FOLK DANCES & DANCE DRAMAS OF INDIA

Folk dance is a traditional dance form that reflects the life, culture, customs, and beliefs of a particular community or region. It is often performed during festivals, celebrations, harvests, and other social occasions.

Explore the vibrant world of folk dances and discover the rich culture and traditions of India through each dance form.

LAVANI NRITYA (DANCE)
MAHARASHTRA

ORIGIN

Lavani is a popular folk dance form of the state of **Maharashtra** in India. It developed during the **17th–18th century** and flourished during the rule of the **Maratha Empire** and the **Peshwas**. The dance was traditionally performed to entertain soldiers and the public.



COSTUME & JEWELLERY

The dancer usually wears a **nine-yard saree (Nauvari saree)** draped in a special Maharashtrian style. The saree allows free movement for energetic dance steps. Hair is usually tied in a **bun decorated with flowers**. Lavani dancers wear traditional Maharashtrian jewellery such as:

- **Nath** (nose ring)
- **Kolhapuri Saaj** (traditional necklace)
- **Bangles and anklets**
- **Earrings and waist belt**
  These ornaments add elegance and beauty to the performance.



MUSIC & INSTURMENTS :

Lavani dance is performed with lively and energetic folk music. The main instruments used in Lavani are:

- **Dholki** – the most important percussion instrument of Lavani
- **Tabla**
- **Harmonium**
- **Tuntuna**
- **Manjira (cymbals)**
- **Halgi**

The rhythmic beats of these instruments guide the dancers' movements and expressions.

Lavani dance is closely associated with the folk theatre tradition of Maharashtra called **Tamasha**.

STYLE & PRESENTATION

Lavani is performed on the powerful rhythm of the **Dholki**. It combines **energetic movements, expressive gestures, and rhythmic footwork**. The dance focuses greatly on **abhinaya (expressions)** and strong body movements that match the fast beats of the music.

- Lavani songs are based on **Marathi poetry**, which often expresses **love, social themes, devotion, and humor**. The lyrics are rhythmic, lively, and sometimes dramatic, which enhances the expressive nature of the dance.
- Lavani is often performed on stage or in traditional **Tamasha** folk theatre. The dancer performs with live musicians and singers, creating a lively and interactive atmosphere.

IMPORTANCE

Lavani is an important part of **Maharashtrian folk culture and heritage**. It combines **dance, music, poetry, and theatre**. The dance is known for its powerful rhythm, expressive storytelling, and energetic performance style.

FAMOUS LAVANI DANCERS

Some well-known performers include: **Yamunabai Waikar , Surekha Punekar & Sulochana Chavan.**

Lavani continues to remain one of the most vibrant and expressive folk dance traditions of Maharashtra.