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DANCES OF INDIA

Dance is an expression of self and emotion. It involves physicality of movement both bodily and facial. For centuries, dance has been a part of various cultures – from primitive man to the modern individual. Right from celebrating marriage, birth, to warding off evil and pacifying the supernatural, dance has been a mode to fulfill various desires and aspirations. Dance has traditionally been an important part of religion and culture in India. Diverse culture of India has the treasure of a variety of classical, folk and tribal dances in regions across the country. The uniqueness of dances of India binds the entire country together. Dances of India reflect its cultural richness.

Brief history of dance in India

Dance is a product of society and while interacting with it can trace its roots to several centuries. The origins of dance in India go back into the ancient times. The earliest paleolithic and neolithic cave paintings such as the UNESCO world heritage site at Bhimbetka rock shelters in Madhya Pradesh shows dance scenes. Several sculptures found at Indus Valley Civilization archaeological sites, now distributed between Pakistan and India, show dance figures. For example, the Dancing Girl sculpture is dated to about 2500 BCE shows a 10.5 centimetres high figurine in a dance pose.

The Vedas integrate rituals with performance arts, such as a dramatic play, where not only praises to gods were recited or sung, but the dialogues were part of a dramatic representation and discussion of spiritual themes.

The evidence of earliest dance related texts are in Natyasutras, which are mentioned in the text of Panini, the sage who wrote the classic on Sanskrit grammar, and who is dated to about 500 BCE.

Dance in Medieval India along with the culture and customs of the country experienced disgrace. However, Dance in Medieval India witnessed ascends with the coming of the Mughals in India. The establishment of Mughal kingdom raised the popularity of some forms of dance like Kathak during the period. During the initial period of their stay in India, the British showed complete indifference to the Indian music and dances, because they were hardly able to appreciate its richness and variety. Encouraged by the efforts of the Indian artists, they

also slowly developed taste in Indian dance.

Sangeet Natya Academy

To promote dance in the country there is **Sangeet Natya Academy, the national academy for performing arts in India**, recognizes traditional dances as Indian classical dances, while other sources and scholars recognize more.

The academy functions as the apex body of the performing arts in the country to preserve and promote the vast cultural heritage of India expressed in music, dance and drama.

It also works with governments and art academies in states and territories of the country.

Classification of dance in India

We can broadly classify the dance forms of India into two categories, viz. **classical dances** of India, **folk dances** of India. All these dance forms have their own style and cultural values associated with them.

1. Classical dance in India

- **Indian classical Dance' or 'Shastriya Devesh'**, is an umbrella term for Various performance arts rooted in religious Hindu musical theatre styles, whose theory and practice can be traced to the Sanskrit text Natya Shastra.
- The number of recognised classical dances range from eight to more, depending on the source and scholar.
- The Sangeet Natak Academy recognizes **eight** – Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Odissi, Kathakali, Sattriya, Manipuri and Mohiniyattam.

■ Bharatnatyam

- ▶ Bharatnatyam Dance is considered to be over 2000 years old. Several texts beginning with **Bharata Muni's Natya Shastra** (200 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.) provide information on this dance form.
- ▶ The **Abhinaya Darpana by Nandikesvara** is one of the main sources of textual material, for the study of the technique and grammar of body movement in Bharatnatyam Dance.
- ▶ Bharatnatyam dance is known to be **ekaharya**, where one dancer takes on many roles in a single performance. In the early 19th century, the famous **Tanjore Quartette**, under the patronage of **Raja Serfoji** are said to have been responsible for the repertoire of Bharatnatyam dance as we see it today.
- ▶ The style was kept alive by the **devadasis**, who were young girls 'gifted' by their parents to the temples and who were married to the gods. The devadasis performed music and dance as offerings to the deities, in the temple courtyards.
- ▶ **The traditional Bharatanatyam performance follows a seven-part order of presentation. This set is called margam:**
 - **Alarippu:** The presentation begins with a **rhythmic invocation (vandana) called the Alaripu**. It is a pure dance, which combines a thank you and benediction for blessings from the gods and goddesses, the guru and the gathered performance team. It also serves as a preliminary warm up dance, without melody, to enable the dancer to loosen her body, journey away from distractions and towards single-minded focus.

