of performing artists in this careeristic world for rigorous and continuous rehearsals and main event is a big challenge for the choreographer. Moreover the limited or inadequate amount of remuneration to artists and choreographers also play a vital role as a challenge in choreography. In essence, modern choreography and the ancient tradition of Bharat's *pindi-bandh* are not worlds apart; they are simply bound by different lexicons. The distinction lies in the language we use—where once the words *chain*, *rekha*, *lata bandh*, *bhedyak*, and *pindi* guided movement, today we speak in terms of *straight-lines*, *right to left*, *center forward*, *crossing*, and *overlapping*. Yet, the underlying principle remains remarkably similar: both speak to the art of directing the body in space, creating patterns that resonate with purpose and grace. Even as contemporary dance direction employs modern terminology, it is deeply rooted in the ancient practices prescribed by Sage Bharata, whose teachings continue to echo through time. The essence of these movements—the way they connect the dancer to the rhythm, the space, and the narrative—remains timeless, a testament to the enduring power of movement as an art form that transcends words.

IX. REFERENCES

Here are the references formatted in APA style:

- [1] Pandit Tirath Ram Azad (2015), Kathak Dnyaneshwari (Second Edition), Publisher – Nateshwar Kala Mandir, Delhi 110092, ISBN : 978- 81-90692 – 1, Chapters 50,51,52,53 Pages – 197 to 209
- [2] Sandhya Purecha, Srihari Vasudev Gokarnkar (2016), Bharatmunivirchitam Natyashastram, Secretary, Maharashtra State Literature and Culture Board, Prabhadevi, Mumbai 400 025
- [3] Paranjape, J. (2017). *Nritya Spectrum*, Volume 2.
- [4] Bhate, R. (2018). *Lehja: Choreography and its Indian Context* (Chapter 2). In *Lehja* (pp. 10-15). Publisher.
- [5] Pandit Tirath Ram Azad (2020), Kathak Darpan, Delhi 110092
- [6] Patil, D. *Internet Blog - Darshana Patil Lekh*.
- [7] *Britannica*. (n.d.). *Department of Arts and Culture*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com>
- [8] Bhavna Grover (2015) – “*Innovative Experiments in Kathak Dance: An Analytical Study*,” published in *Sangeet aur Nritya Navachar*, ISSN-2350-0530 (Online), 2394-3629 (Print), *International Research Journal - A Knowledge Repository*.
- [9] Monika Singh (2015) – “*The Changing Face of Kathak Dance*,” *International Journal of Research - Granthaalayah*, 3(1SE): 1–3.
- [10] Anita Rani (2017) – “*Music and Rasa – A Rich Poetic Dialogue*,” *Artistic Narration*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, ISSN (Print): 0976-7444, ISSN (Online): 2395-7247, Impact Factor 3.9651 (ICRJIFR), UGC Approved Journal No. 43285.
- [11] Prabha Vashnery (2018) – “*The Role of Rhythm and Taal in the Context of Rasa*,” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI)*, ISSN (Online): 2319-7722, ISSN (Print): 2319-7714, Volume 7, Issue 8, pp. 94–97.
- [12] Vandana Agrawal (2018) – “*Constituents of Rasa Formation in Music*,” *International Research Journal of Management Sociology & Humanities*, Vol. 9, ISSN 2277-9809 (Online), ISSN 2348-9359 (Print).
- [13] Prabhdeep Kaur (2019) – “*Use of Music in the Presentation of the Heroine in Kathak*,” Print ISSN: 2321-290X, RNI: UPBIL/2013/55327, Volume 6, Issue 8 (Part-2), e-ISSN: 2349-980X.
- [14] Ruchi Mishra (2020) – “*Indian Aesthetic Tradition and the Discourse on Rasa*,” *Sangeet Galaxy*, ISSN: 2319-9695, Vol. 9, Issue 2, pp. 34–43.
- [15] Ranjana Govar (2022) – “*Rasa Experience in Indian Classical Music*,” *IJAR*, ISSN Print: 2394-7500, ISSN Online: 2394-5869, Impact Factor: 8.4, *IJAR* 2022; 8(5): 355–357.
- [16] Tamasa (2023) – “*Significance of Rasas in Shastriya Sangeet*,” *IJCSP*, Paper ID: IJCSP23B1412, Volume 13, Issue 2