



Kolkali

Kolkali is one of the most popular folk dance of Kerala. This dance is 200 years old. The name Kolkali means dance with sticks. A mixed dance in which both men and women participate.

The dancers move in a circle striking small sticks and keeping rhythm with special steps according to the music. The circle expands and contracts as the dance proceeds. The accompanying music gradually rises in

pitch and the dance reaches its climax.

Sometimes it is performed on a specially constructed wooden stage. Thus the name Thattinmelkali. Musical instruments used are Chenda, Elathalam, Mathalam and Chengala. Usually it is presented once in a year after paddy harvest during the month of April. Farmers and all villagers celebrate the festival together without any caste and creed.



Thiruvathirakali

Thiruvathirakali also known as Kaikottikali is a very popular, graceful and symmetric group dance of the women folk of Kerala, performed during festive seasons like Onam and Thiruvathira. It is a simple and gentle dance. Typically dressed in Kerala style, the women move in a circle singing and clapping hands. Thiruvathira songs are well reputed for their literary flourish.



Oppana

This is a Bridal Dance performed by Muslim Girls of North Kerala and in Lakshadweep. There are separate dances for the bride and bridegroom. Brides and Grooms are mentally prepared for marriage and the nuptial night by their close friends through a sequence of dance and music. This is an occasion of great celebration and merriment and all arrive attired in gorgeous costumes.

Theyyam



Theyyam, otherwise known as Kaliyattom, is an ancient socio-religious ceremony performed in Kerala since very remote times. As the word Kaliyattom denotes, this is a sacred dance performance for goddess Kali. Kaliyattom is sometimes called Therayattom because every Thera or village was duly bound to perform it. These names show that Kaliyattoms were special Festivals of religious and social importance.

In ancient times, every village or 'Thera' in Kerala had its own common shrine called 'Kavu' and it was imperative to have Kaliyattom performed in front of it.

As the word Kali has also the meaning of "Safety" in Malayalam, Kaliyattom may have the significance of a sacred dance for social or family safety.

Mohiniattam



Mohiniyattam is a classical dance form of Kerala. A seductive dance of women, Mohiniyattam is mainly of the lasya style, performed strictly to the scriptures of Natya Sastra. It is seductive dance performed by women, sensuous in its appeal. In technique lies somewhere between Kathakali and Bharatanatyam. Combining the formal grace and elegance of Bharatanatyam, with the earthy vigour and dynamism of Kathakali, the petalled Nrita hands of the one with wide stance of the other, the delicate expressions of the

one with the stylized eye movements of the other, it co-ordinates the instinct with charm, subtle allure and seductive appeal. In the rendering of this style there is enchantment, grace, delicacy and passion. The dancer presents the theme by slow and graceful movements; facial expressions and gestures. The music is of classical, Carnatic style with a slight touch of traditional sopana music.

Kalaripayattu



The word Kalari has been derived from the Sanskrit Khaloorke, a military training ground. The Kalari payattu may be reckoned as part of Kerala's contribution towards heritage. It was earlier a hereditary institution vested in particular families. Bhagavathi is worshipped in the institution of Kalari as the guardian deity presiding over every Kalari. The training which the Kalari imparts, aim at suppleness of the body, agility of limbs, qualities which are essential in any trial of strength. The efforts of a few surviving

gurus had led to a remarkable revival of the Kalari.

Margam Kali



Kerala is a land of diverse culture of people from varied ethnic backgrounds and rich history. There are Hindus, Muslims, Christians and people belonging to other religions that live in perfect harmony in this state. Each group of people have their own distinct culture and traditions, which gives them their distinct identity. They express their distinctness through their culture, festivals, rituals, customs and other such practices. They not only take pride in the culture and tradition and observe it with great sense of dignity, but they are more than happy to share it with others. This friendly and welcoming nature of theirs bring tourists from all over the world to be part of their social life. Among the population of Kerala, the Christians are a dominant group who have a deep connection with the place. They form a very important part of the fabric of social life and contribute to the richness of its culture through various customs and rituals of theirs. One such aspect of their culture is **Margam Kali**, an ancient form of group dance performed mainly by the Saint Thomas Christians or Syrian Christians of Kerala.

There are various theories surrounding the origination of this form of dance. Some says it originated from the Jewish traditional wedding songs whereas some say it came from the Sangam Kali which is a dance performance of the Brahmins, or Yathra Kali of the Nambhutri Brahmins or the early forms of Thiruvathira Kali. Whatever the theory may be, today it forms a very important custom of the Syrian Christians and they perform it with great pride and grandeur. In this form of folk dance, there are twelve dancers who participate and they dance around a traditional lamp. These twelve dancers represent the twelve apostles of Christ while the lamp represents the Christ himself. Hence this dance has religious connections as well. The dancers wear the white dhoti, which is the traditional attire of the Keralites and put a peacock feather in the turban. The word 'Margam' means path, way, religion or creed. Some believe that this dance form was used to spread Christianity in Kerala in the olden days.