- **Jatiswaram:** The next stage of the performance adds melody to the movement of Alarippu, and this is called Jatiswaram. The dance remains a preliminary **technical performance (nritya)**, pure in form and without any expressed words. The drums set the beat, of any **Carnatic music raga (melody)**. The dancer performs a **sequence (Korvai)** to the rhythm of the beat, presenting to the audience the unity of music, rhythm and movements.
- **Shabdham:** The performance sequence then adds **Shabdham (expressed words)**. The solo dancer, the vocalist(s) and the musical team, in this stage of the production, present short compositions, with words and meaning, in a spectrum of moods.
- **Varnam:** It emphasizes **expressive dance**. It is the **longest section** and the nritya. The artist presents the play or the main composition, reveling in all her movements, silently communicating the text through codified gestures and footwork, harmoniously with the music, rhythmically punctuated. Her hands and body tell a story, whether of love and longing or of a battle between the good and the evil, as the musicians envelop her with musical notes and tones that set the appropriate mood.
- **Padam:** This is the stage of reverence, of simplicity, of abhinaya (expression) of the solemn spiritual message or devotional religious prayer (bhakti). The music is lighter, the chant intimate, the dance emotional. The choreography attempts to express **rasa (emotional taste)** and a mood, while the recital may include items such as a **keertanam (expressing devotion)**, a **javali (expressing divine love)** or something else.
- **Thillana:** The performance sequence ends with a **Tillana, the climax**. It closes out the nritya portion; the movements exit the temple of expressive dance, returning to the nritya style, where a series of pure movement and music are rhythmically performed. Therewith the performance ends.
- **Shloka or Mangalam:** The seventh and final item in the sequence can be either a Shloka or a Mangalam. The dancer calls for blessings on the people all around.



Other aspect of Bharatatyam

Attire

- The attire of a Bharatanatyam dancer **resembles a Tamil Hindu's bridal dress**. It consists of a fitted, brilliantly colored Sari which is mainly of warm colors with mirrors on them.
- The Sari is made of a specially stitched pleated cloth which falls in front and opens like a hand fan when she flexes her knees or performs footwork.
- The dancer is typically adorned with jewelry on her ear, nose, and neck that outlines her head or hair.

■ Kuchipudi

- ▶ Kuchipudi is one of the classical styles of Indian dance. Around the third and fourth decade of this century it emerged out of a long rich tradition of dance-drama of the same name.
- ▶ It originated in a **village named Kuchipudi in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh**.
- ▶ Kuchipudi is a dance-drama performance, with its roots in the ancient Hindu Sanskrit text of **Natya Shastra**. It developed as a religious art linked to traveling bards, temples and spiritual beliefs, like all major classical dances of India.
- ▶ Kuchipudi largely developed as a **Hindu god Krishna-oriented Vaishnavism tradition**, and it is most closely related to **Bhagavata Mela performance art found in Tamil Nadu**.
- ▶ **Solo dancing** was there earlier, but only as a part of the dance drama at appropriate sequences. At times, even though the dramatic situation did not demand, solo dancing was being presented to punctuate the presentation and to enhance the appeal.
- ▶ The Kuchipudi performance usually begins with an invocation. Then, each costumed actor is introduced, their role stated, and they then perform a short preliminary dance set to music (**dharavu**).
- ▶ Next, the performance presents pure dance (**nritta**). This is followed with by the expressive part of the performance (**nritya**), where rhythmic hand gestures help convey the story. Vocal and instrumental Carnatic music in the Telugu language accompanies the performance.
- ▶ The popularity of Kuchipudi has grown within India, and it is performed worldwide.



Costumes

- ▶ The traditional Kuchipudi was performed by all males troupe. A dancer in a male role would be in **Angivastra**, also known as **Bagalbandi**, wear a **dhoti** (a single pleated piece of cloth hanging down from the waist). A dancer in a female role would wear a **Sari with light makeup**.

Musical instruments

- ▶ Musical instruments used in Kuchipudi are **cymbals, mridangam, violine, thamburi, flute**. The Kuchipudi performance is led by a conductor (chief musician) called the **Sutradhara or Nattuvanar**.

■ Kathakali

- ▶ Kerala is the home of several traditional dance and **dance - drama** forms, the most notable being Kathakali.
- ▶ It is a **"story play"** genre of art, but one distinguished by the elaborately colorful make-up, costumes and face masks that the traditionally male actor-dancers wear.

- ▶ Kathakali's roots are unclear. The fully developed style of Kathakali originated around the 17th century, but its roots are in the temple and folk arts (such as Kutiyattam and religious drama of the southwestern Indian peninsula), which are traceable to at least the 1st millennium CE.
- ▶ A Kathakali performance, like all classical dance arts of India, synthesizes music, vocal performers, choreography and **hand and facial gestures** together to express ideas. However, Kathakali differs in that **it also incorporates movements from ancient Indian martial arts and athletic traditions of South India.**
- ▶ The traditional themes of the Kathakali are folk mythologies, religious legends and spiritual ideas from the Hindu epics and the Puranas. **The vocal performance has traditionally been performed in Sanskritised Malayalam.**
- ▶ In modern compositions, Indian Kathakali troupes have included women artists, as well as adapted Western stories and plays such as those by Shakespeare.

