



Folk Dances of India

Key Topics

- Folk Dance Forms of North India
- North-Eastern India
- Folk Dance Forms of Eastern and Central India
- Folk Dance Forms of Western India
- Folk Dance Forms of South India

Folk Dance Forms of North India

Jammu and Kashmir

The folk dance forms of Kashmir are Kud, Dumhal, Rouf, Bhand Pather, Bachha Nagma, Hafiza Dance, Bhand Jashan, Bacha Nagma, Wuegi-Nachun.

Dumhal Dance

- **Origin:** The Dumhal dance originated in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Theme:** In memory of his Guru, Shah Sukar Saloni executed this dance performance to commemorate his teachings. The purpose of the dance was to fulfil the wishes of people who were on a pilgrimage to the Ziarat shrine.
- **Tribe:** Wattal tribe of Jammu and Kashmir
- **Occasion:** It is performed as a ritual on special occasions, such as Urs, which are the times when the performance takes place.
- **Performers:** Male members of the Wattal community, and only on certain occasions and in designated places
- **Performance:**
 - The dance is performed by a group of dancers.
 - The commencement of the dance involves the use of drums that produce a sound so loud that it attracts a large gathering of people.
 - A procession is formed by men who carry a banner and march to a designated area.
 - The dancers, in a procession, express the region's culture vividly and with charm.
 - A flag is carried and planted in the ground to convey a message.
 - In addition to dancing, they sing beautiful tunes in chorus.
 - The drum is utilized as a musical instrument to create music. When synced with songs, they produce fantastic sounds and a delightful experience.
 - The men commence dancing around a banner that is planted in the ground.
- **Attire:** Elaborate, multi-hued garments featuring lengthy robes and pointed headgear adorned with various beadwork and other decorative elements
- **Songs:**
 - The dancers perform folk melodies that they sing in a chorus.

- The tunes they perform are traditional and have been passed down through generations.
- The singing is accompanied by dancing.
- The melodies are typically upbeat and lively, and they often tell a story.
- **Musical Instruments:** Drum, etc.
- **Facts:**
 - The Sufi movement is believed to have given birth to this folk dance, which was originally created by Shah Sukar Saloni to pay tribute to Baba Nasim-U-Din-Gazi, his Sufi mentor.
 - Although it is mostly performed by male dancers, women have recently taken part in a few performances of this dance.
 - The professional religious Dumhal dancers were summoned by individuals who were impacted by drought, illnesses, or infertility to receive the blessings of God.

Kud Dance

- **Origin:** The middle mountain ranges of Jammu and Kashmir are where Kud, a customary community dance, is typically performed.
- **Theme:** A ritual is conducted at night to pay tribute to the gods, *Lok Devatas*, as a sign of gratitude. It is done to thank the *Gram devata* (village deity) for safeguarding crops, cattle, and people from natural calamities.
- **Occasion:** Special events, festivals, and the rainy season when maize is harvested are important occasions on which this dance is performed.
- **Performers:**
 - This dance is usually performed by farmers from the local area, with people from neighbouring villages also joining the festivities.
 - Both young and old individuals participate equally, making it an even more captivating experience.
- **Performance:**
 - The Kud dance involves groups of 20–30 dancers who are typically farmers.
 - It is characterized by fast beats that inspire spontaneous movements, including jumping forwards and backwards.

- It includes many interesting and intricate movements, with the rhythm and beats of the music dictating the dancers' actions.
- Even those with no experience can easily join the beauty and fun of Kud dance, which can be mesmerizing and engrossing for all involved.
- **Attire:** Churidar-kurta with a turban for men; salwar-kameez for women
- **Musical Instruments:** Unique musical instruments such as chhaina, drums, narsingha, and flute
- **Facts:**
 - A bonfire is surrounded by people of all ages, dressed in their finest attire, to celebrate throughout the night.
 - The purpose of this gathering is to show gratitude to the local deity, 'Gramdevta', who protected the farmers and villagers, their livestock, maize crops, children, and families from natural disasters.
 - **Khem Raj** is the recipient of the Rashtrapati Award in Kud Dance.

Hikat Dance

- **Origin:** It is one of the most well-liked traditional dances of Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Theme:** Hikat represents happiness and delight.
- **Occasion:** Harvesting season, Dusshera celebration, cultural programmes, and other festive occasions
- **Performers:**
 - The dance was originally created by children, but later, it was modified by adults to suit their needs.
 - Eventually, it gained popularity and became a dance form that was enjoyed by the entire community.
 - A boy and a girl in Hikat join as dancing partners and hold each other by extending their hands.
- **Performance:**
 - Two individuals engage in the dance, holding hands and reaching across to grasp the other's wrist.
 - They then lean backwards slightly.

- The music commences with a slow rhythm, and they gradually spin before the tempo picks up and they start to swirl faster.
- Eventually, they spin freely with delight and revel in the gentle force of the wind.
- In the past, no musical instruments were used during the performance of the Hikmat dance, but nowadays, the sound of Rabab and drums can be heard accompanying this joyous folk dance.
- It is a simple circle, but the experience can bring great pleasure when standing in a blooming field surrounded by mountain peaks.
- **Attire:** Colourful attire—salwar-kameez by women and Pathan kurta by men
- **Songs:** The character of the songs is romantic, and both girls and boys take part in singing them.
- **Musical Instruments:** **Rabab**, a type of string instrument that is plucked, and **Tumbaknadi**, a type of drum unique to Kashmir
- **Facts:**
 - It is enjoyed by people of all ages and genders as they revel in the joyous breeze.
 - It is popular among women of the region.
 - It is a modified version of a game played by children. The addition of music to the circle game transformed it into a beloved folk dance of India.
 - During the Dussehra festivities, people sing and dance around a collection of Raghunathji images that are brought from various temples in the area.
 - The valley witnesses a delightful dance, which is typically performed during the onset of spring.

Bacha Nagma

- **Origin:** Afghans in Kabul are credited with the parentage of this dance. It is an offshoot of the Hafiza Nagma dance form.
- **Etymology:**
 - The origin of *Bacha Nagma* can be traced back to two distinct words: *Bacha*, which has its roots in Persian and ultimately derives from the Sanskrit term *vats*, while *Nagma*, which comes from Urdu and Hindi and refers to a melody or tune.
 - Together, the term is used to describe a form of dance performed by children.

- **Other Names:** Bacha Gyavaun (in certain regions of Kashmir) and Bach Nagma Jashan (the celebration of kid dancers)
- **Themes:** Being famous in the folklore of Kashmir, it is an expression of celebration.
- **Occasions:**
 - It was developed as a dance that they performed during the harvest season to celebrate the joy of harvesting.
 - Over time, the dance became more popular among the people.
 - Today, it is performed at various social gatherings, including weddings, festivals, and religious occasions.
- **Performers:** Boys in their teens, wearing female attire
- **Performance:**
 - Highly skilled and exceptionally talented young performers usually perform the dance.
 - Each dancer is accomplished and skilled in their own genre of dance.
 - To resemble women, the dancers wear traditional women's attire and makeup, and follow the Hafiza style of dance.
 - These young teenagers have supple bodies, which makes it easier for them to perform flexible moves.
 - They receive expert training to adopt the Hafiza dance form of Kashmir.
 - The young age of the dancers makes their voices sweeter, allowing them to sing while dancing.
 - They are trained to retain their voice's sweetness, which creates a soothing ambience.
 - The dance group consists of a maximum of six to seven members, with no singer.
 - One of the dancers serves as the lead singer, while the others join him in the chorus.
 - The spinning movements in the dance resemble those of Kathak, and the dancers wear clothes like those of Kathak dancers.
 - Their faces are adorned to represent a girl's.
 - The dancers move around the dance stage with dignified movements.

- The singing and Ghungroo playing continue throughout the night, enhancing the song's aesthetic nature.
- The simple yet lively and poised nature of the dance captivates the audience.
- **Attire:** Performers wear vibrant, lengthy skirts and dresses with a veil, known as *dupatta*, draped over their heads to represent women in many cultures. This attire is reminiscent of the traditional clothing worn in the Kathak dance form.
- **Musical Instruments:** Rabab (plucked chordophone), Shehnai, Dukka (Dugi-Tabla pair), Tumbaknadi, Ghunghroo, and Sarang
- **Songs:**
 - Different kinds of songs are present, such as erotic, humorous, pathetic, heroic, spiritual, peaceful, and wondrous.
 - These songs are sung by Bacha and are accompanied by beautiful dancing that portrays various emotions.
 - The songs are like the ones sung in the Hafiza dance, which includes Sufi Kalam, or lyrics dedicated to divine power and spirit.
 - The Chhakri singers and instruments accompany Bacha Nagma.
 - Some songs have lyrics that resemble the Persian style of literature.
 - Nowadays, the lyrics are composed to represent a fun theme or comedy to attract the audience.
 - It was a common local practice for Bacha Nagma singers to perform dance along with the singing of a narrative song for entertainment purposes.
- **Note:**
 - A Sufi Kalam performance consists of an *ustad* and three musicians (all the vocalists and instrumentalists) introducing the shake (*alaap*) before presenting the bath (mystic and/or romantic verses) of a *maqam* (*raga*).
 - Sufi Kalam was the music form favoured by the elite, while the masses enjoyed traditional forms of folk music like Chhakri, Rouf, and Wanwun.
 - Chhakri is folk music sung to the accompaniment of *Sarang*, *rabab*, *tumbaknari*, and *nott*.
- **History:**
 - The Hafiz Nagma, a dance form performed by female dancers, was eventually replaced by the Bacha Nagma for various reasons.

- The local belief is that the concept of boys dancing in female attire has historical significance dating back to the Mughal emperor Akbar's rule.
 - After Akbar captured Kashmir, he wanted to diminish the gallantry of the men residing in the place by forcing them to dress like women to prevent them from displaying their heroism and bravery.
 - Kashmiris believe that Mughal Emperor Akbar forced Kashmiri men to wear feminine gown-like dresses called pheran to counteract the manly valour of its people and remove any possible future trouble.
 - In the 1920s, the ruling Dogra Maharaja officially banned Hafiz Nagma in Kashmir, stating that it was losing its Sufi touch and becoming too sensual and, hence, amoral for society.
 - With the same songs, female Muslim dancers were replaced by young Muslim boys who dressed as women, giving birth to Bacha Nagma.
 - The dancers not only wore women's dresses, but they also decorated themselves with various ornaments and jewellery. The dance movements were performed with such dignity and expertise that it was almost impossible to distinguish the boys from the girls' dance performances.
- **Facts:**
 - The dance form challenges gender norms by simultaneously mocking and reinforcing them, creating a sense of ambiguity around gender identity.
 - It is often performed during wedding celebrations in Kashmir, particularly during boat processions on the Jhelum River.

Punjab

Among the most prominent and popular are **Bhangra and Giddha**. Other dances, such as **Luddi, Sammi, Kikkli, and Gatka**, are also quite popular. These dances are characterized by lively steps, verbal comments, movement subtleties, and uninhibited liberation, making them an expression of the victorious soul, an explosion of emotions, and a sudden release of energy.

Giddha

- **Origin:** As a popular folk dance of women in Punjab, it originated from the ancient ring dance of Punjab in undivided India.
- **Themes:** A celebration of joy

- **Occasion:** Ceremonial Giddha is performed during the Teejan of Sawan festival held in July for 12 consecutive days.
- **Performers:**
 - Women perform during harvesting, festival, or social occasions (marriage or childbirth).
 - It is accompanied by rhythmic clapping, with a traditional folk song performed by elderly women in the background.
- **Performance:**
 - Dancers form a circle and participate in pairs, take turns to come to the centre and sing *boliyan* (couplets).
 - It is a call-and-response form of dance.
 - As energetic as Bhangra with feminine grace, elegance, and flexibility, it consists of singing, clapping, and enacting the *boli* on various subjects ranging from household chores to the conflicts between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.
 - *Boli* is punctuated with an enthusiastic refrain—the phrase ‘*Balle Balle*’.
- **Attire:** Salwar-kameez and ghaghara in bright colours with jewellery, with hair is dressed in two braids and a tikka on the forehead.
- **Other forms:**
 - Giddha of Malwa is famous for its gusto and speed.
 - It is originally performed by elderly men to keep the family’s spirit high when the bride leaves her parental home.
- **Musical Instruments:** Dholak etc.
- **In Pop Culture:**
 - *The Glory of Giddha*, a short film by Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla
 - *Boliyaan Giddha*, a song from Hindi movie, *Aloo Chaat*



Giddha Dance

Sammi Dance

- **Origin:** A traditional dance form similar to Giddha, it originated in the tribal belt of Punjab (Sandalbar, Amritsar, and Pothohar region of Punjab in Pakistan).
- **Theme:** Dance of celebration
- **Tribe:** Baazigar, Sansi, Lobana, and Rai Sikhs perform this dance.
- **Performers:** Women
- **Attire:**
 - Bright colourful kurtas with tehmet (lower cloth) and a thick cloth called Bhochhan, to cover the head
 - Hair is knit into thin plaits in intricate patterns and the remaining length of hair is one full plait.
 - A special ornament shaped like an inverted lotus called phul-chowk or suggiphul is fixed in the middle of the head as a hair accessory.
- **Performance:**
 - Often done in a circle with a slow flow.
 - Dancers while forming the ring swing their hands from sides and bring them to the front.
 - People implement a hopping sequence, along with using sticks in their hands.
 - Without any musical instrument, the rhythm is achieved through the beating of feet, clapping, and *chutki* (snapping fingers).
 - It is a dance of controlled movement, and even the *Devatas* (angels) get intoxicated seeing this.
- **Legendary Tale:** Originally performed by Princess Sammi of Marwad to show the excessive emotions of her separation from Rajkumar Such Kumar of Rajasthan.
- **In Pop Culture:** *Sammi Meri Waar* by Umar Jaswal and Quratulain Balouch is a popular song of this dance.

Haryana

Some of the major folk dances of Haryana include **Jhumar, Phag, Daph, Saang, Dhamal, Loor, Gugga, Khorla, and Gagor.**



Loor, or Loori

- **Origin:** It is a traditional dance form of Haryana.
- **Etymology:** The word *Loor* means a girl in the Bangar area of Haryana.
- **Theme:** It depicts the joy and gratitude of the farming community.
- **Occasion:** Performed during the month of *phalgun* (especially the Holi festival), to mark the spring season and sowing of Rabi crops.
- **Performers:** Women of all age groups
- **Performance:**
 - Women perform this dance by moving in a circle or semi-circle manner standing in two rows.
 - The dance and songs depict events in the life of a girl (birth to marriage).
 - A symbolic pigeon is referred to take the letter of his wife to the husband working in the army.
- **Attire:** Traditional ghaghara, kurti, chundri, and chunda
- **Songs:** The songs are in the format of question and answers

Saang

- **Origin:** It is a form of rural dance drama folk-dance theatre, widely admired in Haryana.
- **Etymology:** The meaning of *saang* or *swang* is to disguise or to impersonate.
- **Themes:**
 - It portrays the theme of love, narrating ancient and contemporary stories of bravery, selflessness, humour, and other aspects that hold human attention.
 - Mythological love, popular history, and religious themes are often intertwined in various narratives.
 - These narratives also emphasize secular values. The conclusion of most dramas usually involves the triumph of good over evil. Some examples are AIDS, health, and hygiene.
- **Occasions:** Religious festivals, awareness programmes, cultural gatherings, etc.
- **Performers:** Men, even female roles, as women are not permitted to participate.

- **Performance:**

- The performance begins with a hymn that praises Bhawani, the goddess of knowledge, called '*bhaint*' or offering. It is a request for her to open the doors of knowledge and bless the singer's tongue with pure expression.
- The play's core components are Chamolas, Kafias, and Savias.
- The play starts with a brief introduction and then moves on to mimicry, which gives Swang theatre its name.
- Actors engage in long question-and-answer sessions and improvise dialogue and exchange quotations, puns, proverbs, and songs effortlessly.
- The focus is on dialogue rather than movement.
- The performance is characterized by singing and dancing, and there is always a clown character called Makhaulia (jester).
- Performers often require elaborate makeup and costumes.
- Religious stories and folk tales are acted out by a group of ten or twelve people in an open-air theatre.
- Amateurs or new actors typically perform in this folk drama, which is either played in the open or on a specially constructed platform.
- The performance has very few actors; a single performer portrays multiple roles, and costumes are changed on the stage itself.
- One of the essential characters in these plays is the eunuch or hijra, which is featured in all Margi (classical) and desi (folk Sanskrit) plays.

