

**For Civil Services  
UPSC**



# **Art & Culture**

**Topic : Dances (नृत्य)**

**Dances Forms in India**

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**Helpsys: The Helping Hands**



- Dance is a form of art, where the body is used as a medium of communication.
- The dance heritage of India is at least 5000 years old.
- The wall paintings of Ajanta and Ellora, the sculptures of Khajuraho stand ample evidence for popularity of Indian dances from ancient times.
- Nataraja, the dancing Lord Shiva, is the supreme manifestation of Indian dance.

**Classical Dances**

**Folk Dances**

**Tribal Dances**



## Classical Dances

- Bharatnatyam - Tamil Nadu
- Kathak - Uttar Pradesh
- Kathakali - Kerala
- Kuchipudi- Andhra Pradesh
- Manipuri - Manipur
- Mohiniattam - Kerala
- Odissi - Orissa
- Sattriya - Assam





## Classical Dances

### 1. Bharatanatyam

- Bhava (expression), Raga (music), Tala (rhythm) and Natya (classical theater).
- It originates in South India.
- It consists of multiple items:
- Nritta- pure dance movements
- Abhinaya- dramatic art of storytelling
- Nritya- combination of nritta & abhinaya
- Performed on Carnatic music.
- Costumes are made of silk saris with gold embroidery and have a lot of pleats.
- Necklaces, Bangles and head ornaments are used as jewelry.
- Bells mounted on woven pads are worn on the feet.



## Classical Dances

### 2. Kathak

Name is derived from Katha (story) and Katthaka (who tells stories). It originates from North India.

There are three main gharanas or schools:

- I. Lucknow,
- II. Jaipur
- III. Benares

Dance progresses from slow to fast pieces. Has Footwork & spins and includes abhinaya-expression.

Performed on Hindusthani music provided by Tabla, Sitar, Santoor.

#### **Costume includes**

- I. Ghungroos or bells on the ankles
- II. Female- lehenga choli or chudidaar kameez
- III. Male- bare chest and dhoti or kurta churidar





## Classical Dances

### 3. Kathakali

- ❖ It originates from Kerala state.
- ❖ Attractive make-up of characters and elaborate costumes are used.
- ❖ **Performance is a combination of five elements:**
  - \* *Natyam (expression),*
  - \* *Nritham (dance),*
  - \* *Nrithyam (enactment),*
  - \* *Geetham (vocal) and*
  - \* *Vadyam (instruments)*
- ❖ Carnatic music is used with Manipravalam as language of songs.
- ❖ **Elaborate makeup is used:**
  - Green face color- noble characters (Pacha)*
  - Green with red streaks- characters with evil streaks*
  - Red face color- excessively evil characters*
  - Women have yellow face color*
- ❖ Costumes are elaborate and differ according to character.



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## Classical Dances

### 4. Kuchipudi

- It originates from Andhra Pradesh.
- It shares many common elements with Bharatanatyam.
- In Tarangam (a unique kuchipudi dance)- dancer dances on plate with diyas in the hands and vessel of water on the head.
- Carnatic music is used.
- Costumes are similar to Bharatanatyam.
- Costume also include 'Katcham' (long fold) at the back of the costume.
- Female characters wear ornaments and jewelry.



## 5. Manipuri

- It originates from Manipur state.
- **Few features in its performance are:**
  - A. Movements are subtle and aim at devotion and grace
  - B. Rounded movements without jerks and sharp lines
  - C. Dancers feet never strike the ground hard
- Music is provided by a singer, 'Pung' (drum), cymbals and flute.
- **Costume includes:**
  - Female- dress called patloi and lehenga called kumin.
  - Transparent odni is worn on the head and covers the face.
  - Male- usually saffron dress depicting Lord Krishna.
- Dancers do not wear ankle bells in this dance form.







## 6. Mohiniattam

- Its name is derived from:  
Mohini- temptress and  
Attam- dance
- It's a graceful dance performed only by women.
- It has influences from Bharatanatyam and Kathakali.
- Music includes Vocal (called chollu), Veena, flute, Maddalam & Idakka.
- It is characterized by realistic makeup and simple dressing.
- Costume includes white or cream sari with gold border and is profusely pleated.
- Mainly gold ornaments are used as jewelry.





## Classical Dances

### 7. Odissi

It originates from Orissa.