Costumes

- ▶ Of all classical Indian dances, Kathakali has the most elaborate costuming consisting of head dresses, face masks and vividly **painted faces.**

Acting

- ▶ Like many classical Indian arts, Kathakali is choreography as much as it is acting. It is said to be one of the most difficult styles to execute on stage, with young artists preparing for their roles for several years before they get a chance to do it on stage.
- ▶ The actors speak a "**sign language**", where the word part of the character's dialogue is expressed through "**hand signs (mudras)**", while emotions and mood is expressed through "**facial and eye**" movements.

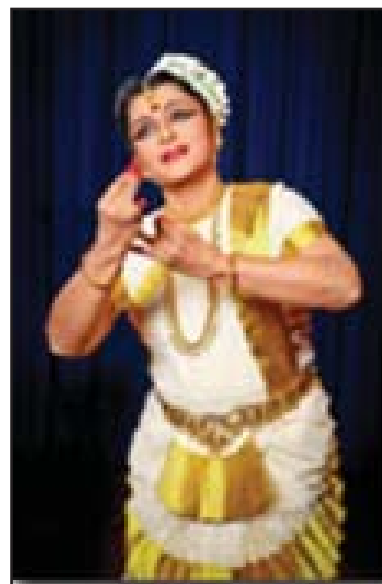
Songs and musical instruments

- ▶ The play is in the form of verses that are metered and lyrical, sung by vocalists whose voice has been trained to various melodies (raga), music and synchronized with the dance-acting on the stage.
- ▶ Many musical instruments are used in Kathakali. Three major drums found are **Maddalam** (barrel-shaped), **Centa** (cylindrical drum played with curved sticks) and **Itaykka** (Idakka, hourglass-shaped drum with muted and melodious notes played when female characters perform).



■ Mohiniyattam

- **Mohiniyattam**, is one of the eight classical dances of India that developed and remained popular in the **state of Kerala**.
- Mohiniyattam dance gets its name from the word **Mohini** – a mythical enchantress avatar of the Hindu god Vishnu, who helps the good prevail over evil by developing her feminine powers.
- Mohiniyattam's roots, like all classical Indian dances, **are in the Natya Shastra** – the ancient Hindu Sanskrit text on performance arts. However, it follows the **Lasya style** described in Natya Shastra that is a dance which is delicate and feminine.
- The delicate body movements and subtle facial expressions are more feminine in nature and therefore are ideally suited for performance by women.



Costumes

- The costume includes plain white or off-white such as ivory or cream colored sari embroidered with bright golden or gold laced colored brocade (**similar to a ceremonial Kasavu saree**).

Music and instruments

- The vocal (music) of Mohiniyattam involves various rhythms. There are numerous compositions for a Mohiniyattam repertoire, most of whose lyrics are in **Manipravalam, a mixture of Sanskrit, Tamil and Malayalam**.
- The musical instruments usually used in Mohiniyattam are **Mridangam or Madhalam (barrel drum), Idakka (hour glass drum), flute, Veena, and Kuzhitalam (cymbals)**. The ragas (melody) are rendered in the **sopana (steps) style**, which is a slow melodic style with roots in the Natya Shastra.

■ Odissi

- Odissi is a classical dance that originated in Odisha, also referred to as Orissi in older literature, is a major ancient Indian classical dance that originated in the Hindu temples of Odisha – an eastern coastal state of India.
- Odissi, in its history, was performed predominantly by women, and **expressed religious stories and spiritual ideas, particularly of Vaishnavism (Vishnu as Jagannath)**.
- Odissi performances have also expressed ideas of other traditions such as those related to **Hindu gods Shiva and Surya, as well as Hindu goddesses (Shaktism)**.
- Modern Odissi is performed by children and adults, in solo or as group.
- For centuries **maharis** were the chief repositories of this dance. The maharis, who were originally temple dancers, came to be employed in royal courts which resulted in the degeneration of the art form. Around this time, a class of boys called **gotipuas** were trained in the art, they danced in the temples and also for general entertainment. Many of today's gurus of this style belong to the gotipua tradition.
- Odissi is traditionally a **dance-drama genre of performance art**, where the artist(s) and musicians play out a mythical story, a spiritual message or devotional poem from the Hindu texts, using symbolic costumes, body movement, abhinaya (expressions) and mudras (gestures and sign language) set out in ancient Sanskrit literature.