- **Attire:** Traditionally, the approach taken may vary depending on the story being told.

- **Musical Instruments:** Ektara, kharta, dholak, sarangi, and harmonium, etc.

- **Styles:** Rohtak and Haathras—the Rohtak style uses the Haryanvi (Bangru) language, while the Haathras style uses Brajbhasha.

- **Mythological Themes:**

- Well-known mythological stories, including Raja Vikram Aditya, Ranveer-Padmavat, Jaani Chor, Prahalad Bhagat, Gopi Chand, Bharthari, Harishchander, Raja Bhoj, Kichak Badh, Draupadi Chir Haran, Jaani Chor, Pingla Bharthri, and other ancient literature tales.

- Punjabi love stories such as Pooran Bhagat and Heer Ranjha are also quite popular.
 - Historical and semi-historical themes that people enjoy, including Raja Rissalu, Amar Singh Rathore, Sarwar Neer, Jaswant Singh, Ramdevji, and so on.
 - Lastly, people also enjoy reading romantic stories like Sorath Rai Diyach, Nihalde, and Padmavat.
- **Facts:**
 - Swang is a form of folk theatre that has been present in India for the longest time.
 - The traditions of Nautanki, Saang, and Tamasha are believed to have originated from Swang.
 - Swang theatre is a traditional Indian folk-dance drama that is popularly practised in Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and the Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh.
 - **Kishan Lala Bhat is credited with laying the foundation of the modern style of folk theatre in Haryana**, which led to the development of the Swang theatre.
 - **Dip Chand Bahman, also the the Shakespeare or Kalidasa of Haryana**, from the village of Shiri Khunda in Sonipat, is one of the most famous figures associated with Swang theatre.
 - Some artists attribute the origin of Swang theatre to Kavi Shankar Dass, a poet artiste from Meerut.
 - The Swang/Saang performance has been around since the time of Kabir Sant and Guru Nanak.
 - **Note:**
 - The customs of Swang that have been around for a long time include *Ek Mardana Ek Janana Manch Par Ade The Rai* and *Ek Saarangi Ek Dholakia Saath Mein Ade The Rai*.
 - The story is started by a male and a female performer.
 - A performance can be enhanced by the addition of a Sarangi player and a Dholak player. Both players should be included in the performance to achieve this enhancement.

Phag/Faag/Phaag

- **Origin:** It is a well-known traditional dance style that originated in Haryana.
- **Etymology:** It gets its name from the Hindu calendar month of Falgun, during which it is performed.
- **Themes:** It is performed to commemorate the harvesting season and enjoy the pleasant weather. Performers express gratitude and rejoice for a fruitful harvest.
- **Occasions:** It is observed during February and March and is associated with the changing of seasons.
- **Performers:**
 - Performed by both men and women belonging to the agricultural community.
 - On some occasions, it is solely performed by men.
- **Performance:**
 - Men and women form groups in this dance, and both exhibit passionate moves.
 - Women showcase their graceful manners, while men dance with enthusiasm.
 - The rhythm of the music drives them to express their emotions through their hands, eyes, and feet.
 - The dance involves various movements, which require proper coordination.
 - Performers sing in the ancient Daamal style that dates to the distant past, which is a combination of dance and song.
 - Songs tend to be different when performed only by men.
 - The joy and energy exuded by the dancers can be felt while watching them perform.
- **Attire:**
 - It does not require any special costumes as it is usually performed by villagers who wear their everyday clothes during the dance.
 - On special occasions, both men and women wear vibrant clothing—a ghagra-choli with a dupatta and some jewellery (women) and kurta-pyjama with a colourful turban (men)
- **Songs:** Vary depending on whether it is performed solely by men or both men and women.
- **Musical Instruments:** Dholi, dholak, nagada, tasha, and harmonium, etc.

- **Facts:**

- The months of Faag or Phag are particularly significant because farmers typically have little time to dance and celebrate.
- These are the only months when they have finished sowing their crops and are eagerly awaiting the harvest.

Dhamal

- **Origin:** A folk dance form of Haryana, its origin can be traced back to the time of the Mahabharata.
- **Community:** Traditionally performed by the **Ahir community** of Gurugram.
- **Themes:** The joy experienced upon a successful harvest.
- **Occasions:** It is performed by men only during the Phalgun month on nights with a full moon.
- It is customary for the dance to be performed outdoors.
- **Performers:** Exclusively by men
- **Performance:**
 - A dance performance that involves around 15–20 dancers is customary in this region.
 - During the performance, the male participants create a semi-circle and bow down to the ground in prayer, seeking blessings from Lord Ganesh, the Goddess Bhavani, and the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh.
 - This dance is usually performed on a good harvest.
 - The performance commences with the player playing a long note on the Been, followed by musical instruments like Dhol, Tasha, and Nagara to set the rhythm for the dance.
 - After seeking blessings from the deities, the performers rise to their feet in a semi-circular position and dance to the beat.
 - Some of the performers carry medium-length sticks wrapped with tinsel, while others carry large Daphs edged with frills of bright-coloured fabric to create music.
 - The performers jump a lot during the dance, which is a way of expressing their joy and is an essential part of the choreography.

- They also imitate the non-participant women to add an element of humour to the dance.
- Using Shuntis and Daphs, the performers showcase their individual skills to create musical effects. They sing and dance to the sound of the Dhamal beats.
- **Attire:** Traditional—kurta, dhoti (a loincloth), and a matching turban as attire with large dhaps
- **Songs:** The tunes performed express both the toils and affections of the villagers, portraying their desires, yearnings for love, moments of happiness, and instances of sadness.
- **Musical Instruments:** Older musical instruments such as Sarangi, Been, Nagara, Dholak, Tasha, Khartals, and shuntis, which are tinsel and tassels located at both ends of the sticks

Himachal Pradesh

Some of the famous folk dance forms of Himachal Pradesh include **Nati, Dangi, Chhanak Chham, Demon (Rakshasa) Dance, Kayang Mala, Dalshon and Cholamba, Dhure, Shan and Shabu, Laaldi Ghughti, Swangtegi, Jhora,** and others.

Nati

- **Origin:** It refers to the traditional dance of Sirmur, Kullu, and Shimla regions of Himachal Pradesh.
- **Theme:** It depicts **raasleela** or dances concerning the Hindu God Krishna and Gopi and the entertaining plays of Chandra Valli.
- **Occasion:**
 - It is performed during the Losai or new year and celebrates a new harvest ready for reaping, the Dusshera festival and other cultural occasions.
 - **Special occasions:** 3 types—Dhili, Pheti and Bashri
- **Performers:** Traditionally men; now also women of all age groups
- **Performance:**
 - The dancers join their hands and make slow swaying movements (lasya variety of dance) and they dance either by making circles or by standing in rows on music and rhythm.
 - Dancers sing while performing.

- **Attire:**

- Boomani, silver chains, floral shawls, shoes, decorated caps, sashes, churidars and swirling tunics, lachhi, gachi, ghaghara
- **Men:** Topa kalagi (woollen cap), Balay (big gold ear ring), Chopla (white woollen upper garment), Patka (scarf), pyjama and pula (shoes)
- **Women:** Ornaments of gold and silver known as Gorkhadu (gold earring), long (nose ring), Kanganu or mirdri (bangles), Chanki and Tunki
- Clothes like thipu (red scarf), pattu, suthan, and puhla (shoes made from fibre).
- Ornate fan in one hand and colourful handkerchief in the other hand.
- **Different Forms:** Total 13 types, including Mahasuvi nati, sirmauri nati, kinnauri nati, Brada nati, Kullvi Nati etc.
- **Musical Instruments:** Dhol, nagara, narsingha, karnal, shehnai, sarna, etc.

- **Facts:**

- This dance is recorded in the Guinness Book of World Record as the largest folk dance with 9892 participants (January 2016).
- Event phrased ‘Pride of Kullu’ with the message ‘Save Girl Child’ was organised on 26 October 2015, and around 13,000 participants from all parts of the Kullu district participated.
- This dance is also popular in Jounsari community in Uttarakhand.
- The Lahaul district residents have a unique traditional dance known as ‘Garphi’, which is not a component of Lahauli culture.



Musical Instruments Used in a Nati Dance

Uttarakhand

Some of the popular folk dance forms of Uttarakhand include **Hurkiya Baul**, **Jhoria**, **Chholiya**, **Pandav Nritya**, **Chapeli**, **Mukhota Dance**, and many more.

Pandav Nritya or Pandav Lila

- **Origin:** Intermingled with the Hindu history of Pandavas, it is practised in Garhwal regions of Uttarakhand.

- **Theme:** It is a ritual re-enactment of stories from the Hindu epic, *Mahabharata* through singing, dancing, and recitation.
- **Performers:** As a community dance, it is performed by all villagers.
- **Performance:**
 - The ritualistic drama features actors who spontaneously become possessed by the spirits of their character and begin to dance.
 - It is performed outdoors but not in a linear manner; any episode can be chosen.
 - The performance is called **Sraddha**.
 - The performance lasts from 3 days to months in some villages, in the month of November to February.
 - The most awaited episode is Gainda—a battle between Arjuna and Nagarjuna.
- **Musical Instruments:** Dhol, Damau (single-headed drum) and Bhankore (two long trumpets) etc.
- **Fact:** Weapons used in the battle are never allowed to touch the ground, so they can retain the power and are taken care of till the next Lela.

Jhora

- **Origin:** It is a community-driven folk dance of Uttarakhand which originated in the Kumaon region.
- **Themes:** To break caste barriers and unite people
- **Occasion:** During the spring season, weddings, and fairs/festivals
- **Performers:**
 - Men and women of all communities
 - The number of participants has no limitation.
 - The performance can last up to 24 hours; dancers keep joining.
- **Performance:**
 - The villagers participate in this community dance.
 - By holding each other's arms and moving in circles and performed in the evening and morning.

- Dancers bend their bodies smoothly and sway their bodies with every beat starting from left to right.
- It looks very synchronised and appealing for the watchers.
- **Attire:** Mostly traditional for all participants with traditional ornaments like bangles, necklace, earrings, etc., for women.
- **Songs:** It is more like a conversation between men and women.
- **Styles:** Do Manjhila Jhora dance is a style of this dance form.
- **Musical Instruments:** Hurka (traditional drum), cymbals, flute, etc.

Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh is known for its various folk dances, including **Ras Leela, Ram Leela Dance, Khyal Dance, Nautanki Dance, Naqaal Dance, Swang Dance, Charkula Dance, Chhapeli Dance, Dhurang Dance, Rai and Shaira Dance, and Kajri Dance.**

Ras Leela

- **Origin:** This divine dance style derives its origin from the Braj region, cities of Mathura and Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Creation:**
 - It is created from Hindu scriptures such as *Bhagavata Purana*.
 - It is a folk tradition that has incorporated elements of Indian classical dance, music, and drama.
- **Theme:**
 - Life tales of Krishna ranging from childhood till adolescence.
 - Divine love of Gopikas from Braj for Krishna.
 - The relationship of Krishna and Radha is also explored.
- **Performers:** Mandalas (a performance group) who roam from one place to another
- **Performance:**
 - Performed in a mandap decorated with green leaves (mostly mango leaves).

- The centre of the mandap is occupied by one male and female dancer representing Radha and Krishna.
- The Gopis encircle them and perform the dance with the narration of a story through songs.
- The performance feels heavenly and mesmerizing with the divine energy spread across.
- **Attire:** Similar to those worn in Vrindavan—colourful dhoti, mainly yellow, with heavy ornaments, headgear comprising peacock feathers (men) and Ghaghara-choli with dupatta and fine jewellery (women)
- **Musical Instruments:** Dholak, flute etc.
- **Inspired Other Styles:** Raas Leela’s form of dancing has also been incorporated into a few classical Indian dance styles, such as Manipuri, Kathak and Bharatnatyam.
- **Songs:** The song used is Rasia (Radha–Krishna love-based theme song).
- **Music:** Extremely slow and rhythmic.
- **Emphasis On:**
 - Darshan—seeing through sound.
 - Bhava—a particular mood/sentiment.
- **Different Dramatic Flavours:** Friendship, servitorship, parental love, conjugal love, amazement, humour, chivalry, compassion, fury, fear, and dread.

Khyal

- **Origin:** Agra in Uttar Pradesh is an important centre of origin of this dance form.
- **Theme:** Mythological tales of bravery, sentiments, romance, from the Puranas, etc., are the main themes of this dance form.
- **Performers:** Males with a Ustaad well-versed in dance and song moves.
- **Performance:**
 - Performance starts with an invocation, which begins with hymns to the respected deities.
 - The clown is an integral part of the performance.
 - It is a Highly dramatized play-dance form.

- **Popular Forms:** The form's name is categorized by city, acting style, community, or the author, such as **Jaipuri Khyal**, **Abhinaya Khyal**, **Ali Baksh khyal**, and **Gadhaspa Khyal**.
- **Musical Instruments:** Flute, dholak, harmonium, cymbal, table, etc.

Kajri

- **Origin:** The birth of this dance form took place in Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh.
- **Theme:** Longing of a maiden for her lover as the black monsoon clouds come hanging in the summer skies.
- **Occasions:** Before the arrival of monsoon to express joy and happiness.
- **Performers:** Women in groups or pairs
- **Attire:** Costumes often resemble the dance pattern of Kathak school—tight and short blouses (choli), a flared skirt with a dupatta covering the head and shoulder and heavy jewellery, such as bangles, anklets, earrings, and necklace.
- **Songs:** Jhula lyrics or swing songs.
- **Forms:**
 - It is a genre of semi-classical singing.
 - It is performed on a platform.
 - Dhumnuiya Kajri (sung by women on monsoon evening).
- **Legendary Story:** King Kantit Naresh's daughter, Kajali, unrequited desire to meet her husband and the unbearable pain of expression at the feet of **Goddess Kajmal** is known as kajri song.
- **Other Cities/States Where It Is Performed:**
 - In UP—Banaras (now Varanasi), Mathura, and Allahabad (now Prayagraj)
 - Bihar—Bhojpur
- **Associated Personalities:** Pandit Channulal Mishra, Shobha Gurtu, Siddeshwari Devi, Girija Devi
- Rajan, and Sajan Mishra
- **In Pop Culture:** Folk singer Malini Awasthi's famous song, *Reliya Bairan Piya Ko Leke Jae Re*

North-Eastern India

Mizoram

The folk dance and music of Mizoram are interesting and delightful and reflect the colourful spirit of the locales. Most of the dance forms in Mizoram are group dances, and the folk dances include **Chailam, Cheraw, Khuallam, Bamboo Dance**, and many more.

Khuallam

- **Origin:** It is a folk dance practised in Mizoram.
- **Theme:** Journey of the soul and bravery of a warrior
- **Etymology:** *Khual* means guest and *Lam* means dance. Together, they form the **Dance of the Guests**.
- **Occasion:** Having religious significance for Mizos, it is performed during the ceremony called **Khuangchawi**.
- **Performance:**
 - It is a community dance which is performed in large numbers.
 - No song is played.
 - Dance is performed with the accompaniments of the sounds of gongs called Darbu (local name).
 - Neighbours of other villages are invited while performing.
 - Community feast follows the dance.
- **Reason for the Performance:** To claim a distinguished place in society, one has to attain the coveted title of Thangchhuah.
- **Attire:**
 - Puandum (a traditional hand-woven Mizo cloth) is wrapped over the shoulders and the dance is performed by swaying the cloth.
 - Puandum is red, black, and yellow in colour and has green stripes.
 - Puandum is an indispensable item which every girl has to take along when she gets married.
 - It is used to cover the body of their husband when he dies.