**Consists of three schools:**

- ❖ Mahari, Nartaki, Gotipua

Main features of performance are:

- ❖ Tribhangi- independent movement of head, chest and pelvis
- ❖ Chauka- basic square stance

Odissi music is used.

Costume features Sari- beautiful cloth wrapped around body in traditional style in bright shades of orange, purple, red or green.

**Jewelry includes:**

- ❖ Tikka (forehead ornament)
- ❖ Allaka (headpiece where tikka hangs)
- ❖ Ear covers in intricate shapes with jhumkis (bell shaped earrings) hanging from them
- ❖ Chains
- ❖ Two sets of bangles (thin bracelets) worn on upper arm & wrist.



## Classical Dances

### 8. Sattriya

- It originated in Assam state.
- Performances are based on mythological stories and is performed by both men and women.
- It is recognized as one of the classical dance forms of India in 2000.
- Devotional songs called borgeets are used.
- Instruments used are khols (drums), taals (cymbals) and flute.
- Costume are made of pat (type of silk).
- Ornaments are based on traditional Assamese designs.

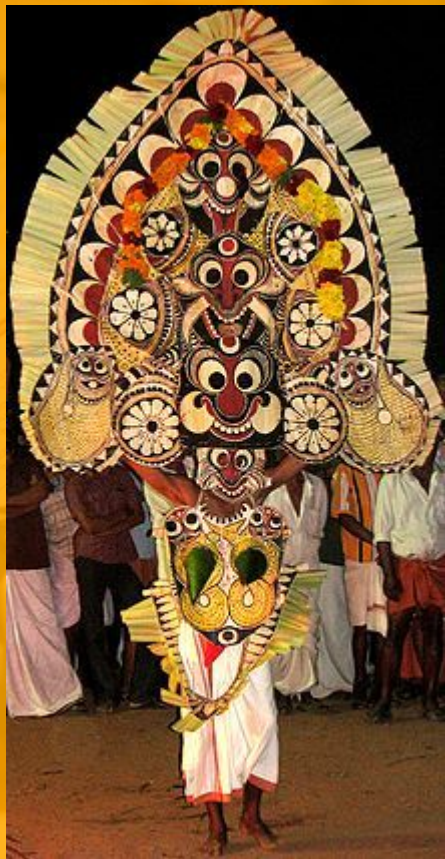


Indian culture includes a treasure of a variety of folk dances.

The diversity in culture and tradition is reflected in the variety of Indian folk dances.

1. Padayani (Kerala)
2. Kaikottikali, Kerala
3. Karakattam, Tamil Nadu
4. Kummi, Tamil Nadu
5. Yakshgana, Karnataka
6. Chhau, West Bengal
7. Dalkhai, Orissa
8. Namagen, Himachal Pradesh
9. Bhangra, Punjab
10. Ghoomer Dance
11. Bihu, Assam
12. Cheraw (Bamboo) Dance, Mizoram
13. Burra Katha Dance, Andhra Pradesh
14. Garba Dance, Gujrat
15. Dandia-Ras, Gujrat





### 1. **Padayani (Kerala)**

- ❖ One of the most colourful and enchanting dances of Southern Kerala.
- ❖ Associated with the festival of certain temples.
- ❖ These temples are formed in the districts of Alleppey, Quilon, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam districts.
- ❖ The main kolams (huge masks) presented in Padayani are Kali, Kalan , Yakshi (fairy), Pakshi (bird), etc.
- ❖ The literal meaning of Padayani is military formations or rows of army.
- ❖ The performers consist of dancers, singers and instrumentalists.





## 2. Kaikottikali, Kerala

- ❖ Also known as Thiruvathirakali.
- ❖ Dance performed by women, in order to attain everlasting marital bliss, on Thiruvathira day in the Malayalam month of Dhanu (December- January).
- ❖ The sinuous movements executed by a group of dancers around a nilavilakku, embody 'lasya' or the amorous charm and grace of the feminine.
- ❖ The dance follows a circular, pirouetting pattern accompanied by clapping of the hands and singing.