- ▶ Odissi is learnt and performed as a composite of basic dance motif called the **Bhangas (symmetric body bends, stance)**. It involves lower (footwork), mid (torso) and upper (hand and head) as three sources of perfecting expression and audience engagement with geometric symmetry and rhythmic musical resonance.
- ▶ An Odissi performance repertoire includes invocation, **nritta** (pure dance), **nritya** (expressive dance), **natya** (dance drama) **and moksha** (dance climax connoting freedom of the soul and spiritual release).

Costumes

- ▶ The Odissi dancers are colorfully dressed with makeup and jewellery. The Saree worn by Odissi dancers are brightly coloured, and usually of **local silk (Pattasari)**. It is worn with pleats, or may have a pleat tailor stitched in front, to allow maximum flexibility during the footwork.



Music and instruments

- ▶ Odissi dance is accompanied by Odissi music. The primary Odissi ragas are Kalyana, Nata, Shree Gowda, Baradi, Panchama, Dhanashri, Karnata, Bhairavee and Shokabaradi.
- ▶ An Odissi troupe comes with musicians and musical instruments. The orchestra consists of various regional musical instruments, such as the **Mardala (barrel drum)**, **harmonium**, **flute**, **sitar**, **violin**, **cymbals** held in fingers and others.

■ Sattriya

- ▶ Sattriya is originated in the eastern state of **Assam**. It is a **dance-drama performance art** with origins in the **Krishna-centered Vaishnavism monasteries of Assam**, and attributed to the 15th century **Bhakti movement** scholar and saint **Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev**.
- ▶ One-act plays of Sattriya are called **Ankiya Nat**, which combine the aesthetic and the religious through a ballad, dance and drama. The plays are usually performed in the **dance community halls (namghar) of monastery temples (sattras)**. The themes played relate to Krishna and Radha, sometimes other Vishnu avatars such as Rama and Sita.
- ▶ Sattriya dance tradition is governed by strictly laid down principles in respect of hastamudras, footworks, aharyas, music etc.



- ▶ **Sankaradeva** introduced this dance form by incorporating different elements from various treatises, local folk dances with his own rare outlook.
- ▶ Recognized in **2000** as a classical dance by Sangeet Natak Akademi of India, modern Sattriya explores many themes and plays, and its performances staged worldwide.

■ Manipuri

- ▶ Manipuri dance, **also known as Jagoi**, is one of the major Indian classical dance forms, named after the region of its origin – Manipur, a state in northeastern India bordering with Myanmar (Burma), Assam, Nagaland and Mizoram.
- ▶ It is particularly known for its **Hindu Vaishnavism themes**, and exquisite performances of love-inspired dance drama of **Radha-Krishna called Raslila**. However, the dance is **also performed to themes related to Shaivism, Shaktism and regional deities such as Umang Lai during Lai Haraoba**.
- ▶ The roots of Manipuri dance, as with all classical Indian dances, is the ancient Hindu Sanskrit text **Natya Shastra**, with influences and the culture fusion between various local folk dance forms.
- ▶ The Manipuri dance is a team performance, with its own unique costumes, aesthetics, conventions and repertoire.
- ▶ The Manipuri dance drama is, for most part, marked by a performance that is graceful, fluid, and sinuous with greater **emphasis on hand and upper body gestures**.
- ▶ It is accompanied with devotional music created with many instruments, with the beat set by **cymbals (kartal or manjira) and double-headed drum (pung or Manipuri mrdanga) of sankirtan**.
- ▶ Manipuri dance is a religious art and its aim is the expression of spiritual values. Aspects of this performance art are celebrated during Hindu festivals and major rites of passage such as weddings among the Manipuri people, particularly in the ethnic majority of Meitei people.
- ▶ The dance drama choreography shares the plays and stories of '**Vaishnavite Padavalis**' that also inspired the **major Gaudiya Vaishnava-related performance arts found in Assam and West Bengal**.



■ Kathak

- ▶ The origin of Kathak is traditionally attributed to the traveling bards of ancient northern India known as **Kathakars or storytellers**.
- ▶ The term Kathak is derived from the **Vedic Sanskrit word Katha** which means "**story**", and **Kathakar** which means "**the one who tells a story**", or "**to do with stories**".
- ▶ Wandering Kathakars communicated stories from the great epics and ancient mythology through dance, songs and music in a manner similar to early Greek theatre.
- ▶ Kathak dancers tell various stories through their hand movements and extensive footwork, but most importantly through their facial expressions.
- ▶ Kathak evolved during the **Bhakti movement**, particularly by incorporating the childhood and stories of the Hindu god Krishna, as well as independently in the courts of north Indian kingdoms.