This dance is performed in a song that is sung orally by the leader of the group called 'Asan'. There aren't any instruments used and is sung in a language that incorporates both old Tamil and Malayalam. The text of the song narrates the various activities of St. Thomas in that region and his martyrdom. The song is a very important part of the dance and plays a major role in the completion of the act. Along with the song and dance, the performance also includes display of martial arts. Today this performance has become a very important part of the weddings and other occasions of the Syrian Christians in Kerala. Traditionally it was only performed by men, however these days it is performed by both men and women and even children. It displays the richness of the culture of the Syrian Christians of Kerala.

DAPPU KALI

A group-dance of the Moplahs of Malabar. The performers form two rows of ten or twenty. They beat on the dappu which each dancer holds in his left hand and dance with exquisitely symmetrical swayings of the body and astonishing co-ordination of rhythm steps, flexion of body and timing of dappu.

Dollukunitha



This dance, as a major form of art, occupies the pride of place among folk dances. It provides both spectacular variety and complexity of skills in the process of demonstration. Woven around the presiding deity of Beereswara, chiefly worshipped by the shepherd clan, who comes under the caste of Kurubas, also called Halumathasthas, it presents both entertainment and spiritual edification.

There are quite a few legends very popular about Beereswara, a variation of Lord Siva, whose manifestation in this manner is a sacramental devotion as far as the Kurubas are concerned. It is necessary, at least, that one version of the legend is examined here for its ritualistic practice and sacred convention. In all temples of Beereswara, it is a religious practice that the major instrument Dollu be hung in the premises of the temple by means of a thick thread tied up to the hooks fixed in the ceiling. Every time pooja is offered to

Beereswara, the custom demands that there should be an instantaneous beating of the Dollu as an accompanying act of worship.

As traditional art provides robust entertainment, Dollu dance has gone on uninterruptedly generation after generation with renewed vigour and raciness of performance. Hardly any religious performance of a ritualistic ceremony or any village festival can ever take place without this dance, especially in North Karnataka. On all these occasions, the Dollu dance becomes the very centre of activity around which other important things get built up. Since this dance demands strength, muscle power and the spirit of endurance, only well-built sturdy persons of enough stamina alone can take to it.

Usually, the troupe consists of about a dozen artistes as dancing partners. Against the background we have tala, tappadi, trumpets, gong and flute, raised to a high-pitched tenor. These instruments are perforce used to reinforce the rich vibrations of Dollu. A miniature model of Dollu, easy to carry in hand, and handle it for beating – is often employed while singing a distinct class of songs-Dollu Songs/Drum Songs. Because there is beating of Dollu here by the fingers.

The songs that come under this category are referred to as 'kaipattu' – songs that just beat (no stick is involved but the incessant play of the hands all the time-hence called Kaipattu). Stressing the importance of Revanasiddeswara, they sing in his glory, giving an altogether different ring of intonation as distinguishable from the rest of other kinds of folk singers. Their ancestral pride is something, unconditional when they take to singing, tracing the origin of their genealogy, evolution and development over the ages. This expressive literature in its oral tradition goes by the legend called 'Halumatha (Kuruba) Purana'.

Lambadi



Lambadis are also called Banjar. They are found mostly in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhyapradesh, and Maharashtra. The women wear a very colorful dress and lot of ornaments. The clothes they wear are decorated with pieces of mirror and cowri. They wear ivory bangles and ornaments which are innumerable. The dance performed by the Lambadi is not vigorous. But when the dance is to the beat of drums, it gains momentum. The language in which the songs are sung is of their own. They have very meaningful folk songs among them.

Mathuri



This folk dance is generally performed by the backward class people of Umji and Indravelli forest areas of Utnoor Taluk of Adilabad District in Andhra Pradesh. They dance hours together on Krishnastami in the month of Sravana during night times. The compositions are based on Ramayana. This dance is performed by Men and Women separately. The women will dance in slow rhythmic movements and the men dance in fast rhythmic movements. They wear colorful dresses, hand-kerchiefs and small sticks in hands. The instruments used for the dance are 'Nagaras'.

Bihu



The Bihu dance is a folk dance from the Indian state of Assam related to the festival of Bihu. This joyous dance is performed by both young men and women, and is characterized by brisk dance steps, rapid hand movement, and a rhythmic swaying of the hips in order to represent youthful passion. Dancers wear traditionally colorful Assamese clothing.

The most important and colourful of the three Bihu festival is the Spring festival "Bohag Bihu" or Rangali Bihu celebrated in the middle of April.

Songs sung in Bihu are woven around themes of love and often carry erotic overtones. People adorn traditional attires like Dhoti, Gamocho and Chadar, Mekhala.