- **Musical Instruments:** Darbu, drum, etc
- **Mythological Story:**
 - One achieves a place in paradise only after acquiring the title of ‘Thangchhuah’, achieved by mastering either hunting or dancing. It is because the soul after death goes either to ‘*Pialral*’(paradise) or ‘*Mitthi Khua*’ (hell).
 - Creative forms that are performed to gain the title of ‘Thangchhuah’ gave birth to the occasion of Khuangchawi in Mizoram.

Chailam Dance

- **Origin:** It is practised among the tribes of Mizoram.
- **Theme:** Recital of the heroic deeds of the past and praise the honoured guest; embodies the spirit of joy among the people
- **Occasion:** Chapchar Kut (one of the most important Mizo festivals)
- **Performers:** Both men and women
- **Performance:**
 - In a circle, men and women stand alternatively in a group.
 - Women hold men’s waist and men hold women’s shoulders.
 - Musicians coordinate the dance in the middle.
 - Dance starts on the beats of the drummer.
 - Rhythmic swaying of the dancers to the left and right with the fourth stroke of the drum with chai song singing.
 - In the old days, Chai dancers used to drink beer continuously while singing and dancing.
- **Attire:** Traditional attire of Mizo people; female dancers wear ethnic jewellery, which includes necklaces, bangles, earrings, etc.
- **Musical Instruments:** Drum, horns of mithun, etc.
- **Songs:** Chai song as it has a unique feature that its lyrics in triplets are made on the spot.
- **Forms:** It has four versions.
 - **Chai Lamthai I**
 - **Chai Lamthai II**

- **Chai Lamthai III**
- **Chai Lamthai IV**
- **Mythological Story:**
 - A king went hunting with his men but failed and returned disappointed.
 - On seeing his men disheartened, the king invited them for a feast in the evening at his palace.
 - Everyone was served rice beer drink, and after getting intoxicated, the party was followed by singing, dancing, and a sumptuous feast.
 - This became an every year thing from that time and took centre stage as a celebration.

Meghalaya

The folk dances of Meghalaya include **Shad Sukmysiem, Shad Nongkrem, Derogate, Do Dru Sua, Laho, Wangla Dance**, and many more.

Ka Shad Suk Mynseim

- **Origin:** It originated in Meghalaya as a Khasi way of offering their thanks to the creator for all the blessings and bountiful harvests received, characterized by many symbolic rituals, dances, and the best of traditional apparel.
- **Theme:**
 - Khasi people believe that god exists in everyone, be it animal, human, or an object.
 - Shad Suk Mynsiem (the dance of peaceful hearts) festival signifies the same.
 - It is an agrarian festival and celebrates optimism for the coming year.
 - Spring is symbolic as a season of rebirth, sowing the seeds for the next seasons symbolizes the new beginning.
 - The layout of the dancers teaches the distinctiveness of the matrilineal societies that celebrate this occasion.
- **Occasion:** It is held annually during the month of April to celebrate harvesting and sowing.
- **Performers:** Both unmarried males and females of the Garo and Khasi tribes.

- **Performance:**

- **It is a three-day festival.**

- **Day 1:** Shad Nahkjat (opening dance comprising drummers, pipers, and some male dancers)
- **Day 2:** Shad Wait (actual dance, male and female equally participate).
- **Day 3:** Shad Mastich (warrior dance, men and women dance in pairs)
- The dance of the maidens reflects their roles in the community.
- Male and female dance in two separate circles.
 - **Men:** The turbaned men in ceremonial apparel are the protectors, and they surround the female dancers armed with the waitlam (sword) and symphiah (whisk).
 - **Women:** The keepers of the hearth, home, and lineage of the clans are in the middle.

- **Musical Instruments:**

- Music changes from time to time and so does the rhythm and tune.
- Tang muri—flute with nakra (big drum) and ksing padiah (small drum), cymbals, sharati, shyngwiang, duitara (stringed instrument), Spanish guitar (now used), etc., are played.

- **Attire:** Traditional attire with ornaments

- **Female:** Clad in best silk; Ka Jingpim Shad (a cloth draped from the waist to the ankle) and Ka Sopti Mukmor (a full-sleeve blouse with lace work all around the neck).
- Ki Sohshkor Ksier (gold earrings), braid adorned with fresh flowers (kapangngiet ksias Ne Rupa), Ki Mahu (silver armlets), Kikhadu Ne ki syngkha (golden bracelets), U Kynjiri tabah (silver chain around the neck), and a white handkerchief.
- The crown of pure silver with a white flower called Tiewlasuban attached to the back of the crown represents modesty and dignity.
- **Male:** Men wear Ka Jain Spong Khor (golden silk turban), U Taban (silver chain across the shoulders), silver quiver and arrows tied to the waist, a dangling animal tail, Ka Jainboh (maroon silk cloth worn like a dhoti), Ka Waitlam (ceremonial sword), and Ka Rumar (a handkerchief).
- Carries a silver quiver with silver arrows on their backs.

- **Other Names:** Weiking dance and Shad Phur (old name)
- **Mythological Story:**
 - Khasi Hills of Meghalaya are known as the land of dance and songs, accompanied by a wide variety of unique instruments and music.
 - The song sung is Phawar, a song comprising chants, ballads, and verses that contain stories about martyrs and other legendary heroes among Khasi.
 - It was organized for the first time on 14 April 1911 at Weiking Grounds.
 - This festival is symbolic, where the women stand for the seeds and the men are the metaphors of the cultivators.
 - The role of the man in Hynniewtrep society is to be an advisor, leader, and protector, which is represented in the nuances of Shad Suk Mynsiem rituals.
 - The chastity of the dancer is represented by the lasubon flower (an important totem for the Hynniewtrep clans).
 - The white handkerchief carried by women dancers stands for their maidenhood and virginity.

Nongkrem

- **Origin:** As a traditional dance, it is an integral part of the cultural heritage of the Khasi community.
- **Etymology:** *Nongkrem* means the goat killing ceremony.
- **Theme:** To thank the Goddess Ka Blei Synshar for a good harvest and to seek her blessings for the future
- **Occasion:** Annually for five days in the month of November
- **Performers:** Young unmarried men and women
- **Performance:**
 - This festival takes place in Smit (the cultural centre of Khasi hills).
 - It is performed in two circles.
 - Ka Shad Mastieh—dance performed by men in an outer circle by holding a sword in their right hand, and white yak hair whisks in their left hand.

- Ka Shad Kynthei—performed by women in the inner circle.
 - Moving in the rhythmic patterns to the beats of traditional khasi music.
 - Performed in front of Ka Syiem Sad (queen mother) and Ki Sohblei (high priest) sitting on a raised platform and offering prayers and blessings to the dancers.
 - The Pomblang Ceremony is performed by Ka Syiem Sad along with Sohblei to offer sacrifices (goat) to the deity of the Khasi people.
- **Attire:** Young Khasi women wear colourful traditional attire and jewellery while performing the dance.
 - **Musical Instruments:** Drums, tangmuri, flute, etc.
 - **In Pop Culture:** Local food, such as Jadoh, Tungrymbai, Ja stem, and Dohkhlieh, and handicrafts are a special attraction during these festivals.



Attire of Young Women for the Nongkrem Dance

Laho or Chipiah

- **Origin:** It is a famous dance form of Meghalaya performed by the Pnar tribe of Jaintia Hills.
- **Theme:** To seek prosperity, well-being, and blessings for the people of Meghalaya, and to get rid of evil spirits
- **Occasion:** Behdienkhlam (chasing away the demon of cholera) festival celebrated in July after the sowing period.
- **Performers:** Men and women of the Pnar tribe.
- **Performance:**
 - During the festival of Behdienkhlam, this dance is performed as its part.
 - This folk dance symbolises the rich taste and culture of Pnar tribe.
 - A girl dances holding her arms with two boys on her left and right.
 - A recitation from a person known as cheerleader with a strong, sweet and clear voice without any musical instruments.
 - Dance is totally synchronised and looks harmonious.

- People of Meghalaya make 'Dien Khlam, Khnong' and Symlend' from the tree trunks (especially pine trees).
- These tree trunks are placed in each locality, sometimes also in front of the respective houses, after the erection of the tree, ritual follows and ultimately trunks are pulled down.
- This festival ends with consuming rice-beer and the famous Loho dance.
- **Attire:** Traditional colourful costumes with gold and silver ornaments; males use limited jewellery
- **Musical Instruments:** No musical instrument; usually ribald couplets are recited.
- **Fact:** In the Harp tribes of Meghalaya, this is known as the Wangala dance.

Assam

Assam has an exotic culture that is full of life, and its folk dances are no exception. The state is known for many folk dances such as **Bihu Dance, Bagurumba Dance, Ali Ai Ligang Dance, Bhortaal Nritya Dance, Deodhani Dance, Hamzar Dance, Satriya Nritya, Jhumur Dance**, and many more.

Deodhani or Bhawani Charai

- **Origin:** It is of Bodo origin; evolved from the two places of Assam—Mangaldai and Uttar Lakhimpur.
- **Etymology:** *Deo* means God and *Dhani* means woman.
- **Literal Meaning:** 'A woman possessed by god (shaman)'.
- **Occasion:** Performed at the time of Manasa Puja, the worship of the snake Goddess Mansa or Marei/Maroi.
- **Performers:** Both women and men
- **Performance:**
 - It is a centuries-old 3-day festival.
 - It begins at the end of the Assamese month of Shaon and at the beginning of Bhadra month (during August)



A Deodhani Dancer

- Deodhani depicts the dance of a shaman woman or a man when possessed by a spiritual being.
- It can be performed either solo or in group (3–4 women).
- It is performed to the accompaniment of songs sung by an Ojapali is known as Xuknoni in the undivided Darrang district and in the undivided Kamrup district, it is accompanied by Kamrupi bor-Dhol's.
- The most difficult part of the dance is performing with a Daa (sharp weapon/sword)
- Sacrifices of goat and pigeon are carried out.
- Each god or goddess has their own Deodha which is called Janki or Ghora.
- **Props:** Sword and shield
- **Attire:**
 - Dancers wear Mekhela (a traditional dress of Assamese) in Muga, a red blouse as their dress combination along with traditional jewellery.
 - Women dress like warriors and keep their hair loose and flowing with the movements.
- **Musical Instruments:** Joidhol (a cylindrical percussion instrument) and Khutitaal (a palm-sized cymbal).
- **Forms:**
 - Male shaman form is also present which is called 'Jaki' in South Kamrup (Assam).
 - 'Deodhai' in other parts of Assam.
- **Legendary Story:** Behulaa (a character in Padma Purana) had to dance before the Goddess Manasa to get back her husband's (Lakhindar) life.
- **Fact:**
 - The Deodhani Nritya has been observed at the Maa Kamakhya temple as a festival since the year 2007.
 - It is believed that people taking part in this form of dance inherit some superficial powers from Goddess Kamakhya.

Bardwi Sikhla

- **Origin:** It is a Boro folk dance of Assam.
- **Etymology:** *Bar* means wind, *Dwi* means water, *Sikhla* means girl. In Assamese, Bardwi Sikhla is called **Bordoisila**.

- **Theme:** With the intention to welcome the monsoon, girls dance and portray themselves as storm and rain.
- **Performers:** Young women of the Bodo tribe of Assam
- **Performance:**
 - It is one of the most colourful and rhythmic dances of the tribe.
 - The dancers perform with bamboo clappers in their hands which provide the rhythm for their movement. The hair is kept loose during the dance.
 - While dancing, the dancers form different patterns like circular, horizontal, and parallel.
- **Attire:** Colourful costumes
- **Occasion:** It is performed during the Bwisagu (spring) festival.
- **Musical Instruments:** Kham (big drum), sifung (flute), charinda (an indigenous string instrument), jota (made from iron/tama), and cymbal.
- **Mythological Story:**
 - The legendary fairy, Bardwi Sikhla had the power to control wind and water to create rain, thunder, and hailstorms.
 - She used to come in the spring season and rejuvenate the surroundings.
 - Trees and plants blossom, and greenery appears everywhere.
 - She is commemorated to welcome the monsoon by the Bwisagu festival.
 - This dance form is the enactment of her nature.

Jhumur

- **Origin:** As a traditional dance of tea tribe communities of Assam, it originated from the core of the cultural enthusiasm of the working class. It is a dance form of Sadan (Indo-Aryan ethnic groups of the Chota Nagpur plateau).
- **Theme:** The workers at tea gardens of Assam find their voice of expression through this traditional folk dance form and derive serenity, joy, and happiness from Jhumur.



Jhumur Dance

- **Occasion:**
 - Usually performed during the autumn season in Assam, ritual worship, courting, and love making, prayers for rain.
 - Occasion of Karam Puja (a week-long worship of Raja Karam) and Tushu Puja.
- **Performers:** Boys and girls, usually tea workers working in the sprawling tea gardens of Assam
- **Performance:**
 - It is mostly performed in open areas like fields or under a tree.
 - The female dancers performing are accompanied by male dancers to maintain the rhythm and vocal while playing the musical instruments.
 - Performed to the rhythmic accompaniment of the Madal (two-headed hand drum) hung around the shoulders of the men.
 - Female dancers mostly perform the dancing part by holding each other's waist and moving hands and legs forward/backward synchronously.
- **Attire:** Men wear long traditional dresses. Women wear sarees with broad borders.
- **Musical Instruments:** Traditional instruments—drum, flute, pair of taal, nagara, etc.
- **Songs:** Songs and dialogues that depict the joys, sorrows, yearning, and aspirations of everyday lives of people.
- **Story:** It is believed that Jhumur was originally a means of recreation between the phases of tedious agricultural work.
- **Fact:**
 - This dance gets its name from the dangling bells worn around the ankles that make a jingling sound as the dance commences.
 - The tea tribes of Assam are the oldest tribe of this state, which has completed almost more than 100 years.
 - This dance is also performed in few parts of West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and East and Northeast India.
 - Bhaduria dance is performed as a celebration for the bountiful monsoon; it is a variation of the Jhumar dance.
- **Other Names:** Chah Baganar Jhumar Naach or Tea Garden's Jhumar dance

Nagaland

Nagaland is home to several folk dances, including **Modse, Agurshikukula, Butterfly Dance, Aaluyattu, Sadal Kekai, Changai Dance, Leshalaptu, Khamba Lim, Mayur Dance, Monyoasho, Rengma, Seecha and Kukui Kucho, Shankai and Moyashai, War Dance, and Zeliang Dance**, among others.

Chang Lo or Chokri or Su La

- **Origin:** The colourful dance originated in Nagaland by a tribe called the Chang tribe.
- **Theme:** It is performed at the start of the harvest season.
- **Occasion:** In the present times, a three-day festival called Poanglem features Chang Lo performance.
- **Performers:** Male and female dancers
- **Performance:**
 - In ancient times, this dance was supposed to be performed after the victory is achieved over an opponent during a battle. However, nowadays, it is a three-day festival.
 - It is a collective dance that includes dramatization.
 - The dancing technique involves foot movement with very little upper body movement.
 - Dancers need training to attain expertise in balancing and coordination.
 - This dance involves a lot of clapping and chanting.
- **Attire:** Male dresses in traditional Naga warrior armour; female artists wear more feminine and vibrant clothing.
- **Musical Instruments:** Drum, etc.
- **Legendary Story:** According to an old legend, Chang (a local tribal group) created this style of dancing to celebrate their victory over the enemy.
- **Props:** The props used are dao, spears, and shields.
- **Fact:** It is different from the Zeliang dance of the Zeliang tribe.

Butterfly

- **Origin:** It is a traditional folk dance of the Chakhesang tribe of Nagaland.
- **Theme:** This dance embodies the spirit of Chakhesang tribe and is a representation of femininity, elegance, and grace.

- **Performers:** Men and women
- **Performance:**
 - Dancers arrange themselves in a circle and move in perfect synchrony.
 - Mimicking the flutter of a butterfly's wings with their arms and legs.
 - Dancers sing while dancing.
- **Attire:** Traditional Chakhesang attire, which includes brightly coloured shawls, headbands, and ornaments.
- **Musical Instruments:** Bamboo flute, drum, etc.
- **Fact:**
 - It is named after the butterfly, which is a symbol of beauty and grace in their culture.
 - It is also a traditional social dance of the Hopi tribe of Arizona, the US, held during the months of August and September after gathering the harvest.