- ▶ Kathak is found in three distinct forms, called "**gharanas**", named after the cities where the Kathak dance tradition evolved – **Jaipur, Banaras and Lucknow**.
- ▶ While the **Jaipur gharana** focuses more on the **foot movements**, the **Banaras and Lucknow gharanas** focus more on **facial expressions and graceful hand movements**.
- ▶ Stylistically, the Kathak dance form emphasizes rhythmic foot movements, adorned with small bells (Ghungroo), and the movement harmonized to the music.
- ▶ The most common instruments that go with Kathak are **tabla** (a pair of hand drums) that syncs with the dancer's feet rhythms, **sarangi or harmonium with manjira** (hand cymbals) that meters the **tal** (cycle), and other instruments to add effect, depth and structure to the expressive stage of a Kathak performance



2. Folk dances of India

- Indian folk dance is a simple dance, and is performed to express joy and happiness among themselves. Folk dance is performed for every possible occasion, to celebrate the arrival of seasons, birth of a child, a wedding, festivals and some old social customs.
- The dances are extremely simple with minimum of steps or movement. The dances burst with verve and vitality.
- Men and women perform some dances exclusively, while in some performances men and women dance together. On most occasions, the dancers sing themselves, while being accompanied by artists on the instruments.
- Each form of dance has a specific costume. Most costumes are extraordinary with extensive jewels. While there are numerous ancient folk and tribal dances, many are constantly being improved. The skill and the imagination of the dances influence the performance.

Dance	State	Dance	State
◦ Ankia Nat	Assam	◦ Tippani	Gujarat
◦ Bihu	Asom	◦ Chavittu Natkam	Kerala
◦ Ojapali	Asom	◦ Keikotti Kalli	Kerela
◦ Dandonate	Orrisa	◦ Koodiyattam	Kerala
◦ Bahaka wata	Orrisa	◦ Krishnanathani	Kerala
◦ Bhangra	Punjab	◦ Mudivettu	Kerala
◦ Gidda	Punjab	◦ Tappatrikali	Kerala
◦ Bhavai	Gujarat, Rajasthan	◦ Theyyam	Kerala
◦ Damdiya Ras	Gujarat	◦ Hikot	Jammu & Kashmir
◦ Garba	Gujarat	◦ Rauf	Jammu & Kashmir
◦ Rasila	Gujarat	◦ Chamar Ginad	Rajasthan

Dance	State	Dance	State
◦ Gangore	Rajasthan	◦ Chhau	West Bengal
◦ Kayanga Bajavanga	Rajasthan	◦ Chiraw (Bamboo dance)	Mizoram
◦ Khayal	Rajasthan	◦ Dahikala	Maharashtra
◦ Jhulan Leela	Rajasthan	◦ Jat-Jatin	Bihar
◦ Chappeli	Uttar Pradesh	◦ Jatra	West Bengal
◦ Kajri	Uttar Pradesh	◦ Kathi	West Bengal
◦ Karan	Uttar Pradesh	◦ Kathi	Tamil Nadu
◦ Kumanon	Uttar Pradesh	◦ Kummi	Tamil Nadu
◦ Nautanki	Uttar Pradesh	◦ Kokattam	Tamil Nadu
◦ Munzra	Himachal Pradesh	◦ Lai Haroba	Manipur
◦ Gidda Parhaun	Himachal Pradesh	◦ Lavani	Maharashtra
◦ Kayanga	Himachal Pradesh	◦ Lezum	Maharashtra
◦ Luddi	Himachal Pradesh	◦ Tarnasha	Manipur
◦ Pandvani	Madhya Pradesh	◦ Maha Rassa	Haryana

Folk dance of North India

• Jammu & Kashmir

- **Dumhal:** It is a dance performed by men of the **Wattal tribe on specific occasions**. The performers wear long colourful robes and tall conical caps that are studded with beads and shells.
- **Rauf:** It is a folk dance form which is mainly practiced by the women folk of the Kashmir valley.
- Himachal Pradesh
- **Nati:** It refers to the **traditional dance of Sirmour district Kullu and Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh**. The dance is listed in the **Guinness Book of World Records as largest folk dance**.
- **Charba dance:** Normally performed during celebration of dussehra festival.
- Punjab
- **Bhangra:** It is one of Punjab's most popular dances and the name of the music style. Bhangra is done with classic style Punjabi dresses, and with instruments including a Dhol, Chimta, Algoza etc.
- **Giddha:** It is a female folk dance from Punjab. It is an energetic dance derived from ancient ring dancing that highlights feminine grace and elasticity. It is often accompanied by singing folk couplets **known as bolliyan**.
- **Kikkli:** It is normally performed by two girls holding hands and twirling each other in circle and balancing their positions in circular motions.