Bihu dances performed by young boys and girls characterised by brisk stepping, flinging and flipping of hands and swaying of hips represents youthful passion, reproductive urge and 'Joie-de-vivre'.

In harvest period most of these folk dances are performed. "Khamba Lim" is one such folk dance and is performed by two groups of men and women who stand in two rows. The sense of fun and frolic of the Nagas is seen in many of their dances.

The characteristic feature of all Naga dancing is the use of the human figure in an erect posture with many movements of the legs and comparatively little use of the torso, and the shoulders.

Bordoishikhla Dance from Assam (NEZCC)



The Bodos like the other communities of Assam have nurtured their own distinctive music and dance forms. They have contributed towards upholding the cultural traditions of Assam to a large measure. Bordoishikhla, a very special folk art form of the Bodo Community, is one of the most colourful and rhythmic dances of Assam. Young girls assemble in a particular area of the Village to perform the dance to relieve themselves of their wearisome days work through singing and dancing. It is also closely associated with harvesting and is performed to welcome a good Monsoon. The dancers perform with bamboo. Clappers in their hands, which provide the rhythm for their movements. The colourful costumes worn by the dancers and graceful body movements make the dance fascinating. This group dance is performed to the accompaniment of traditional musical instruments like Kham, Siphung, Jotha, Charinda and Cymbals.

Phag Dance



This dance form is performed by the farmers in the month of Phalgun. Both men and women can perform this dance. During performance women wear colourful traditional cloths where men wear colourful turbans.

Ghoomar dance



A dance called Ghoomar is popular in the western parts of the Haryana. Circular movements of the dancers mark this dance as different one. The girls from the border region of the state generally perform Ghoomar. The dancers, who take a circular mode and move about clapping and singing, perform this dance. The girls sing while they dance in a swirling movement and as the tempo of the music increases the girls form pairs and swirl faster and faster. The accompanying songs are full of satire, humour and refer to contemporary events, while the dancers twirl around in pairs. This dance is performed on occasion of festivals such as Holi, Gangaur Puja and Teej.

Gotipua



In Oriya colloquial language Gotipua means single boy. The dance performance done by a single boy is known as Gotipua dance. When decadence and declination came in to Devadasi or mahari tradition due to various reasons this Gotipua dance tradition evolved as sequel as these performance were practiced to please God. It is totally unknown that when exactly this danced form came in to practice. Still some historians say that this dance tradition appears to have originated during the region of Prataprudradev (1497 A.D. to 1540 A.D.) and gained popularity in the subsequent Muslim Rule. Ray Remananda the famous Vaishnavite Minister of King Pratapruda and ardent follower of Sri Chitanya is the originator of this boy dancing tradition, As Vasishnavs were not approving of the females in to dance practices so it possible that the dance tradition must have come after Sri Chaitanya came to Orissa.

The Gotipua Dance Tradition is now seen in the village Raghurajpur situated 10 kms away from Puri town, situated on the banks of river Bhargabi. It is otherwise known as the Crafts Village as various Orissan handicrafts' craftsmen reside in this village contributing their expertise in Patta Painting and other handicrafts.

Under the tutelage of Gotipua Guru Maguni Das several Gotipua dancers are learning the finer elements of Gotipua dance. His repertory also performs in the country and abroad. There are four to five boy dancers in a Gotipura troupe. The boys are attired and made up as females. The dance performance begins with an invocation to five Gods and Goddesses, which is known as Bhumi Pranam. Then the pure dance or nritya is performed which is followed by Pallavi. The gestures or Bhangis are very simple in Gotipua dance. Chauka style is existent in it.

The Abhinaya is devoid of any Sanchari Bhava. The Abhinaya has the interludes of nritya. Various mudras are existent in the form as per the ancient text. There is presence of dhwaja, danda, tripatka kartarimukha, sarpashira and many hand mudras. In abhinaya the writings of the medieval Oriya Vishnavite poets like Gopalkrushna, Banamali, Goura Charan etc. are taken. Various situations are depicted through mudras and body movements. The attire of Gotipua dancers is very simple and resembles the attire of the Devadasis. The ornaments are all made with all small plastic balls and the headgear is not that prominent. The faces of the Gotipuas are heavily made up. The accompanying instruments are harmonium, manjira and mardal.

The Gotipua dancers also perform an acrobatic type of dancing known was Bandha nritya in which several acrobatic poses like Chaki, Shagadi, Mayura and Chira Mayura are create a feast for the eyes.

Mewasi Tribal Dance



Mewasi is the tribal dance of Gujarat. The Bhils, Tadavi and Vasava community perform this dance on the occasion of engagement ceremony. The Rama dhol, Sarnai and Thali are the main instruments. While the girls wears Lodiya, Hasli, Hiriya, Kada and Paeradi, the boys put Pagdi (turban) tucked with peacock feather in it....