Kuki Dance

- **Origin:** Kukis are the indigenous tribe of Nagaland, and this dance is an important part of their culture and tradition.
- **Themes:** Celebration of joy
- **Occasion:** Festivals, weddings, and important occasions
- **Performers:** Both men and women
- **Performance:**
 - It is a lively and energetic dance.
 - Steps are intricate and synchronised with the movements of the musical instruments.
 - Dance is characterised by its fast tempo and acrobatic movements, with dancers often leaping and jumping in the air.
 - It is performed using bamboo sticks.
- **Attire:** Traditional, colourful attire
- **Musical Instruments:** Drum, etc.

Zeliang Dance

- **Origin:** This dance originated from the Zeliangrong tribe of Nagaland.
- **Theme:** It is a celebration of unity and inspiration for the tribe.
- **Occasion:** Mileinyi festival (March) and Langsimnyi festival (October)
- **Performers:** Men and women
- **Performance:**
 - It is an artistic dance form which includes clapping and chanting.
 - This dance takes place on the dry ground (nowadays stage).
 - Dancers enter the ground in a row, doing some peculiar movements, and once all in, they form geometrical shapes like circles, etc.
 - The upright upper body and forceful stomping of feet on the beats of the drum are the prime elements of this dance.
 - It is a mock enactment of a war scenario.
 - Dancers clap their hands and recite hymns in chorus throughout the dance.
 - The group moves until they complete one round, and then they repeat.
 - All dancers are barefoot.
- **Attire:**
 - The costumes are colourful and unique.
 - Men wear a loincloth decorated with thread work, supported by a plain white cloth tied around the waist. The portion of the leg from ankle to knee is covered by stocking-type material. Chunky metal jewellery is the highlight of their look. Headgears are elaborate, having multiple rings of colourful cloth and bamboo sticks attached circularly with a tuft of feathers tucked on one side.
 - Women wear blouse and skirt up to knee length, silver necklaces, earrings, armlets, and anklets.
- **Musical Instruments:** Drums (made from animal skin and wood underneath), jemji (a horn used), and some bamboo instruments are also used.
- **History:**
 - Nagaland is a state inhabited by the bravest tribes found in India.

- Zeliangrong tribe is found in the hilly terrain of Mount Barail in Nagaland.
- Zeliangrong tribe gives equal status to women, unlike other tribes in Nagaland.

Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh is home to several popular folk dances, including **Aji Lhamu, Roppi, Hurkani, Ponung, Lion and Peacock Dance, Hurkani, Buiya, Chalo, Rekham Pada, Popir, and Wancho**, etc.

Buiya

- **Origin:** The Digaru Mishmis tribe of Arunachal Pradesh performs this dance.
- **Theme:** A joyful dance that brings people together, or entertainment, is the main theme.
- **Performers:** Men and women of all age groups; the elderly are often spectators.
- **Performance:**
 - This dance remains an attraction because of the unique formations combined with the beats of different instruments.
 - The performers form a straight line, with one dancer standing behind the other.
 - When the music plays with the sound of the gong, the buiya dancers start moving from the front end of the passage to the rear.
 - The movement is effortless, with the right foot put forward to move ahead by one step.
 - Then the left heel is based on the left leg with a slightly bent knee.
 - These movements are repeated until the end of the episode.
 - Another movement involves skipping a step.
 - Women make small, graceful jumps to move forward, and men make much higher, faster jumps.
 - Music starts at a slower pace and slowly picks up the pace.
 - Sometimes dance is performed without any music as well.
 - There is no formal training for this dance.

- **Occasion:**
 - This dance is performed for the prosperity of the person dancing and for their households.
 - Grand feasts, family gatherings, and festivals like Tazampu, Duiya, and Tanuya.
 - In different festivals, this dance holds different meanings.
- **Attire:**
 - This dance has no particular dress code. Performers wear typical tribal wear.
 - **Men:** A jacket with no sleeves on the top and a loincloth on the bottom, a turban on the head, earrings, and some jewellery around the neck and the wrist.
 - **Women:** A long wrap skirt and a blouse; another smaller skirt is a wrapper over the long skirt; a side bag is hung on their shoulder; different types of jewellery like necklaces, large silver earplugs, and silver fillets with straps studded with coins or cowries.
- **Musical Instruments:** Gong, drum, cymbal, etc.
- **Songs:** It can be sung solo or in chorus as well.
- **Facts:**
 - The Digru Mishmis tribe performs two types of dances.
 - **Buiya:** It has two types of movement, and its purpose is entertainment only.
 - **Nuiya:** It is a ritual dance performed by priests.

Chalo Dance

- **Origin:** It originates from the Nocte tribe of the beautiful northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh. This dance is a part of the Chalo Loku festival in Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Etymology:** In noctes, the term *Loku* is derived from *Lofe* (to drive out) and *Rang-ku* (season). Thus, *Loku* means to drive out the old season of the year.
- **Theme:** It was a way of saying goodbye to the past season for the Nocte tribe.
- **Performers:** Men and women of all age groups.

- **Performance:**

- It is performed in the chief's courtyard, so the costumes of the dancers have to be traditional.
- The dance is synchronised with the beats of the drum, and people sing songs.

- **Occasion:**

- It is a yearly grand festival taking place in October and November.
- It is celebrated just before the farmers harvest the paddy.

- **Attire:** No dress code, but when at the chief's courtyard, the dress code is traditional.

- **Men:** A loincloth (dhoti) on the bottom; the top is bare and usually adorned with silver and bamboo jewellery; the headgear is made up of white feathers attached and many decorative pieces.
- **Women:** A blouse and a cotton skirt up to knee length. They also tie a matching piece of cloth around their waist.
- Both men and women wear metallic rings, anklets, armlets, and earpieces.

- **Musical Instruments:** Drum

- **Fact:**

- The name Chalo Loku translates to paddy cultivation in English.
- It is a 3-day festival, with each day having its own significant rituals that hold value for these tribal people.
 - Famlam (first day): It starts with the sacrifice of pigs and buffalos and is fed to all the people of the village.
 - Chamkatja (second day): It is marked by a Chamkat ceremony. All villagers headed by their chiefs visit a place situated on the outskirts called 'Chaatom'. Everyone prays for a better harvest and the well-being of their family. Relatives and friends exchange gifts. The chief of the tribe also hosts the villagers, and there this Chalo/Chamwangbong dance is performed for two/three hours.
 - Thanglangja (third day): Starts with breaking eggs by the chief and other elderly people. The eggs are believed to be an indication for the future; based on this, field plots are chosen for Jhoom cultivation in the following year.

- Following this, everyone gathers at the ‘Songlongthong’ (the courtyard of the chief’s house), where traditional chalo dances are performed by the villagers.
- **Farewell Song:** *Loku La Liem Ta Chongpo Lazu Ta Panri La Chun Ta Ja Ja Chono Ja Nep Aba Huro Ja Tao Hangloma Cha Cangloma*—it means, blooming flowers have fallen down, fruits have mellowed, and Loku has also ended. Go away, Loku, and please come in the next year with a new spirit and with the blessings that we will reap a good harvest.

Tripura

The major folk dances of Tripura include the **Hozagiri dance of the Reang community, Garia, Jhum, Maimita, Masak Sumani and Lebang Boomani dances of the Tripuri community, Bijhu dance of the Chakma community, Cheraw and Welcome dances of the Lusai community, Hai-Hak dance of the Malsum community, Wangala dance of the Garo Community, Sangraiaka,** and others.

Hojagiri Dance

- **Origin:** It originated as a form of worship, offering gratitude to Goddess Lakshmi, the deity of wealth and prosperity.
- **Theme:** It is a celebration of grace, balance, and cultural heritage.
- **Occasion:**
 - Performed in the lunar month of Bhadra (August/September), festivals, weddings, and celebratory occasions.
 - **The Reang practice Jhum (shift) cultivation:** When the crop is ready for harvesting, the Hojagiri dance is performed to invoke Goddess Lakshmi for the bumper crop.
- **Performers:** It is performed by women (4–6), in a group.
- **Performance:**
 - The rituals start with the worship of nine gods and culminate in the worship of the Goddess Mailuma (Lakshmi).
 - The performance combines rhythmic movements, acrobatics, and the skilful balancing of pots on the head.
 - The dancers, predominantly women, form a circle or a line, swaying to the rhythm of traditional music and beats.

- Choreography involves intricate footwork, hand gestures, and body movements that exude elegance and poise.
- Dancers show their agility and skills through acrobatic elements like spinning, twirling, and balancing on a single leg, thus captivating the audience with their precision and hold.
- The remarkable aspect of this dance is balancing multiple earthen pots on the head, often adorned with decorative items like flower garlands or oil lamps, while performing the intricate dance steps.
- Only the lower half of the body is moved, which is done to create a special rhythmic movement.
- It is a slow hip and waist maneuvering dance.
- It takes 30–40 minutes to complete.
- This dance tries to bring out the day-to-day life of the jhum cultivators in various phases, i.e., from the day of sowing to harvesting.
- Men play the musical instruments and sing the song.
- **Attire:** Traditional attire
 - **Males:** Kamcwlwi borok (for upper body), Rikutu (loincloth), with some ornaments.
 - **Women:** Colourful traditional attire Rikutu (upper garment), Risa (colourful flowing skirt) embellished with intricate embroidery and mirror work, and Rignai (upper garment) are worn around the waist and over the shoulder, adorned with traditional jewellery like necklaces, earrings, anklets etc.
- **Musical Instruments:** Kham (drum with two sides of skin surface), sumui, flute made from bamboo, bamboo cymbal
- **Props:** A baling (wide circular rice cleaning article made up of cane), a pitcher or kalash, a bottle, a household traditional lamp, a plain dish, and a handkerchief for each member.
- **Songs:** Sung by male members, the lyrics of the songs are simple and hold no relation to the ongoing dance.
- **Story:**
 - **Pots on the Head:** The incredible display of balance symbolises the harmony between nature, fertility, and the aspirations of the community.
 - Pots also represent the wealth and abundance sought by the Goddess Lakshmi.

- **Facts:**

- The pitcher on the head is balanced, similar to the Karagam dance of Tamil Nadu.
- The correct nomenclature of this ethnic group is BRU, although the name 'Reang' was accidentally incorporated by the Indian government during a census count.
- The dance was once called Hodagiri among reangs and was solely performed on the day of Maikhlungmo puja, conjointly called Hindu deity puja, for bulk production of paddy and different crops. The third day of Dusshera Goddess Mailuma (Lakshmi) is worshipped, and this dance is performed on that day.
- Reang tribes are also known as Tripuri tribes.
- Satya Ram Riang was awarded the Sangeet Natak Academy award by the government of India for his relentless effort to preserve and promote hojari dance in India and abroad. He has also established a school to teach this dance.
- 2023 IPL match held at the ACA stadium in Barsapara (Assam), the Hojagiri dance was performed in the opening ceremony.

Folk Dance Forms of Eastern and Central India

Bihar

Some of the popular dance forms in Bihar include **Karma Dance, Jhijhia Dance, Kajri Dance, Jhumar Dance, Bhojpuri Jhumar Dance, Magahi Jhumar Dance, Jharni Dance, and Jat Jatin**, etc.

Jhijhian or Jhijhari

- **Origin:** This is the cultural folk dance of the Mithila and Bhojpuri regions of India and Nepal.
- **Theme:** The dance is a way to show devotion towards the Goddess Durga. She is considered the goddess of victory, and of protecting one's family, children, and society from witches and dark magic.
- **Occasion:** Dusshera, festive occasions, etc.
- **Performers:**
 - Generally, women and girls in groups of five to fifteen for ten consecutive evenings, starting from Ghatasthapana (first day) and ending on Bijaya Dashami (last day of Dusshera)
 - Men also participate.

- **Performance:**

- The Jhijhiya songs are sung while performing the dance by rotating around and around in a fixed position.
- During the dance, the performers place earthen pitchers on their heads and rotate while dancing.
- A fire lamp is placed inside the pitcher, and multiple holes are made in it.
- It is believed that if a witch can count the holes on the pitcher, the dancer will die immediately.
- The Jhijhiya dance begins after dancing at a holy site on the first day of Dusshera.
- After the formal start of the dance, it is customary to go from house to house and perform the dance.
- The dancers then request the owner of the house for grains and food to offer on the final day.
- On Vijayadashami, final prayers are conducted, and the collected grains and money are used to host a feast.

- **Attire:**

- Bright and vibrant coloured clothes, which reflect the festive nature of the dance
- Additionally, the attire is adorned with mirrors, embroidery, and intricate designs, which add a touch of glamour to the overall look. As a result, the costumes are visually captivating during performances.
- The attire worn during the Jhijhiya dance in Bihar typically includes the following elements:
 - **Angarkha:** A long, tunic-style upper garment with a flared silhouette, known as Angarkha, is traditionally worn. It is usually adorned with intricate embroidery and mirrorwork.
 - **Dhoti:** Male performers wear Dhoti, a traditional lower garment. It is a long piece of cloth that is wrapped around the waist and legs.
 - **Kurti:** Female performers wear a shorter tunic-style top that reaches the waist, known as Kurti. It is often embellished with colourful embroidery and mirror work.
 - **Lehenga or Ghagra:** Women wear a Lehenga or Ghagra, which is a flared skirt reaching the ankles. It is typically adorned with vibrant patterns and designs.

- **Odhni or Dupatta:** Both male and female dancers wear a long scarf draped over the shoulder or head, known as Odhni or Dupatta. It adds elegance to the costume and can be used for various movements during the performance.
- **Accessories:** Traditional jewellery, including necklaces, earrings, bangles, and anklets, is often worn by performers. These accessories are typically made of silver or gold and are adorned with colourful stones and beads.
- **Musical Instruments:** Dholak, tassa, manjhira, bansuri, and harmonium
- **Songs:**
 - While performing the dance, two types of songs are typically sung.
 - The first type of song is a tribute to the goddess.
 - The second type is intended to protect against witches and dark magic.
- These songs are an integral part of the dance and serve important purposes during the performance.
- Below is a Jhijhiya song verse in the Maithili language, accompanied by its English translation.

*Tohare bharose Brahama Baba, Jhijhiya banailiai ho,
Brahma Baba Jhijhari par hoinyoun asawar (in Maithili)*

*We humbly follow Jhijhiya, seeking your blessings, Father Brahma.
Father Brahma, please join us in this observance. (English translation)*

- **Legendary Story:**
 - The dance form's origin is uncertain, as it has been passed down orally.
 - Legend has it that King Chitrasen had an infatuated queen who used black magic to pretend she was ill. She demanded Balruchi's blood as the only cure, but he was freed by soldiers who brought deer blood instead.
 - Balruchi met an old witch in the forest, who adopted him when he asked for food and a place to stay. When the king and queen passed through the forest, they found Balruchi, but neither recognized him.
 - The king recognized Balruchi when he sang a song he knew. The old witch hurt Balruchi when he left with the king and queen, but the queen countered with magic to defeat her.
 - Balruchi was declared the king's successor, and the queen ordered tantrik rituals for his protection, which the public adopted.

- **In Pop Culture:** In the 2023 Nepali movie *Ek Bhagavad Ra Ek Geeta*, a Jhijhiya tune was featured. The tune was based on folk lyrics.