• Uttar Pradesh

- **Mayur Nritya or Peacock Dance:** This is a folk dance from **Brij region of Uttar Pradesh**. This is done by girls dressed as peacocks, resplendent with peacock feathers and a glittering head-dress complete with a beak.

- ▶ **Rasleela:** It is most popular form of folk dance of India, especially during the festivals of **Krishna Janmashtami and Holi in the regions of Mathura and Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh.**
- ▶ **Charpali, Jaatta, Kajari and Cchhora** are also some of the dances of Uttar Pradesh.

Folk dance of Western India

• Gujarat

- ▶ **Dandiya Raas:** It is an energetic, vibrant dance originating in the state of Gujarat. Often called the "stick dance" because it uses polished sticks or dandiya, it represents a **mock-fight between Durga and Mahishasura, the mighty demon-king.**
- ▶ **Garba:** It is customarily performed by women; the dance involves circular patterns of movement and rhythmic clapping. It popularly performed during Navratri.
- ▶ **The Tippani dance:** It originated from **the Chorwad region of Saurashtra.** Labourer women take a wooden rod, sometimes tipped with iron at one end, to beat the floor.

• Rajasthan

- ▶ **Ghoomar:** Ghoomar is a traditional women's folk dance of Rajasthan. It is performed by groups of women in swirling robes accompanied by men and women singing together.
- ▶ **Kalbelia:** It is performed by **Naachato Rajasthan** the women's group of the Kalbelia community of Rajasthan.
- ▶ **Ghodi and Kachchhi Ghodi:** It is an Indian folk dance that originates from the **Shekhawati region of Rajasthan.** Dancers wear novelty horse costumes and participate in mock fights while a singer narrates folk tales about local bandits.

• Maharashtra

- ▶ **Lavani:** It is a combination of traditional song and dance, which is particularly performed to the beats of Dholki, a percussion instrument. Lavani is noted for its powerful rhythm and erotic sentiment.
- ▶ [Folk dance of Eastern India](#)

• Bihar

- ▶ **Bideshiya:** It is a form of dance drama which holds a unique place amongst folk dances from Bihar. It is believed to be **created by Bhikhari Thakur**, a person who was barber by profession and left everything for his passion of drama.
- ▶ **Fagua:** It is a special dance form and also a type of folk song which is sung and performed in the festival of Holi.
- ▶ **Jat-Jatin:** It is the most popular **folk dance of North Bihar, especially in Mithila and Koshi region.** It is performed by a pair of man and woman.
- ▶ **Jhijhian:** It is sung when there is no rain for a long time. Through 'Jhijhian' people try to portray drought where there is no rain. They pray to Lord Indra for rain. This dance is ritualistic in nature with the songs showing deep devotion to Lord Indra.

- ▶ **Jhumri:** It is another popular dance form of Bihar. It is very much similar to Garba of Gujarat.
- ▶ **Kajari:** It is a popular dance form in **Bhojpuri speaking region of Bihar**. It is often used to describe the longing of a maiden for her lover as the black monsoon cloud come hanging in the summer skies, and the style is notably sung during the rainy season.
- ▶ **Painki:** It is another popular dance form of Bihar. The dance reminds us of infantry and its agility, courage, and excitement.
- ▶ **Sohar:** It is mainly performed to **celebrate the birth of a child**. Sohar is also a type of folk song which is sung in order to praise the child and women dance on it.

• Jharkhand

- ▶ **Jhumar:** It is popular folk dance of Jharkhand. It is performed **during harvest season and festival**.
- ▶ **Lahasua folk dance:** It is performed by both men and women accompanied by musical instruments Mandar, Dhol and Bansi.
- ▶ **Fagua:** It is a folk dance performed during festival of Fagua or Holi.
- ▶ **Paika** is a martial dance.
- ▶ **Chhau dance:** It is a semi classical Indian dance with martial, tribal and folk traditions, with origins in the eastern Indian states of Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Odisha.

• West Bengal

- ▶ **Alkap:** It is a rural performance, popular in many places of Bengal, especially in Rajshahi, Maldah and Murshidabad districts, and the Rajmahal Hills in the state of Jharkhand. This is associated with the **Gajan Festival of Shiva around the middle of April**.
- ▶ **Domni:** It is performed in Malda district. A Domni performance starts with a Vandana dedicated to God.
- ▶ **Dhunachi:** It is a dance performed in Bengal for the Durga Pooja at the time of Dussehra. Women and Men wear traditional Bengali dresses and dance with a mud pot filled with burnt coconut shavings.
- ▶ **Jhumair:** Jhumair is folk dance of Western parts of West Bengal performed during harvest season and festivals.