### 3. Karakattam, Tamil Nadu

- ❖ One of the most essential parts of a ritual, dedicated to Mariamma, the goddess of health and rain.
- ❖ It is performed by men, wherein they balance pots filled with uncooked rice, surrounded by a tall conical bamboo frame covered with flowers.
- ❖ Drums and long pipes form the musical instruments accompanying the dance.
- ❖ Karakattam is popular in villages during temple festivals





#### 4. Kummi, Tamil Nadu

- ❖ Kummi means to dance while clapping hands to a rhythm, accompanied by songs in popular tunes.
- ❖ Women form a circle and dance during the Maariamman and Kaanum Pongal festivals for ten consecutive days.





### 5. Yakshgana, Karnataka

- ❖ Yakshgana is a folk theatre form of Karnataka and it is an ancient art.
- ❖ The original form of Yakshgana involves the use of recitative modes of poetry, melodies of music, rhythm and dance techniques, colourful costumes and graceful make up.



## 6. Chhau, West Bengal

- ❖ Originated from the Purulia district .
- ❖ Mostly performed in the open space or ground field during the night.
- ❖ It is a mask dance performed only by the male dancers.
- ❖ The masks are made up from the clay and paper.
- ❖ It is mythological, as it is mainly based on various episodes of the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata.
- ❖ As the singer complete the invocation song, a host of drummers and musicians start beating the Dhol and the Dhamsa.





### 7. Dalkhai, Orissa

- ❖ The 'Dalkhai' is a dance performed by women of the tribes from the Sambalpur district of Orissa.
- ❖ It is quite a virile dance rendered during the time of festivals.
- ❖ The men generally play the musical instruments and the drummers often join the dance.



### 8. Namagen, Himachal Pradesh

- ❖ The autumnal hue is celebrated in September by a dance performance called Namagen.
- ❖ The most striking dance amongst these is the Gaddis.
- ❖ The costumes are largely woollen and richly studded ornaments of silver are worn by women.



### 9. Bhangra, Punjab

- ❖ One of the most popular dances of India.
- ❖ Performed during Baisakhi usually by the men in Punjab.
- ❖ It includes tricks and acrobatic feats.
- ❖ The songs include recitation of meaningless 'bolis', words, such as hoay, hoay.
- ❖ The drummer usually in the centre of the circle, is surrounded by men dressed in lungis and turbans.
- ❖ The dance performed by the women folk of Punjab is called the 'Gidha'.

In the Gidha, at a time a woman or a pair of women dance while the others clap in rhythm. The dance is performed in the festival of Teeyan to welcome the rains.





### 10. Ghoomer Dance, Rajasthan

- ❖ Famous and a community dance of women in Rajasthan.
- ❖ It is performed on various auspicious occasions like fairs & festivals.
- ❖ It is called as `Ghoomer`, from the `ghoomna` of Ghaghra i.e. the flowing of Ghaghra, a long skirt of the Rajasthani women.
- ❖ Women from any age group, may it be the young or old can participate in Ghoomer dance.
- ❖ While dancing, the dancers move in a circular direction with clockwise and anti-clockwise steps.



### 11. Bihu, Assam

- ❖ The Bihu dance is performed in the Bihu festival, celebrated for the arrival of spring in the Assamese New Year.
- ❖ The dance is performed in an open space during daytime.





## 12. Cheraw (Bamboo) Dance, Mizoram

- ❖ The most popular and colourful dance of the Mizos.
- ❖ Long pair of horizontal bamboo staves are tapped open and close in rhythmic beats by people sitting face to face on the ground.
- ❖ Because bamboos are used for the dance, people sometimes call it the BAMBOO DANCE.



### 13. Burra Katha Dance, Andhra Pradesh

- ❖ Burra' is a special instrument used by two performers who dance encourage the main story teller by exclamation and questions.
- ❖ Demands oratory as well as dancing skills on the part of the performers.
- ❖ Three people to enact the story telling.
- ❖ Main artiste is dressed in a colourful attire with a garland round his neck and a tambura slung across his shoulder, the other two artistes dressed similarly question the narration to alert a sleepy audience.
- ❖ The two accompanying artistes have a drum and hand taal.
- ❖ The theme of the story could be anything that has happened or is happening.



#### 14. Garba Dance, Gujrat

- ❖ This dance form has connection with Shakti-Puja.
- ❖ It is played in a circular form performed by ladies on the nine nights of Navaratri festival, Sharad Purnima, Vasant Panchami, Holi etc.
- ❖ The word Garba is derived from the word `Garbha Deep` (a lamp inside a perforated earthen pot).
- ❖ In this folk dance, the women place the pot known as Garba with the lamp on their heads and move in circular direction, singing and clap at the same time.