West Bengal

Some popular folk dance forms of West Bengal include **Baul Dance, Santhali Dance, Gambhira Dance, Mundari Dance, Gajan Dance, Durga Puja Dhunuchi, Bratachari Dance, Laghur Nritya Dance, and Dhali and Paika Nritya Dance.**

Gambhira

- **Origin:**
 - Gombhir, or Gambhira, or Gamvira, is a type of Bengali song and dance that originates from the Bengal region, which is now known as North-Western Bangladesh and north-eastern West Bengal, India.
 - The art form of Gambhira is said to have originated from the cultural practices of the Koch people, who lived in the Malda region.
- **Theme:** Social, political, economic, and moral issues of contemporary culture and society
- **Occasion:** Chaitra Sankranti, Loko Utsav; the lifestyle of village people is reflected in the word *Lok*, and they celebrate their happiness by coming together during the 'Loko Utsav' festival.
- **Stories Behind the Legacy:**
 - Gambhira used to be celebrated as a puja in ancient times.
 - However, during the Middle Ages, several Hindu communities began celebrating the Puja of Dharma Thakur, a notorious Hindu deity, during the last three days of the Bengali year.
 - This later came to be known as the SHIVA GAJAN.
 - In history, Shiva was believed to be present during actual performances.
 - In Bengal, Gambhira is a famous devotional dance performed by worshippers of Shakti. It derives its name from the dance hall of the Chandi Mandir, which is known as Gambhira. There is a specially constructed pavilion for the dance in front of the shrine.
 - One of the most popular devotional dances in Bengal is Gambhira. The tunes of Gambhira are believed to have originated from the worship of the Lord Shiva because he is also known as Gambhir.

- Loko Utsav is a popular festival in Malda, and Gambhira is a significant part of it.
- This festival is confined to Malda and is known as 'Loko Utsav' or local festival. It has become the heartbeat of the people living in rural areas.
- It is closely associated with local agricultural customs, particularly the cultivation of mangoes, as well as the veneration of the Hindu deity Shiva.
- **Performers:** The Rajbanshi, Chnai, Koch, and Mahali communities are primarily known for celebrating the festival of Gambhira.
- **Performance:**
 - The Gambhira dance is usually performed on a song with the same name.
 - The performance includes two main dancers and a chorus.
 - Prior to the performance, an idol of Shiva is installed in an open hut.
 - The performance itself is typically divided into five parts.
 - All characters, including females and goddesses, are played by male performers.
 - The two main dancers enact the roles of nana (maternal grandfather) and nati (grandson), respectively.
 - The performer who plays the character of Nati wears a string of bells around his ankles.
 - Through this dance, the performers engage in dialogue and express their concerns about social, political, economic, and moral issues in contemporary culture and society.
 - The chorus repeats the catchphrase from the song behind the two main dancers.
 - This dance form combines various art forms, including dialogue, dance, songs, and music, and appears like a documentary dance form or a folk play.
 - When the chorus repeats the refrain, the two main dancers perform the dance, and when they sing and perform, the chorus takes a backstage.
 - The Gambhir dancers of Maldah are famous for wearing masks during the performance.
 - Performers undergo rigorous training and preparation before the performance.
 - The performance is divided into different segments, each showcasing different aspects of the dance form.

- The audience often participates in the performance, adding to its overall impact.
- **First Part:** This performance is called bondolan, and performers sing and dance together to invoke Shiva.
- An actor portraying Shiva, costumed with matted hair and tiger skin, listens to the troubles of the audience.
- **Second Part:** This part consists of solo dance performances, with dancers wearing masks, makeup, and costumes to represent deities such as Kali, Chamunda, Shiva, or individuals from Puranic literature.
- **Third Part:** This part of the performance, charyari, is a skit performed by four actors, and the subject matter changes between scenes.
- The acting is accompanied by gestures, comical body movements, and music to heighten the comedy.
- The music is often adapted from popular songs from Bengali and Hindi cinema to match the tone of the skits.
- The dialogues do not follow a set script and tend to be improvised around an overarching theme.
- The skit is followed by a performance featuring satirical comments and sociopolitical critique through song and dialogue.
- **Toppathungri:** A brief musical interlude known as toppathungri is then performed before the final part of the performance.
- **Final Part:** It is called 'reporting'. This involves actors playing the role of media persons reporting on current issues in the area.
- **Attire:**
 - The Gambhira folk dance of West Bengal is known for its vibrant and charming costumes worn by both male and female dancers. These traditional attires are an essential element in reflecting the cultural heritage of the region. The Gambhira costumes have their unique features, and here are some details about them.
- **Male Costume:**
 - Male Gambhira dancers typically dress in a dhoti, which is a rectangular piece of cloth that is wrapped around the waist and extends down to the ankles.
 - The dhoti is often made from cotton or silk and is frequently decorated with colourful borders or patterns.

- They match the dhoti with a kurta (long shirt) that is loose-fitting and comfortable, which can be plain or adorned with intricate embroidery.
- The kurta is generally short-sleeved.
- The dancers may also wear a vest over the kurta to add an extra touch of elegance.
- To complete the outfit, a colourful headgear or turban is often worn, which adds a hint of regality to the overall appearance.
- **Female Costume:**
 - Female dancers who perform the Gambhira dance, are seen donning vibrant and ornate saris.
 - These saris are essentially long pieces of fabric that are wrapped around the body, with one end draped over the shoulder.
 - The fabric used in making these saris is usually rich in colour and features traditional motifs or intricate patterns.
 - The dancers may opt for saris made from silk, cotton, or other lightweight fabrics that allow for fluid movements.
 - To complement the sari, a matching blouse is also worn, which can either be simple or decorated with embroidery and embellishments.
 - The dancers also accessorize themselves with traditional jewellery, such as necklaces, earrings, bangles, and anklets, to enhance their overall look.
- **Accessories:**
 - Gambhira dancers don a range of accessories to enhance the visual appeal of their performances, in addition to their main costumes.
 - Both male and female dancers wear metal or wooden bangles on their hands and colourful thread bracelets on their wrists.
 - They may also adorn their fingers with rings and finger ornaments.
 - To make their performances more captivating, they often apply decorative face paint or makeup to accentuate their facial expressions.
- **Note:**
 - The attire used for Gambhira showcases the cultural legacy of West Bengal and aims to enhance the visual appeal to match the lively and emotive dance routines.
- The vivid hues, detailed designs, and customary ornaments are instrumental in capturing the essence of this enchanting folk dance style.

- **Features:**

- The Gambhira dance is a significant part of the traditional performing arts in the region.
- With its lively music, rhythmic movements, and vibrant energy, it has become an integral part of West Bengal's cultural fabric.
- Bengali culture regards folk dancing as a special part of their traditions, complementing their good practices with colour and ceremonies.
- Initially, these dances were mainly for farming or worship purposes.
- West Bengal's Gambhira folk dance serves as a testament to the state's rich cultural heritage.
- The dance mesmerizes its audience through its performances and educates them, connecting them with their roots.
- Gambhira serves as a bridge between the past and the present, reminding us of the importance of preserving and celebrating our diverse traditions.
- By appreciating and promoting Gambhira, we contribute to the vibrant tapestry of West Bengal's cultural legacy and keep the spirit of this enchanting dance form alive for generations to come.

- **Musical Instruments:** Harmonium, flute, dhak (a cylindrical drum), dholak (a hand drum), cymbals, and Judi, along with ankle bells called nati on the dancer's feet.

- **Music:** The music of Gambhira is influenced by an earlier tradition called Bolbahi or Bolbhai, which comprises songs and skits featuring portrayals of local events, figures, and controversies.

- **Mask:** The local Sutradhar community makes masks using neem and fig trees. Occasionally, they also crafted masks out of clay.

- **Songs:**

- Believed to be associated with the worship of the deity Shiva, also known as 'Gambhir'.
- The folk songs are performed by local artists in troupes and often consist of written verses.

- **Regions Where Performed:**

- Gombhira performances are mainly concentrated around the Malda District in West Bengal (India).
- In Bangladesh, the Chapai Nawabganj District serves as the primary centre for this tradition.
- The nearby districts of Rajshahi and Naogaon are also popular for this art form.

- **Transformation With Time:**

- Comparisons have been made between earlier versions of Gambhira and the festival of Gajan, which also placed emphasis on the worship of Shiva.
- Gambhira festivals were originally held for a period of four to five days, with the performative components occurring on the second and third days.
- These were referred to as **Choto Tamasha**, where children would perform masked dances, and **Bado Tamasha**, where adults would enact skits.
- In the early 20th century, Gambhira underwent a significant transformation and became recognised as a public platform for villagers to present their concerns to deities such as Shiva, who was considered an ally of the people.
- Since then, it has maintained its popularity and relevance by highlighting local issues through public satirical skits.
- Gambhira is still performed by troupes today in various regions, including Dinajpur, Rangpur, and Rajshahi in Bangladesh.
- In these regions, the figures of a maternal grandfather and his grandson are used to critique socio-political issues.
- It is also performed in the Malda and Murshidabad districts of West Bengal (India).

- **From the Author's Pen:**

- In the book 'Addyer Gambhira', Mr. Haridas Palit made a comment that in ancient times, a house that resembled Chandimandap was referred to as Gombhir or Gambhira.
- Pushpajit Roy has stated in his book 'Gambhira' that Gambhira is not just a type of song, but it represents a complete ritualistic play.

- **Facts:**

- Although this dance has lost much of its popularity, it is still performed in Rajshahi.
- It is often spelled as GOMBHIR, Gambhira, or Gamvira.
- The Election Commission (EC) has collaborated with Chhau performers from Purulia and Gambhira artists in Malda to boost voter turnout in the upcoming elections.
- To achieve this goal, a deal has been struck with Doordarshan to broadcast these programmes.

Jharkhand

Jhumair, Mardana Jhumair, Janani Jhumair, Domkach, Lahasua, Jhumta, Fagua, Paika, Chhau, Firkal, Mundari, and Santali are some of the folk and tribal dances in Jharkhand.

Fagua

- **Origin:** The Sandhikal of Falgun and Chaita is celebrated through a dance.
- **Theme:** The arrival of the spring season is commemorated by performing a dance, which is believed to be a time of happiness and rejuvenation.
- **Occasion:**
 - Holi is celebrated by the people through a performance known as the Phagua dance.
 - This dance is typically performed in the Phagun month of the Hindu calendar, which falls between February and March.
 - The exact dates of the celebration vary every year based on the lunar calendar.
- **Performers:**
 - Male oriental dance has been traditionally performed by men, but nowadays, it is also performed by women.
 - This dance is a community activity that encourages everyone, regardless of their caste, creed, or gender, to participate and celebrate together.
- **Performance:**
 - Phagua is a lively dance that is performed by male dancers.
 - In some regions, a few female dancers also participate in the dance.
 - The dance is accompanied by folk songs and drumbeats, which form an essential part of the performance.
 - As the dancers move to the music, they throw coloured water and powder at each other.
 - The dancers exhibit a variety of movements, with professionals or skilled dancers usually performing the dance. The dance is characterized by fast-paced and acrobatic movements, with the dancers executing jumps and spins while holding their props.
 - They also form circles and lines and engage in mock battles with each other.
 - As the dancers move, a singer loudly sings folk songs, creating an atmosphere that reflects the joy in the hearts of the people.

- **Traditional Form:**

- A traditional Phagua dance performance usually begins with the dancers gathering in a circle around the musicians, who are usually positioned in the centre.
- The dancers then move in a synchronized manner, following the rhythm of the drums and other instruments.
- As the performance progresses, the dancers incorporate the use of their props, such as sticks or swords, into their movements.
- They also create different formations and patterns, including circles, lines, and zig-zags.
- The dancers often showcase their acrobatic abilities, performing jumps and spins in the air, which adds an element of excitement and thrill to the performance.
- Some dancers may also perform solo acts, highlighting their individual skills and talents.
- Throughout the dance, the music and movements become progressively faster and more energetic, building up to a climax towards the end of the performance.
- The dancers may also engage in simulated combat with each other, using their props to create mock battles.

- **Attire:**

- Vibrant and colourful as the festival itself
- **Women:** They typically wear bright-coloured traditional sarees or lehengas, along with jewellery and bangles.
- **Men:** They wear dhotis and kurtas in equally bright colours, complemented by turbans or headbands.
 - The fabric used is satin and has a shiny finish, making it visually appealing.
 - A cloth of contrasting colour is tied around the waist, while a turban is worn to complete the traditional look.
- Both men and women wear scarves and carry props such as sticks, swords, or shields.
- The costumes and accessories are often adorned with intricate embroidery, mirror work, and other decorative elements, which enhance the overall visual appeal of the performance.

- **Musical Instruments:**

- The Phagua dance, a folk dance performed during the Holi festival, is accompanied by traditional musical instruments that contribute to the overall festive atmosphere.
- The dance is accompanied by various instruments, such as the dhol, nagada, shehnai, flute, and dhak.
- The dhol and nagada are percussion instruments that provide rhythmic beats, while the shehnai and flute add melody and harmony.
- The dhak is a type of drum that is used to create a loud and powerful sound, particularly during the more intense parts of the performance.
- Skilled musicians who are well-versed in the traditional music of Jharkhand play these instruments, and their music is an integral part of the Phagua dance.
- The dance features loud beats produced by instruments.
- The lively and energetic rhythm created by these instruments complements the dance movements of the performers, making the Phagua dance of Jharkhand a unique and captivating experience.

- **Props:** Sticks, swords, and shields

- **Other States:** Neighbouring states of Bihar

- **A Legacy:**

- Phagua dance serves as a means of both entertainment and cultural preservation within the region.
- This dance has been handed down through the generations and is an essential component of the social and cultural tapestry of the Jharkhandi people.

- **Mythological Story:**

- The religious significance of the dance is attributed to its celebration of Lord Krishna, who is associated with the Holi festival.
- Moreover, it is believed to symbolize the triumph of good over evil, marking the victory of the deity Vishnu over the demon Holika.

- **A Feel Good Factor:**

- The Phagua Dance of Jharkhand is a mesmerizing form of folk dance that encapsulates the essence of happiness, festivity, and togetherness.

- It has its roots deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of the region and serves as a medium for the community to unite, express their enthusiasm, and celebrate the onset of spring.
 - The dance's lively movements, vibrant attire, and rhythmic beats create an exhilarating ambiance that leaves a long-lasting impression on everyone, be it performers or onlookers.
 - Not only does the Phagua Dance preserve Jharkhand's cultural heritage, but it also strengthens the bonds of harmony and camaraderie among its people.
 - Through its dynamic showcase of artistry and tradition, the Phagua Dance continues to captivate and inspire generations, ensuring that the rich cultural legacy of Jharkhand thrives and flourishes.
- **In News:**
 - **1 November 2023:** The Governor delivered a speech at the Maharashtra Raj Bhavan Mumbai during the State Formation Day programme of Jharkhand. This event was organized under the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' initiative of the Indian Government.
 - The cultural performances included folk dances and traditions from Jharkhand, which were presented by local artists.
 - The cultural programme showcased dance forms such as Chhat Puja, Chhau dance, Kavadi Yatra, Paika dance, Fagua dance, Karam dance, Maghe dance, among others.

Odisha

Some of the major folk dances that you can find in Odisha are **Chhau, Gotipua, Danda Nata, Sambapuri, Dalkhai, Chaitighoda, and Medha Nach**, etc.

Ghumura

- **Origin:**
 - The dance form is native to Kalahandi and has its roots in the Indravati Peninsula.
 - The picturesque waterfall in the valley was first stumbled upon by the Chindaka Nagas of Chakrakota. The dance style gradually expanded into the regions between Indravati and Mahanadi, hinting at its origin dating back to the 10th century CE.
- **Etymology:**
 - The word *Ghumura* is formed by combining the words *GHUM+UU+RAA*.
 - The term *Ghum* refers to an earthen pot, *Uu* means creation, and *Raa* stands for sound.

- Therefore, *Ghumura* refers to the earthen pot from which the sound of 'Ghum', 'Ghum' is created.
- **Performers:** Male dancers performed by 15–40 persons
- **Tribes Who Perform:** Gond, Kondhs, and Bhatars tribes traditionally perform this dance.
- **Occasions:**
 - The dance that the tribes of Kalahandi perform is typically reserved for religious and traditional occasions such as Nuakhai or Dusshera.
 - The dance is traditionally performed during Gamha Poornima, which occurs on the full moon day of the lunar month of Shraavan, typically falling in July or August.
 - In modern days, singers sing and dance to the tune of Ghumura at social functions and religious festivals as well.
- **What Is Ghumura:**
 - The name of a musical instrument made of an earthen pot is Ghumura.
 - The instrument is two feet long and is a hollow earthen pot.
 - The face of the instrument is covered with the skin of the monitor lizard.
 - It is tied to the waist and left shoulder of the dancer.
 - Ghumura is a long-sized instrument used for musical purposes.
 - Females use Ghumuria, which is the feminine counterpart of Ghumura.
- **Performance:**
 - In the past, it was used during wartime to encourage soldiers.
 - According to tradition, the performers of 'Ghumura' first perform the puja-rituals of the instrument on the auspicious day of 'Chitalagi-Amabasya' and practise it every evening from then onwards. From the day of the 'Nuakhai' festival to the 'Vijaya Dashami' festival, they perform 'Ghumura' at various locations.
 - Occasionally, there is competition between two parties, each comprising of twenty to twenty-five men.
 - The Ghumura, which is hung on the necks of the drummers with the support of a rope, makes it easier to play.
 - As soon as the drummer starts drumming the Ghumura, singing and dancing commence.