• Odisha

- ▶ **Chhau dance:** It originated and performed in the Mayurbhanj District, Purulia District and Saraikela district and Nilagiri region of Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand respectively.
- ▶ **The Baagh Naach or Tiger Dance:** It is performed in Binka and Sonepur of Subarnapur district during the **month of chaitra**. The male dancer paints his bare body with yellow and black stripes like that of a tiger and attaches a suitable tail.
- ▶ **Dalkhai:** Though Dusserah is the occasion of the Sambalpuri folk dance Dalkhai, it is often performed at other festivals such as Bhaijiuntia, Phagun Puni, and Nuakhai.
- ▶ **Dhap:** It is a Sambalpuri folk dance mostly performed by the **Kandha tribe of Kosal region**.
- ▶ **Ghumra:** The Kalahandi folk dance called Ghumra is also known as vira-badya of the Odisha region and originated from Junagarh.

- ▶ **Karma Naach:** The Karma Naach folk dance of the Sambalpur is performed during the period of worship of the god or goddess of fate (Karam Devta or Karamsani Devi), whom the people consider the cause of good and bad fortune. The worship lasts for several days from Bhadra Shukla Ekadasi, the eleventh day of the full moon in the month of Bhadra.
- ▶ **The Jhumair:** It is a folk dance of North Odisha and Western Odisha. It is performed **during harvest season and Festivals.**
- ▶ **Odishi Nrutya:** It is one of the most important dances performed in Odisha. This dance is dedicated to **Lord Jagannath or Lord Vishnu.** This dance also explains the love story of Lord Krishna and Radha.

Folk dance of Central India

• Madhya Pradesh

- ▶ **Grida Dance** - crops sway in the fields in the full bloom, the parties from different villages joins together and performs the Grida dance.
- ▶ **Maanch:** It is a lyrical folk drama and a form of operatic ballet that is very popular in Malwa in Madhya Pradesh.
- ▶ **The Phulpati dance:** It is exclusively for semi-rural unmarried girls. The agriculturist class of Malwa is not very much inclined to any dance by nature but during the Holi festival revelers perform this to the uneven manipulation of drums.

• Chhattisgarh

- ▶ **Raut Nacha:** It is a traditional folk dance usually done by Yadavas (a caste which considers itself as descendants of Krishna) as symbol of worship to Krishna.
- ▶ Folk dance of South India

• Karnataka

- ▶ **Veeragase:** It is a vigorous dance performed by women. Based on Hindu mythology, it involves intense energy-sapping movements and is performed during festivals mainly in the **Hindu months of Shravana and Karthika**
- ▶ **Hulivesha:** It is a powerful dance form performed by males in the coastal area of Karnataka. The dancers are painted like the tiger and performed like angry tiger.

• Kerala

- ▶ **Chakyar Koothu:** It is primarily a highly refined monologue where the performer narrates episodes from Hindu epics (such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata) and stories from the Puranas.
- ▶ **Duffmuttu** is a dance form particular to the Muslim community of Kerala. The origin of Duffmutt can be traced back to the Arabs. It is still accompanied by Arabic music.
- ▶ **Margamkali** is a very ancient and the most popular artistic performance prevalent among the Syrian Christians of Kerala.
- ▶ **Oppana** is a dance form specific to the Muslim community of Kerala. Oppana is usually a bridal group dance performed the day before the wedding day

- ▶ **Padayani or Padeni:** in colloquial speech is one of the most colourful and spectacular folk arts associated with the festivals of certain temples in southern Kerala.
- ▶ **Theyyam, also known as Kaliyattam:** It is a sacred ritual dance performed to glorify the goddess Kaali.
- ▶ **Thirayattam,** is a ritualistic performing ethnic art form of north Kerala. It blends dance, theatre, music, satire, facial painting, body painting, masking, martial art and ritualistic function.
- ▶ **Thitambu Nritham:** is mainly performed by Nambudiris of North Kerala.