### 15. Dandia-Ras, Gujrat

- ❖ Also known as the `stick` dance.
- ❖ This dance is also a feature of most welcomed festival, Navratri.
- ❖ The Ras is simple and is generally performed by a group of young people who move in typical style in measured steps around a circle, accompanied by a singing chorus and a host of musical instruments like the dhol, cymbals, zanz and shehnai.





## Tribal Dances



- ❖ Performed by tribal people/adivasi, who possess a culture, distinct from the pan Indian population.
- ❖ Completely different from Indian folk dances.
- ❖ Each tribe possesses its own distinguishable dance traditions interwoven with the life of the people who dance it.

1. **Kaadar Nritham**
2. **Elalakkaradi**
3. **Kaanikkar Nritham**
4. **Paravalli Kali**
5. **Man Kali**
6. **Paniyar Kali**
7. **THAVALA KALI**
8. **EDAYA NRITHAM**





## Tribal Dances

### 1. Kaadar Nritham

- ❖ Only women take part.
- ❖ Primitive dance of Kaadar tribes of the forest of Kochi area.
- ❖ The performers arrange themselves in a semicircle. They hold the tip of their cloths in their hands to the level of the waist and wave it to various rhythms of the dance.
- ❖ It is a very simple but elegant tribal dance in slow steps.

### 2. Elelakkaradi

- ❖ A highly heroic group – dance.
- ❖ Almost the whole community of men, women and children participate.
- ❖ Very common with the tribal called Irular of Attappadi in Palakkad district.
- ❖ The dance brings out the fight of the people against the wild bears which often attack their tribal hamlets.
- ❖ Dancers move out in rhythmic steps, with vociferous shouts and war cries and keep time to the beatings of the primitive drums.





## Tribal Dances

### 3. Kaanikkar Nritham

- ❖ Group dance of the kanikkar tribes from Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Performed as a ritual offering.
- ❖ The steps of the dancers perfectly synchronize with the waving of the hands and beating of drums.

### 4. Paravalli Kali

- ❖ Mixed dance of the aboriginals of dense forest of Travancore area.
- ❖ Both men and women participate.
- ❖ They dance holding arms together, or shoulder to shoulder, linked in a backlock posture.
- ❖ The men and women change their positions with amazing speed.
- ❖ The entire group of dancer sings songs and move with swift rhythm in a circle.
- ❖ The linked arms swing to the rhythm in a fascinating wavelike movement.





## Tribal Dances

### 5. Man Kali

❖ It is mainly of two kinds

- 1) The Ramayana episode in which Sita is being enchanted by Maricha in the guise of a golden deer is enacted in graceful movements.
- 2) One man takes the role of a deer while another that of a hunter. The deer hopes about and jumps around. The hunter follows in close steps and his movements and gestures suggest drawing the bow, aiming it, hurling the spear, brandishing some wooden log, etc.

The whole dance is performed to the rhythm of wild percussion instruments.

### 6. Paniyar Kali

- ❖ Performed by tribal in hilly forests of Wayand district.
- ❖ Highly masculine and only men participate.
- ❖ Around eight or ten dancers stand in a circle with hands linked together.
- ❖ They have around with rhythmic flexions of the body and while moving stamp the ground in perfect rhythm to the loud beat of the primitive percussion instruments called Karu, Para, Udukku, etc.
- ❖ As the dance gathers momentum the circle is swiftly expanded and contracted and the dancers utter peculiar cries which gradually run up to a high pitch.





## Tribal Dances

### 7. THAVALA KALI

- ❖ Boys jump one above the other in succession, imitating the leaps of the frog.

### 8. EDAYA NRITHAM

- ❖ Dance of the tribal shepherds.
- ❖ Both men and women participate.
- ❖ One of the shepherds sing. This is repeated in chorus by all the rest.
- ❖ As the singing is going in, one of them imitate the special sounds of shepherds driving their sheep.
- ❖ Someone of the group crying successively to imitate the wild animals that try to attack the sheep and also the thief who tries to robe them while the other members of the group very adeptly bring out the terror on the faces of the lamps and their mournful walings.







# Thank You !

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