- The dance that is performed to the accompaniment of this drum is called Ghumura Naat.
- The performer ties ropes around their waist and chest or shoulders to swing the “Ghumura” up to their belly and beat it with their hands.
- They play the musical instrument while standing and dance during performances using their right and left forefingers.
- They line up in rows, and the singer who accompanies them sings a verse from a selection of songs designated for the dance.
- The singer may occasionally perform verses that were written or improvised by them.
- While the singer is singing, the dancers stand and play their drums quietly.
- Once the verse is finished, the dancers play their drums loudly and dance energetically.
- **Attire:** The attire of Ghumura is like that of a tribal dance; hence, it is categorized as a folk dance.
- **Unique Characteristics:**
 - This form of martial dance demands the simultaneous display of music, dance, singing, song, and acting, making it a challenging task to execute.
 - The Ghumura dance, although categorized as a folk dance, is heavily influenced by the classical form, which is evident in the style of the singer and dancer and the beats played by the Nissan player.
- **Musical Instruments:** Nissan, Jhaanja, Mahuri, and Mardal
- **Other Forms:** The contemporary form is Ghumura-Ladhei or Badi-Ghumura in Kalahandi, which is very meaningful, attractive, and enchanting.
- **Categorisation:** Ghumura is classified as an 'Avanaddha Vadya' type of musical instrument in accordance with the scriptures.
- **Transformation of War Dance in Folk Dance and Music:**
 - In ancient times, Ghumura was a favoured instrument of Gods and Demons during the war.
 - Kings and soldiers of Odisha later adopted it as their primary war music.
 - The song was integrated with Ghumura's music and dance and became a means of exercise and entertainment for soldiers during leisure time.

- Paikas developed Ghumura as their primary means of entertainment during British rule.
- **Social Message:** Forestation, saving girl children, literacy, etc.
- **Epic Text Mentions:** In the 'Madhya Parva' of 'Sarala Mahabharata', Ghumura is mentioned in the following verse, '*Dhola Madala Gadi je Ghumura Bajai Ghumura je Ghumu Ghumu hoi Garajai*'.
- **Mythological Stories:**
 - In accordance with the Chandi Purana, Durga, the eternal deity of Shakti, asked all the heavenly Gods and Goddesses to contribute their weapons, as instruments and conveyances, to slay the demon king Mahisasur.
 - The Ghumura instrument was one of the war-musical instruments collected and was formed by combining a portion of the Dambaru, a musical instrument of Lord Siva, and Veena of Goddess Saraswati.
 - The Ghumura was utilized as a musical instrument during the war by Gods and Goddesses, as stated in the Mahabharata.
 - The capital of the king Gogingh Daitya, Mahisasura's grandson, during Satya Juga-Jenabali-Patana, according to Sarala Mahabharata. Many people consider Junagarh to be the Jenabali-Patana of that period. Nonetheless, the Madhya Parva of Mahabharat mentions Ghumura with a description of the killing of Gosingh Daitya.
 - Some people believed Ghumura was the war music (Rana-Badya) of Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, and Lanka-garh. Goddess Lankeswari, Ravana's favourite goddess, is worshipped in the area.
 - According to them, after Lanka was destroyed by Hanuman and Ravana was slain, Goddess Lankeswari migrated from Lanka and settled in Jenabali-Patana (now Junagarh, Kalahandi), where she is worshipped.
- **A Legacy:**
 - The district of Kalahandi is also recognized by the name of 'Ghumura'.
 - It is a type of "Veera vadya", which symbolizes the bravery and courage of warriors and could boost the morale of soldiers when played.
 - The sounds produced by this musical instrument uplift the spirits of weak individuals and instill a sense of strength and energy in warriors.

- It can also create a sense of fear among enemies. In the past, during the reign of kings and emperors, 'Ghumura' was designated as the military musical instrument and was played during battles.
- **From Writer's Pen:**
 - Shivam Bhasin Panda, a poet, wrote Ghumura Janma Bidhan in 1954, based on a myth.
 - According to Nandini Bhasin and Gaganeswar's account of the origin of Ghumura, Chandra Dhawaja established the dance, which was later taken over by a demon named Karttabirya Asura.
 - Mahisasura's war music, as described by Sarala Dasa, is also referred to as Ghumura.
- **Historical Evidence:**
 - The objects made of terracotta and stone, which were discovered at a medieval site in Nehena, located 3km from Khariar, bear a striking resemblance to the Ghumura object that dates to the 9th and 10th centuries.
 - Records suggest that the Ghumura dance was quite popular during the 12th century CE, as is evident from a stone-hole scene of a person playing the Ghumura instrument in the Nritya Mandir of Konark Sun Temple.
 - Another scene of the Ghumura dance is depicted in the Bhimeswar temple in Bhubaneswar, which confirms the origin of the Ghumura dance to the 10th century CE.
- **Development and Spread:**
 - The Ghumura dance form holds significant importance during various cultural and religious festivals celebrated in the Kalahandi and Koshal regions. Ghumura is widely acclaimed and appreciated, not only in Odisha but also across India and globally.
 - The country has chosen the Ghumura Dance to participate in several international events that are to be held in Delhi, Moscow, and other locations.
- **Acceptance:**
 - It is uncertain whether Ghumura was originally a caste-based dance or not; however, it has become a popular dance in the Kalahandi region and is now considered a part of folk culture.
 - Over time, Ghumura has evolved and is now performed by people from various castes and communities.

- It is believed that Ghumura may have originated as a dance of a particular caste before being adopted by different groups and becoming a widely accepted mass dance form.
- Today, 'Ghumura' is not only prevalent in tribal-dominated regions but has also spread to many non-tribal regions. It is recognized as a 'Taala-vadya' musical instrument.

Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh boasts of several folk dances, such as **Jawara, Matki, Aada, Khada Nach, Phulpati, Grida, Selalarki, Selabhadoni, and Maanch.**

Jawara Dance

- **Origin:** The peasant community of the Bundelkhand region in Madhya Pradesh usually performs this harvest dance.
- **Etymology:** The name 'Jawara' signifies grains.
- **Themes:** The happiness and joy of the farmers who have achieved a successful harvest are embodied in it. It is a method of commemorating a fruitful harvest and the resulting earnings.
- **Occasions:** End of the harvest season
- **Performers:** Both men and women
- **Performance:**
 - The Jawara folk dance is a performance that requires a high level of skill, and not everyone can participate.
 - Dancers must execute complex steps while using heavy props.
 - To gain the experience needed to perform, dancers must learn the dance for several years and then perform during festivals.
 - This dance is passed down from generation to generation.
 - During the Jawara dance, female dancers carry a heavy basket of Jawara crops on their heads to represent the significance of crops in our lives. The dancers move in a swaying motion, keeping their bodies rigid while balancing the basket on their heads.
 - This act is performed before and during the dance performance, and it requires a lot of stunts and prop balancing.
 - Both male and female dancers can participate in the Jawara dance.

- At the start of the dance, the dancers showcase their balancing skills by balancing lit lamps on their hands and heads while maintaining balance while standing on each other.
- As the music picks up, the dancers start to move with enthusiasm.
- The dancers hold each other from the waist while moving forward and backward, and they also sway their bodies in a manner like a peacock with its feathers. When the rain comes, peacocks dance with joy, and when good crops come, peasants dance with joy.
- The Jawara dance is accompanied by music played by the villagers using traditional musical instruments such as cymbals and bells.
- The dance is also accompanied by the folk songs of the region.
- **Attire:**
 - **Female** dancers adorn themselves with vibrant knee-length dhotis and traditional jewellery, which allow for maximum leg movement during this intricate and rapid dance form. Any sort of binding clothing is discouraged, as it can pose a potential hazard to the dancers.
 - **Male** dancers wear colourful shirt tunics paired with Nehru jackets and dhotis that allow for ease of movement.
 - A significant aspect of the attire for both male and female dancers is the cloth that is wrapped around their heads and adorned with peacock feathers, which symbolize the resemblance of the dance to a peacock.
- **Musical Instruments:** Instruments such as cymbals and bells

Chhattisgarh

Gaur Maria, Panthi, Raut Nach, Pandwani, Vedamati, Kapalik, Bharthari Charit, and Chandaini are some of the significant folk dances in Chhattisgarh.

Panthi

- **Origin:**
 - A significant ritual of the Satnami community of Chhattisgarh is demonstrated through this Indian folk dance.
 - The people hold the Durg region in high importance, and this dance serves to showcase their reverence.
- **Themes:** A tribute to the teachings of Guru Baba Ghasidas and other saint gurus.

- **Occasion:** The celebration of this dance takes place on the birth of Guru Baba Ghasidas (i.e. 18 December 1756), which takes place on Maghi Purnima.
- **Performers:** Mainly male
- **Performance:**
 - The performances of this dance are highly vocal and are accompanied by beautiful songs.
 - The dance is incredibly expressive, depicting its emotions vividly.
 - Only male dancers participate in the performance.
 - During the dance, the dancers move around the Jait khamb, singing songs that honour their spiritual leader.
 - These songs also reflect the philosophy of Nirvana, promoting the spirit of abandoning their Guru and following the teachings of sacred poets such as Kabir, Guru Ramdas Ji, Dadu, etc.
 - The whistle is blown in between songs to signal a change in steps.
 - The lead dancer of the group motivates others by chanting 'Aaha, Aaha' loudly.
 - Performing this dance requires great flexibility and endurance, as it involves a variety of challenging steps.
 - The performance begins with slow, fluid movements of the body.
 - The group leader sings a song while the others follow with a short song.
 - Dancers with curved bodies and swinging arms continue to dance until their dedication is taken away.
 - As the rhythm accelerates, they indulge in acrobatics and even create human towers.
 - The dancers who participate in this dance are usually people or members of the Panthi Nritya Mandir.
 - The high notes at the end of the song signify its termination and surprise the audience with their high level of pace and changeability of steps.
- **Mudras Represented:** The dancers pay homage to their Guru by performing a range of 'Mudras' that include Jait Khamb, Jai Stambh, Dharti Pranam (which is a gesture of respect towards the earth), and Phool Arpan (which involves offering flowers).

- **Songs:**

- The significance of human life, along with powerful spiritual messages and an emphasis on devotion to the almighty, is portrayed in dance-related songs.
- These songs communicate the teachings of saints like Kabir, Ravidas, and Dadu, as well as the philosophy of Nirvana.

- **Attire:**

- Panthi dancers dress themselves in colourful traditional attire.
- To accompany the attire, they also wear minimal ornaments.
- Simple vests, short dhotis up to the knees, garlands on the neck, white tilaks, ghunghroos, waistbands, and turbans on their heads are the main features of this dance group.
- Excessive clothing and decoration are also not suitable for panthi dancers.

- **Musical Instruments:** The rhythmic sounds of traditional instruments like Mridanga and Jhaanj drive the movements of the dancers, who also keep time with the pounding beats of drums, banjo, dholak, tabla, and casio.

- **Inside Story:**

- The Satnami community in Chhattisgarh practices this traditional folk dance.
- They follow the Satnam panth, which was founded by the revered Saint Guru Ghasidas.
- The dance holds religious significance and is considered a natural form of devotion.
- It is believed that the philosophy of Nirvana is central to the Satnami community, and their dance reflects this belief.

- **Famous Personality:**

- Devdas Banjara established his legacy by showcasing to the world his unique dance form.
- Despite lacking any formal dance training, Devdas formed a band and performed across the globe.
- His significant contribution to the development of the Dalit community earned him the prestigious Guru Ghasi Das Award.
- Moreover, he and his team's exceptional achievements in the field of traditional dance were recognized with the Presidential Award.

Folk Dance Forms of Western India

Gujarat

Some of the popular dance forms in Gujarat include **Garba, Dandiya Raas, Bhavai, Hudo, Padhar, Tippani, Dangi Dance, and Raas.**

Hallisaka

- **Origin:** It originates from Gujarat. Its importance is highlighted in the Harivamsha Purana.
- **Mythological Description:**
 - Raas in various forms found throughout India can trace their origin to Hallisaka, as described in detail in the Khil Bhaga Harivamsha (Vishnu Parva, Chapter 20) of the Mahabharata.
 - The Harivamsha Purana mentions specific styles of dancing like Tal Raaska and Dand Raaska, which are also referred to as Hallisaka.
 - Originally starting as a form of Sanskrit drama, it eventually evolved into a popular sport and dance.
- **Theme:** Shri Krishna's pastime stories and his Gopis.
- **Performance:**
 - A group of dancers creates a circle by joining their hands together.
 - The rhythm of the dance is maintained by clapping, and a beautiful song accompanies it.
 - A handsome young man, representing Lord Krishna, stands in the centre of the circle of women.
 - The dance is performed by two Gopikas, forming a mandala, with Lord Krishna at the centre.
 - The performance includes Apsaras, such as Rambha, Hema, Mishrakeshi, Tilottama, and Menaka.
 - The foot movements of the dancers express the rhythm through measured steps, using toes, heels, and legs, with varying speed and timing.
 - This graceful dance is enhanced by group performances, chorus singing, and other creative elements, and it concludes with songs depicting the pastimes of Shri Krishna.

- **Occasion:** Sharad Purnima (full moon night)
- **Musical Instruments:** Flute, mridang, etc.
- **Tracing Its Origin:**
 - The Hallisaka Dance is an ancient form of dance that can be traced back to a significant work of Sanskrit literature known as the Harivamsha.
 - This literary work consists of approximately 16,375 verses and was composed sometime between 200 BCE and 500 CE. It was later added to the epic Mahabharata.
 - The stories in the Harivamsha are centred around Krishna, who is depicted as a herdsman, and later, his interactions with the gopis in the Krishna-Gopi Leela. The Harivamsha had a profound impact on Indian music and is said to have influenced various composite genres in Indian cultural expression, including the Chhalikya songs and the Hallisaka dance.
- **Songs:** Melodious songs mentioning the stories of Krishna and the folklore
- **Legendry Story:**
 - During the Govardhan-Leela event, the girls witnessed Shri Krishna's effortless feat of lifting the Govardhan mountain with his little finger, and this made them realize that Shri Krishna was the most powerful being at that time.
 - The brides among the Gopis were inspired to invite Shri Krishna to join them for the Hallisaka dance, which was scheduled to take place on the bright moon of the upcoming Sharad Purnima.
 - As Shri Krishna danced with the Gopis, they became deeply engrossed in the dance, and their hearts were filled with appreciation.
 - Suddenly, God disappeared, causing the Gopis to feel immense sadness and longing for his presence. In their sorrow, they began to recall the pastimes of Shri Krishna.
 - Eventually, Shri Krishna reappeared and resumed dancing with the Gopis, and it is believed that this is the origin of the popular folk dance known as 'Bahuri Syam Sang Raas Rachayon'.
- **Scholars View:**
 - Scholars believe that Hallisaka is the predecessor of Raas and is also identical to Raskrida.

- Acharya Neelkanth, in his commentary, wrote, '*Haslish kredern eksya punso bahubhi: sribhi: kredn saiv raskeed*', which roughly translates to 'Hallisaka is plough handle and also Saiv Raskeed for many women'.

Maharashtra

Today, traditional dances such as **Lavani, Dhangarigaja, Lezim, Koli**, and others are popular across Maharashtra. These dances are not only artistic expressions but also a celebration of life, rituals, and folklore. They play a significant role in various festive occasions, religious ceremonies, and cultural events, bringing people together in joyful harmony.