• Tamil Nadu

- ▶ **Parai Attam, or Thappattam:** is a dance in which folks beat Parai and dance to its rhythm.
- ▶ **Kummi:** The women folk of Tamil Nadu have three closely related dances, which can be performed at any time but are seen at their best during festivities.
- ▶ **Kolattam:** Kolattam is an ancient village art. This is mentioned in Kanchipuram as '**Cheivaikiyar Kolattam**', which proves its antiquity.
- ▶ **Karagattam or Karagam:** is a folk dance of Tamil country performed by villagers performing in praise of the **rain goddess Mari Amman**. The performers balance a water pot on their head very beautifully.
- ▶ **Mayil Attam or Peacock dance:** This is done by girls dressed as peacocks, resplendent with peacock feathers and a glittering head-dress complete with a beak. This beak can be opened and closed with the help of a thread tied to it, and manipulated from within dress.
- ▶ **The Paambhu attam or snake-dance:** arises from the popularity of the snake as a protective divinity, safeguarding the health and happiness of the rural folk.
- ▶ **Puli Attam:** is a Folk Dance of early Tamil country. This Dance forms "**a play of the Tigers**".
- ▶ **Theru Koothu:** Normally conducted during village festivals, during the months of Panguni and Aadi. This is performed where three or four streets meet

• Telangana

- ▶ **Perini Shivatandavam or Perini Thandavam:** It is an ancient dance form from Telangana which has been revived in the recent times.

Folk dance of North East India

• Tripura

Hojagiri: It is a reflection of the age-old culture and the unique style of dance of the Reang community of Tripura. Only lower half of the body is moved to create rhythmic movements. Dancers performing unusually amazing acrobatic feats are the main highlight of the dance.

• Manipur

- ▶ **Thang Ta:** The **Art of the Sword and Spear--** is the traditional martial art of Manipur in Northeast India.
- ▶ **Dhol Cholam:** It is a drum dance which forms an essential part of the Holi festivities, known in Manipur as Yaosang.

- **Assam**

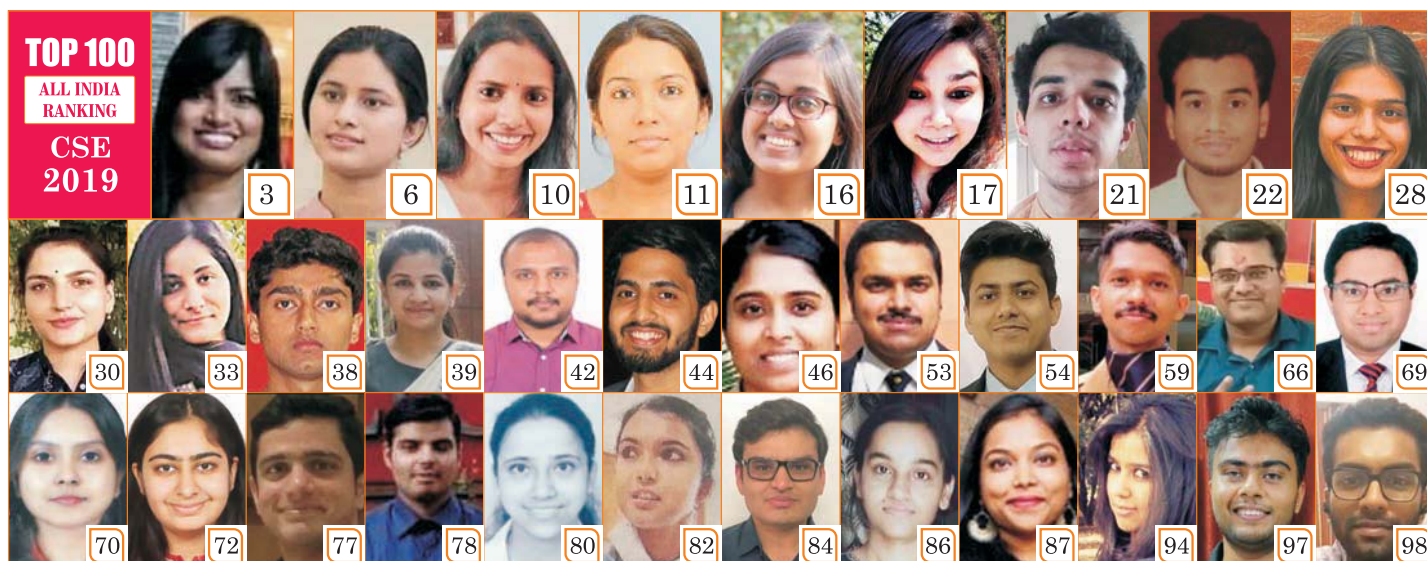
The folk dances of Assam include the popular **Bihu, Bagurumba and Bhortal dance**.

- **Meghalaya**

The popular folk dances of Meghalaya are the **Shad Suk Mynsiem, Laho, Do Dru Sua, Shad Nongkrem and more**.

- **Nagaland**

The **Chang Lo** is the main dance of Nagaland performed by the Chang tribe.



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