Koli

- **Origin:** The Koli community of Maharashtra practises the Koli dance, which is an expression of their ethnicity and traditions.
- **Theme:** The celebration of Kolis always involves the Koli Dance, which is a dance that mirrors the rhythm of the sea waves.
- **Occasion:** Weddings, festivals, and other social events
- **Performers:** A group comprising men and women
- **Performance:**
 - The Koli Dance is popular for its vibrant costumes and lively movements that feature shiny beads and sequins.
 - This dance style has many different variations across the region, all with unique choreography.
 - During the performance, fishermen stand in two rows with small oars, which are essential tools for fishing, in their hands.
 - They move these oars in a synchronized rhythm, mimicking the motion of rowing a boat.
 - Additionally, they sway the oars back and forth, creating the illusion of a boat riding the waves of the sea.
 - Fisherwomen stand in a separate row, holding hands and moving towards the men who are dancing.
 - Together, they move in unison, showcasing the movements of rowing a boat and fishing.

- The dance features a range of synchronized movements that include jumps, turns, and claps, all perfectly matching the beat of the music.
- **Attire:**
 - **Female:**
 - Cotton or silk green-coloured saris that are draped up to their knees in a traditional style unique to the Koli community; these sarees also come in bright colours such as red, yellow, green, or blue.
 - The dancers also wear a choli and complement their attire with jewellery like necklaces, earrings, and bangles.
 - **Male:**
 - Lungis around their waists, creating a triangular shape.
 - Koli topi, which is commonly made of cotton or silk and comes in a red or white colour.
- **Music:**
 - The Koli folk dance music serves a dual purpose; it provides entertainment while also preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of the Koli community in Maharashtra.
 - The music is a reflection of their deep-rooted connection with the ocean and their way of life, which, in turn, contributes to the diversity and richness of the culture of Maharashtra.
- **Songs:** This dance is often performed with popular songs such as *Me Dolker*, *Aga Pori Sambhaal*, *Dol Doltai*, *Paru Go Paru*, and *Valav Re Nakva*.
- **Musical Instrument:** Traditional instruments like dholki (hand drum); tasha (a type of cymbals); manjira (hand cymbals); and sometimes harmonium, halgi (a traditional weapon that produces sound when struck by a stick), zanj (a metal bell or bell that produces a ringing sound), and tuntuna
- **Fact:**
 - They hold the sea and boats in high regard and perform regular worship ceremonies for them.
 - This traditional dance portrays the challenges they face while catching fish, which is their sole means of sustenance.
- **In Pop Culture:**
 - The song *Humko Aaj Kal Hai* is from the Hindi movie *Sailaab*.
 - The Hindi movie *Dil Hai Ki Manta Nahin* has a song called *Galyan Sakli Sonyachi*.

Goa

Among the traditional dances performed by women is Dekhni, which is a rare blend of traditional and modern music. **Fugdi** and **Dhalo** are two of the most performed folk dances in Goa. Additionally, the **Kunbi** is a tribal folk dance. During the Shigmo festival, women perform the lamp dance while holding lamps on their heads. **Morulem**, presented by the backward community during Shigmo, is another traditional folk dance. Zagor, a folk play presented in different villages of Goa by the Gawda community, is another popular dance. Finally, the **Dhangar** is a vigorous session of worship and dance performed during Navratri, and **Mando** is a love song that represents the mingling of Indian and Western traditions.

Dhalo

- **Origin:** A customary folk dance known as Dhalo is quite well-liked in Goa.
- **Theme:** Performing Dhalos is a way to seek divine intervention and protection from malevolent forces, as well as to promote the well-being of family members and establish peace in the village.
- **Occasion:** The month-long festival is observed as per the Hindu calendar, beginning on the full moon day, which is locally called 'Dalyachi Poonav'.
- **Performers:** Women
- **Involved Communities:** Kunbis, Bhandari, Naik, Gabit, and Gaudi communities.
- **Customary Practice:**
 - The celebrations usually commence on either a Wednesday or Sunday.
 - Ahead of the festivities, women adorn the open space of their homes and the temple with rangoli.
 - Women from neighbouring villages are welcome to participate in the dance, excluding widows, who do not partake in the Dhalos.
 - During the festival, women offer talli, which includes rice, moong, and jaggery.
 - These ingredients are then cooked and served to those present.
 - The leader of the village, known as Mandkann, invokes a salutation to the divinity and Earth Mother, seeking their blessings for the entire village and the festival rituals.
- **Performance:**
 - The Dhalo dance, which is one of the most popular rural dances of Goa, is performed in a sacred open space called a mand, where visitors are not allowed to wear shoes.

- The village residents gather there to sing, dance, and play music as part of a traditional performance.
- To start the performance, the leader of the group greets the mother of the world and asks for her blessings for their dance and ceremonial rituals.
- They pray to Mother Nature for the protection of their village from any harm and to ensure the successful completion of the festival without any negative predictions.
- The dance typically involves two rows of women facing each other and swaying back and forth while singing about their life stories and contemporary society.
- The songs and dances describe various events and narratives.
- The Dhalo is performed for the first six nights.
- The songs that accompany the Dhalo were originally about Krishna's romance, Ramayana, and Mahabharata, but in recent years, Marathi and Hindi songs have also been included.
- On the last day, women wear fancy dresses and even take on the roles of men.
- **Attire:** Sarees, scarves, and traditional jewellery, flowers (gajra)
- **Musical Instruments:** Dhol, shehnai, mridanga, tabla, dholak, kansallem, tasso, chowgudo, and tambura
- **Songs:**
 - The dance is typically accompanied by songs sung in Konkani or Marathi.
 - These songs usually revolve around religious or social themes.
 - The traditional songs performed during Dhalo focus on Krishna's romance, the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata, but recent additions to the repertoire include Marathi and Hindi songs.
- **Rambha Performance:**
 - A performance titled 'Rambha' is presented at the conclusion of the festival.
 - The narrative of the play revolves around twenty-one Rambha sisters who wish to see their only brother.
 - The sisters' ages range from fourteen to sixty-five years old. They gather on the terrace and call out for their brother. As they call out, the brother appears on the terrace, and they are reunited.
 - This is the only male role in the Dhalo dance form, known as 'Bandhav', and no other man can take part in it.

- **Fact:**
 - On festive occasions, it was customary for individuals to embellish their residences and places of worship with rangoli designs.
 - Dancing was prohibited for widows and husbands (male partners).
 - During the rituals and dancing, moong food, rice, and jaggery were prepared and offered to the attendees.
- **In Pop Culture:** Dhalo songs by singer Divya Nayak are very popular.

Folk Dance Forms of South India

Some of the popular folk dances of Kerala include the **Tullal Dance** and the **Thiruvatharakalli Dance**.

Thiruvathirakali

- **Origin:** A distinct form of dance known as Thiruvathirakali is performed exclusively in Kerala.
- **Other Names:**
 - Thiruvathirai, or Ardra Darshan, is an important festival celebrated in the Southern parts of India.
 - It is also known as Arudra Darshan and falls in the Tamil month of Margazhi.
 - Kaikottikali and Kummikali are two variations of the same art form. They are also known by these names.
- **Themes:** The practice is prevalent in various regions of South India and is aimed at attaining a state of calmness and serenity in one's married life. This mode of artistic expression is known to be a regular occurrence.
- **Occasion:** The art form of singing the praises of Shiva Parvati is typically performed by women during Onam and Thiruvathira days, which occur during the Malayalam month of Dhanumas (December–January). Such performances usually take place in Shiva temples and other similar locations.
- **Customary Practice:**
 - The day before Thiruvathira is marked by the commencement of ceremonies, which involve partaking in a special meal known as Ettangadi.
 - The ingredients of Ettangadi include sorghum, yam, kachil, berry, yam, lentil, sugar, and honey.

- This meal is consumed at night, just before the commencement of the ceremonies.
- However, it is worth noting that this particular ceremony is not observed in current times.
- **Performers:** Women who desire eternal marital happiness and bliss are the ones who perform, and occasionally, men also participate in the Rudra tandava portion.
- **Performance:**
 - Women dressed in traditional Kerala attire can be seen in groups of up to eight or ten. During the day, Dasapushkas are collected in front of the house, and on the day of Thiruvathira, women take an early bath and observe noyambu (fasting), consuming only rice foods on that day.
 - Thiruvathirakali begins after sunset. Women must stay awake throughout the night, and group dancing is an easy way to spend the night and keep the villagers entertained.
 - After midnight's Thiruvathira nakshatramudhi, the dancers sing devotional songs and bring dasa flowers, along with Ashtamangalyam, holding the lamp to the house. Later, they wear these flowers in their hair, a practice called half-breeding.
 - The flowers are lit by singing songs praising the deities of each flower, and crows are also seen.
 - Typically, girls move in a circle around an intricately decorated pookalam (flower rangoli), situated at the centre of which is a nilavilakku (traditional brass lamp).
 - During Thiruvathira, a group of girls playing the game will see a heroine (leader) who sings the first line, and the ensemble responds to the same line.
 - The group members step and clap their hands to the rhythm of the song.
 - In circular patterns around the nilavilakku (a ceremonial lamp), the dancers sway rhythmically to sinuous movements.
 - This style of dance is referred to as the 'Lasya,' which is a feminine dance.
 - The steps performed during the pooja are straightforward, making it easy for even the uninitiated to participate in the game.
 - Additionally, the performers are well-trained men who include an element of Rudra tandava (Lord Shiva's dance of destruction of the universe).

- **Styles and Variations:** Thiruvathirakali has two styles: Southern and Northern. The Southern style is more intricate and advanced compared to the Northern style, and it also has variations.

Attire:

- The attire worn by women while performing the Kaikottikali dance is very impressive and reflects the traditional Kerala style. They drape themselves in white saris, which are paired with a gold-bordered mundu and neriyathu, the two-piece traditional cloth.
- The mundu is draped around the lower part of the body, while the neriyathu is worn over a blouse. Women usually tie their hair in a bun and adorn it with a fragrant jasmine garland.



Thiruvathirakali Dancers

- **Songs:**
 - The dance is accompanied by traditional folk songs that narrate the story of Parvati's longing for Lord Shiva's love and strength.
 - The songs also draw inspiration from Krishna-Leela, Shakunthalam, Kuchelavritam, and Dhruvacharithram.
 - Additionally, devotional songs are sung as a tribute to Saraswati, Ganapati, and Krishna.
 - The festival of Onam is celebrated in Kerala to honour King Mahabali, and special songs are sung in his praise.
- **Ragas:** Hussaini, Bhairavi, and Kamboji are some of the commonly used ragas in songs.
- **Musical Instruments:** Harmonium, tabla, cymbals, thimila, edakka, etc
- **Mythological Story:**
 - Accounts of Thiruvathirakali can be traced back to the ancient festival of Thiruvathira. The festivities usually take place in the Malayalam month of Dhanu, which falls between December and January. On the full moon day, which is also the birth star of Lord Shiva, the celebrations begin.
 - According to legend, Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati tied the knot on this day, making it an important festival for marital harmony.

- In Hindu mythology, it is believed that the dance of Thiruvathirakali represents marital bliss and female energy. It is said that this energy was responsible for reviving Lord Kama Deva, who was reduced to ashes because of Lord Shiva's wrath.
- While the festival is most popularly celebrated in Kerala, it is also known as Ardra Darshanam in Tamil Nadu.
- **Facts:**
 - It is believed that performing this dance can bring about a long and happy married life and a successful marriage of one's choice.
 - The first Thiruvathira festival after a girl's marriage is known as Poothiruvathira.
 - In ancient times, this dance used to be performed for 28 days, starting from Thiruvathira day until the next month's Thiruvathira.
 - In some places, an 11-day programme takes place during the month of Dhanu.
 - The graceful movements of the devotee in this dance show their deep reverence for the Almighty.
 - This dance form is performed during the annual Utsav festival at the Sri Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu.
 - According to historical evidence and stone inscriptions, this dance form is said to have originated over 1500 years ago.
 - During the festival, the idols of Lord Shiva, as Nataraja (known as Adalvalla in Tamil), and his consort Parvati, or Shivagamni, are taken in a large procession outside the temple.
 - The stories depicted in Kaikottikali are inspired by Kathakali, a profound dance form of Kerala. The Raga Chaya aspect of Kaikottikali is derived from Kathakali.
 - This dance form is reminiscent of the primordial fire dance performed by prehistoric people around the fire, moving in a circle.
- **In Pop Culture:**
 - Padma Shree Leela Omchery is among the most famous composers associated with the art form.
 - The dance form made recent history when a group of 2639 women performed the dance in Mumbai on 9 November 2012, which was recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records as the largest Kaikottakali dance ever performed.

Tamil Nadu

Folk dances in Tamil Nadu are rich in variety, including **Karakattam, Kavadi Aattam, Devarattam, Kolattam, MayilAttam, Ottan Koothu, Poikkal KuthiraiAattam, Puliyyattam, Shattam Dance, and Koothu**. These dances play a vital role in representing the cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu and provide a unique insight into the artistic and cultural traditions of the region.

Kummi

- **Origin:** The Kummi dance is an ancient and significant form of village dance from the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.
- **Etymology:** The origin of the term *Kummi* is believed to come from the word *Komma*, which refers to performing a dance while clapping one's hands to keep time.
- **Themes:** This dance portrays the daily routines of Tamil Nadu's rural population.
- **Occasion:**
 - The Kummi dance is traditionally performed on special occasions, like the Pongal festival, when the harvest season begins.
 - Additionally, it is also showcased during personal events such as weddings, childbirths, and the Manjal Neeratu Vizhaa ceremony, which celebrates a young girl's attainment of puberty.
- **Performers:** This dance is typically performed by women, but in some versions, men also participate.
- **Performance:**
 - A group of Tamil women typically perform Kummi dance in a circular formation. However, this folk dance takes on various forms.
 - Some places have a simple version with rhythmic clapping, while in other places, the dancers imitate different harvesting activities.
 - The women stand in a circle and perform the dance, clapping their hands in rhythm.
 - As other women join, they too begin to sing and dance.
 - The dance steps are repetitive, with the group holding hands, moving forward, bending down, and clapping their hands.
 - One woman leads the singing with a favourite song, while the others join in the dance.

- Each performer takes a turn singing a new line, and the dance ends when everyone gets tired.
- Kummi dance places great importance on facial expressions.
- In some local variations, men also participate with the women.
- In this type of dance, the men form a circle with sticks in their hands, while the women stand inside in a smaller ring.
- The beauty of this dance form lies in the synchronization between the clapping of the women's hands and the beating of the men's sticks.
- The dance is usually performed on the ground and decorated with banana leaves.
- **Attire:**
 - There is no specific dress code for the Kummi dance, which means there are various costume options available.
 - Typically, young girls wear pavadai chattai, while teenagers wear pavadai dhavani, and adult women wear saris.
 - Men usually wear their typical white loincloth along with a kurta or a shirt.
- **Unique Feature:** The dance performance stands out for the absence of any accompanying music. This is a unique element of the performance.
- **Musical Instrument:**
 - The act of performing this dance dates to a time before instruments were even invented, which means that there are no particular instruments associated with it.
 - Instead, all that is required to inspire people to move their feet is the sound of clapping hands and the beating of sticks, which is accompanied by the sweet and melodious singing of women.
- **Songs:**
 - The performance of the Kummi dance is accompanied by singing the Kummi songs.
 - Different variations of Kummi dance are available to learn and perform, such as Ponthatti Kummi, Deepa Kummi, Kulavai Kummi, Kadir Kummi, Mulaipari Kummi, and more.
- **Art of Caves:**
 - Kummi is a type of Koothu or dance where a large group of people come together and perform.

- It's a dance form that involves forming a chorus, with people swaying in a circle or standing on either side, clapping their hands to the music while gracefully waving their legs, hips, and heads, and bending and straightening up together.
- Kummi is widely popular in the rural areas of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- According to legend, Kummi originated from the art of caves.
- **Fact:**
 - The Kummi dance originated at a time when there were no musical instruments available for use.
 - Numerous poets, including Subramania Bharathiyar, have supported the growth of this dance form, with Kummi Paatu being one of Bharathiyar's contributions.
 - Kolattam and Pinnal Kolattam are two dance styles that are like Kummi.
 - Additionally, the Tamils of Sri Lanka also participate in this dance.
 - Kummi songs have become a popular component of modern-day Kothiyottam festivities.

Andhra Pradesh

Some of the well-known folk dances of Andhra Pradesh include **Vilasini Natyam, Andhra Natyam, Bhamakalpam, Veeranatyam, Dappu, Tappeta Gullu, Lambadi, Dhimsa, Kolattam, and Butta Bommalu.**

Veera Natyam

- **Origin:** An ancient dance form of Andhra Pradesh is known as Veera Natyam, which is also referred to as the Dance of the Brave.
- **Etymology:** The meaning of *Veera* is brave, while *Natyam* means dance. Therefore, *Veera Natyam* stands for the dance of the brave.
- **Themes:** The performances revolve around Daksha yagna, a ritual where a fire is ignited and the dancers' bodies are pierced with tridents and spears.
- **Involved Community:** Veeramusti community
- **Occasions:**
 - Skilful techniques and dexterous hand movements are involved in Veera Natyam, a traditional dance form that is performed in every Shiva temple in Andhra Pradesh.

- Nowadays, Veera Natyam is not limited to religious events but is also performed on various occasions, such as marriage functions, vow fulfilment ceremonies, cultural functions, religious processions, etc.
- **Performers:** Men
- **Performance:**
 - This dance, dedicated to Lord Shiva, is an intense display of anger and embodies fierce postures.
 - The beauty of this dance lies in the precision of the hand movements and footwork, which have been passed down through generations and perfected through devotion to Lord Shiva.
 - Every step of Veera Natyam tells a story of courage and heroism, and each one holds great spiritual significance.
 - **First Stage:**
 - During the first stage of the dance, the dancers make their appearance on stage while holding a plate called “Veera Bhadra Pellam”.
 - This plate bears a camphor fire and is carried from the palms to the elbows.
 - Meanwhile, a priest in the background chants mantras.
 - The dance goes on to the tune set by a variety of percussion instruments until the fire on the plate is extinguished.
 - This stage also includes the recital of the ‘Khadgalu’, where a pujari wields a long sword, representing Veera Bhadra.
 - **Second Stage:**
 - In the second stage, the performers hold a long-consecrated pole that is marked with Vibhuti, or sacred ash, representing the ‘Dhwaja Sthamba’ of the Lord.
 - Bells are tied to the top of the pole.
 - **Third Stage:**
 - The third stage of the dance involves the performers using spears and tridents, which are pierced into their hands, ankles, and tongues.
 - This stage is called ‘Narasam’.
 - The performance concludes with a ‘Mangala Aarti’ in the name of Lord Shiva.
 - The performers use flaming tridents for this final act.

- Veeranam is the main instrument in the performance.
- Veeranam is much more than just a dance. It is an expression of the performers' extreme devotion and bravery.
- Furthermore, it forms a unique connection between art, tradition, and spirituality.
- **Other Names:** Veerangam, Veerabhadra Nrityam, or Veerbhadra Natyam
- **Attire:**
 - The knee-length dhotis worn by the dancers are both attractive and colourful.
 - To secure the dhotis in place, the dancers also use waist sashes, also known as waistbands.
 - The dancers adorn their bodies with Vibhuti, a sacred ash.
 - In addition, they tie ghungroos, a type of musical anklet, to their feet.
 - The jewellery worn by the dancers is both traditional and enchanting, as well as exquisite.
 - The colours of the clothes worn by the dancers represent rage, anger, and passion.
 - These colours also symbolize fire, which is the most fearsome element in the world.
- **Songs:** Mantras or hymns
- **Musical Instruments:** The 'Veeranam' (war drum) is a significant percussion instrument utilized in this dance style. Thambura, Soolam, Dolu, Thasha, and Veeranam are among the other instruments used.
- **Mythological Story:**
 - As mentioned in Hindu Mythology.
 - Daksha, who was the father of Goddess Sati, arranged a Yagya once.
 - All were invited except for Lord Shiva. Sati, who wished to meet her childhood friends, attended the event without her husband.
 - However, she was not welcomed warmly at her father's place. An argument ensued between Daksha and Sati eventually. When she could no longer bear the insult towards her husband, she self-immolated using the Agni within her, called Yogagani.
 - The story behind Veera Natyam is based on her sacrifice.

- Shiva loved Sati dearly and was deeply saddened by her demise. He was so heartbroken that he cut a lock of his hair, which gave birth to two incarnations—Veerbhadrha and Bhadrakali.
- These incarnations brought tremendous power to the world, which was too intense to bear.
- The destruction and grief that followed these incarnations were immense.
- **Note:** Knowing this tale is crucial before trying to understand Veera Natyam, as understanding Shiva's emotions after Sati's death is of utmost importance. Dancers aim to bring these emotions to the stage when they perform Veera Natyam.
- **Facts:**
 - The dance form called Veera Natyam has its origins in Shaivite temples, where it was performed as a ritual in honour of Lord Shiva.
 - This is a very devotional dance that derives its name from Veerabhadrha, the form of Lord Shiva that is worshipped during the performance.
 - Veerbhadrha is one of the oldest divine incarnations on earth.
 - The folk-art form of Veera Natyam is very culturally and religiously significant and is popular in the East and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh, especially in Khammam, Kurnool, Anantapur, and Warangal regions.
 - The Veeramusti community of Andhra Pradesh is believed to be the descendants of cohorts of Lord Veerabhadrha.
 - The birthplace of Veerbhadrha is Draksharamam (Daksha vatika), which is in the East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh.
 - The dance is also known as the Pralayam, or the dance of destruction.

Telangana

Telangana's folk dances, such as **Gussadi, Lambadi, Perini Sivatandavam, and Dappu**, have become increasingly popular among tourists from around the world. It is a cultural wonderland that immerses you in its rich history, artistry, and vibrant energy.

Perini Sivatandavam

- **Origin:** An ancient dance form from Telangana, is known as Perini Shivathandavam or Perini Thandavam.
- **Etymology:** 'Perini' is derived from the Sanskrit word '*Prerana*', which translates to 'encouragement' or 'motivation'.

- **Themes:** Honouring Lord Shiva, the Hindu deity, this ritual was traditionally conducted before soldiers went to battle in ancient times. The belief is that it was performed as a tribute to Lord Shiva.
- **Occasions:**
 - Male performers used to showcase their dancing skills in the King's palace and temples prior to the soldiers departing for war.
 - Lord Shiva is widely regarded as the ultimate dancer, and Perini aims to help the performer attain a higher level of consciousness like that of Shiva.
- **Sects:**
 - The warriors and sects of Veeras, Maheshulu, Pasupathi's, and Mylarudevulu used to perform a dance form known as eka Patra.
 - This dance was aimed at invoking the spirit of Lord Siva within themselves, seeking his blessings for courage, strength, and a successful return from the battlefield.
- **Performers:** Males; however, in ancient times, females also participated in this dance.
- **Performance:**
 - The dance performed before the idol of Lord Shiva by warriors before leaving for the battlefield is called '**Dance of Warriors**'.
 - This dance was performed on special platforms in front of temples and has both spiritual and artistic significance.
 - Perini Sivatanavam is a male dance form that is believed to be the most invigorating.
 - This pure form of dance **celebrates the mystic 'Om'** and incorporates the **Vira and Raudra rasas of Lord Shiva**, whose spirits are invoked by dancers.
 - The dance mainly involves five elements, including Water, Air, Wind, Earth, and Fire.
 - The warriors performed this dance before the idol of **Lord Nataraja** as a mode of worship before leaving for the battlefield with the motto of invoking Shiva to dance through them.
 - The dance begins with **Gargara** and ends with **Shiva Panchamukha Shabda Nartanam** in praise of Lord Shiva.

- The dancers perform energetically to the rhythm of the drums and continue until they feel the power of Shiva in their bodies.
- This dance is characterized by intricate footwork, leaps, jumps, and swift spins.
- The dancers exhibit a sense of controlled energy and intense expressions, reflecting the power and dynamism of the warrior spirit.
- The movements are executed with precision and grace, often accompanied by rhythmic chanting and drumming.
- The role of mridangam is very special in Perini, as the sound of mridangam produces vibrations in our body, with each beat having a start, induces and **ebbs the vibration (Osthapathi, Parakasta, and Anthardhana)**.
- The music used in this form of dance involves the use of bells, drums, conch, and rhythmic syllables that change the entire atmosphere, helping the dancers reach a point of frenzy.
- **Repertoires:**
 - The Perini dance usually starts with Gargharam and finishes with Siva Panchamukha Shabda Nartanam, which is a dance praising Lord Siva.
 - In the Perini repertoire, Pancha Mukha Sabdam Nartanam is based on the worship of the five elements—Prithvi (Earth), Jala (Water), Thejo (Fire), Vayu (Air), and Akasha (Sky).
 - It involves less Hasthabinayam and more akasha charis, bhramaris, and karanas and expresses the mood of the five elements in a unique way.
 - This dance is usually performed at the end of the performance.
 - **Gargharam** is a dance that involves various quick movements of the anklets, consisting of six parts—**Lakhadhimi, Siriberam, Halabedem, Patnam, Patavatam, and Suripatem**, and begins with sama pada posture.
 - In the Perini's Vishamam repertoire, the dancer depicts **AkashaChari** and **BhumiCharis** on the sound of mridangam.
 - **Vishamam** starts with Akashachari and ends with **teermanam**, which is performed five times in Perini instead of the usual three.
 - **Bhavasyram** is a repertoire where postures and hand gestures are expressed in a rhythmic dance.
 - Perini has other repertoires like **Bhramana Nartanam**, which has twenty-five varieties of Bhramara, such as Dhasina, Vama, Brujanga, Lath, Chatra, and Kanda.

- **Styles:**

- There are two types of Perini—**Perini Siva Thandavam** (for men) and **Perini Lasyam** is (for women.)
- Classical dance comprises two styles:
 - **Marga Style:** which is more inclined towards spirituality.
 - **Desi Style:** which is more engaging and dramatic.
- Perini is officially categorized under the Desi style.

- **Attire:**

- Traditional clothing such as vibrant dhotis, angavastrams (shawls), various ornaments such as Salangai (anklets), and turmeric paste.
- According to Jayappa Senani's book '**Nritta Ratnavali**', a Perini dancer should wear ornaments made of seashells or gold.
- The dancer is expected to apply ash all over their body, set their hair upright and tied, and hold a dummy cobra or wand in one hand and a 'chamaram' in the other hand.

- **Music:**

- The Perini Sivatanavam music typically features percussion instruments such as the dolu (a large cylindrical drum), tasha (a pair of kettle drums), and tambura (a stringed instrument).
- The tambura's melodies and the drums' beats combine to create an energetic and captivating atmosphere.
- In Perini, the mridangam plays a unique and important role.
- With every beat, the sound of the mridangam induces vibrations in our body, which start, intensify, and then diminish (known as Osthapathi, Parakasta, and Anthardhana).
- The usage of mridangam in Perini is more like that in **Drupada Sangeetham**, evoking a majestic feeling of Veera rasa, unlike its usage as an accompaniment to Carnatic music.

- **Musical Instruments:** Mukhaveena, mridangam, nadaswaram, talas, sruthi, bells, drums, dolu, tasha, tambura, and conch.

- **Angas:**

- Kala Krishna, a renowned exponent of Perini, has identified five components of the dance form—Ghargaram (footwork), Vishamam (acrobatics), Bhavashrayam

(depiction of nature, animals, and demons), Kaivaram (eulogizing kings and gods), and Geetam (music).

- However, Nataraja Ramakrishna chose to reconstruct only two of the components, i.e., the Ghargaram and Vishamam portions.

- **Literatures Mentioning:**

- The Perini dance form has been mentioned in Sanskrit and Telugu literature, such as:
- Panditha Raya Charitra by Palkuri Somana.
- Bharatham by Tikkana
- Uthara Hari Vamsham by Nachanna Somanatha
- Bhimeswara Puranam—Desi Nrityas—by Srinatha Kavi.
- Valmiki Chaitra & Raghunayaka Abhyudhayam by Ragunatha Nayaka
- Rajagopala Vilasam by Chengala Kavi
- Palnathi's Veera Charita
- Nandikesvara's Abhinaya Darpana.
- **Note:** While Palkuri Somana's book mentions Perini dance as a male-only domain, other literature supports the idea that even female dancers, particularly the Raja Narthakis, performed this dance form.

- **History: Perini During Kakaktiya Regime**

- Perini Sivatanavam is an extremely energizing and stimulating dance form.
- It is believed that the dancers, who were warriors, performed this dance as a mode of worship before heading to the battlefield.
- The dance was performed in front of the idol of Lord Nataraja with the intention of invoking Lord Siva to dance through them.
- The dance was so powerful that it gave the dancers a spiritual awakening, and they felt the power of Lord Siva at a physical level.
- This dance form was particularly important during times of frequent invasion threats, when courage was essential.
- The Perini dance was part of the daily ritual, and even the Saiva cult gained momentum during this period.

- The dance was performed six times a day in a ritualistic manner, with each performance dedicated to Lord Siva as Sivaparana during peacetime and as Rudraparana to inspire warriors to go to war.
- **Facts:**
 - Perini is a type of art that belongs to the **Natya melam tradition**.
 - The available historical evidence suggests that Perini was at its peak during the time of Kakatiya's, who spread more of Veera Saivam.
 - The Kakatiya's established their dynasty in Warangal and ruled for nearly two centuries.
 - The rulers of Kakatiya, such as Ganapathi Deva, Pratapa Rudra Deva of Warangal, and Rani Rudrama Devi, who were all admirers of Lord Shiva, played a significant role in promoting the warrior dance form.
 - Ganapati Deva's commander of the elephant corps, Jayana Nayak, is said to have performed the dance before his army to boost morale. It, therefore, became a natural method to stimulate the warrior spirit.
 - However, the art disappeared from the scene after the fall of Kakatiya's due to a lack of patronage.
 - The invocation music in this dance was called 'Melaveempu' or 'Melapraphi'.
 - Dr Nataraja Ramakrishna revived the art form by studying old manuscripts and sculptures at Ramappa Temple. He has given more importance to the tradition followed while reinventing the art form rather than the text in totality.
 - He has revitalized primarily the male aspect of Perini dance form, as opposed to the evidence seen in the texts and sculptors, wherein both genders are portrayed as having performed Perini dance.
 - The sculptures near Garbha Grihi (Sanctum Sanctorum) of the 13th-century **Ramappa Temple** at Warangal provide evidence of this dance.
 - Jayapa Senapati's **Nritta Ratnavali**, a dance treatise written in the courts of Ganapathi Deva (1199—1261 AD), and the sculptural representation on the thousand-pillared temples and shrines at Palampet and Ghanapur in Warangal district provide crucial insights into a powerful and vigorous masculine dance style that was performed to inspire warriors before going to the battlefield.
 - According to historians, Perini Shivatandavam is like the ferocious dance form practiced by the aborigines of New Zealand and America.

- Most of the dancers who performed this art form were from the Veer Saiva cult. The art form is approximately 800 years old.
- The female variant of Perini Shivatandavam, known as Perini Lasyam, is performed with graceful yet vibrant movements.
- While Jayapasena conceptualized nritta-based dance and called it 'Perini'.
- Abhinaya Darpan defines nritta as bodily movements without evoking Rasa Bhava.
- Jayapa Sena also authored a Sanskrit treatise, Nriya Ratnavali, which is an authoritative text on Indian dance.
- Thandava itself is the name of the dance of destruction performed at the end of each Kalpa.
- Another feature of Perini is **Sruna Nartanam**, which depicts Lord Siva dancing for Parvati set against a twilight backdrop.
- **In Pop Culture:** Vedantam Sastri, a renowned teacher, had a student named Vempati Chinna Satyam, who became an accomplished dancer and received the title of Andhra Ratna. One of his notable contributions was choreographing the Thandava dance for NTR in the movie *Narthanasala* in 1963.

