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### **Introduction**

Hello and welcome to yet another module on physical education and today we are talking about Indian folk and tribal dances. Indian folk and tribal dances are simple dances, and are performed to express joy and happiness among themselves. Folk and tribal dances are performed for every possible occasion, to celebrate the arrival of seasons, birth of a child, a wedding and festivals. The dances are extremely simple with minimum of steps or movement. The dances burst with verve and vitality. Men and women perform some dances exclusively, while in some performances men and women dance together. On most occasions, the dancers sing themselves, while being accompanied by artists on the instruments. Each form of dance has a specific costume. Most costumes are flamboyant with extensive jewels. While there are numerous ancient folk and tribal dances, many are constantly being improved. The skill and the imagination of the dances influence the performance. The important inroad by which art has entered the daily life of people is through the domain of folk music and folk dancing. In all cultures and civilizations of the world, human movement has worked as a vehicle of expression of joy and sorrow. The urge of outward expression through body movement has assumed many shapes and forms at different periods of history and in different parts of the world. These forms of human movement or dancing are different in content, theme and style. But they are similar in spirit of spontaneity, participation of audience etc. They cut down the economical and social barriers, bringing people of various communities and economical classes together. Folk dances of different parts of the world have common links. Usually they portray the functions of daily

life, rites and rituals, beliefs of performers in spirit and the like. They are performed throughout the year on social events like marriages, childbirth, around the agricultural functions and during fairs and festivals. There is total absence of self consciousness and sophisticated stylisation in folk forms. They are ever renewing, at the same time keeping with the tradition. They are dynamic. There is re-creation and repetition going hand in hand. The Indian subcontinent has various races, linguistic groups, different geographical and climatic conditions and many religions which give rise to rich folk dance forms. Here prehistoric forms have survived along with the growth of new forms, in spite of many historical, social and economical changes. There are various cultures existing side by side. The tribal people are the creators of what is termed as the tribal dances of India where the peasant society is responsible for ritualistic agricultural and seasonal folk dances.

## **Gujarat**

‘Gujarat has always been a land of dancing since the days of Lord Krishna. Dance has been an integral part of the social, religious and cultural life of the Gujarati people. The folk dances of Gujarat ideally reflect the smooth merging of diverse social and cultural thoughts. The most popular and known folk dances of Gujarat are Garba, Garbi, Rasa, Rasada, Tippani, Padhar-Nritya, Dangi-Nritya etc.. Most of these dances have a circle or Mandala as the basic Choreographic pattern. As the circle signifies the completeness, the dances in the circular form show’ the richness of culture and fullness of life in Gujarat. It would be very difficult to describe and review this fountain head here and so I would concentrate on a few very popular dances of Gujarat.

### **Dandia Rasa**

The Dandia Rasa or *dandia ras* is the counterpart of Garba or Tali Rasa. Dandia is a wooden stick or iron pipe, about a foot long. At the end tiny bells are tied to make the jingling sound when they strike each other. The dance has complicated rhythmic patterns beginning in a slow tempo and ending with a fast tempo. Each dancer in the circle not only performs a solo dance with his or her own sticks, but also has multiple relationship with his partner on either side and opposite. The circle keeps breaking, forming various patterns. The local terms are ‘Chokdi’

‘Sathiya’ etc. The sticks are beaten standing, sitting and lying on the floor and also jumping in the air.

### Garba

‘Garba’ is the most popular women’s folk dance. Its origin seems to be from the tribals wandering about hunting. Gradually, it became an agricultural ritual and today it is a social dance at all levels of society. The ‘Garbo’ or ‘Garbha’ is the life inside a woman’s womb. An earthen pot with holes around the circumference and light burning inside symbolises so. Such a pot placed on the head of a lady is comparable to the starry dome of heavens, handled by Mahashakti. The dance in motion as well as songs came to be termed as ‘Garba’. Garba dancing is performed by women only to get blessing from the Goddess Aroba. the technique is very simple. No intricate footwork or body movements are involved. The dance in a circle is performed by simple clapping of hands in rhythms of three (Tin Tali) or four (Hinch). The songs are sung by the dancing group only. The songs of famous poets of Gujarat like Dayaram, Premananda and others are special Garba songs usually known to everyone.

### Bhangra

Bhangra, the most popular and virile of the community dance of the villages of Punjab is closely linked with the ritual importance which is given to the crop especially wheat. After the wheat crop is sown, the young men gather together in some open field under the light of the full moon in answer to the beat of the drum. The dancers begin to move in a circle, so that as many newcomers who wish to join can do so without breaking its continuity. The circle goes on widening until a large open circle is formed with the drummer as the leader. The leader, with a large drum hung in front stands in the centre and plays the dholak (the drum) with sticks. He is often accompanied by two or more singers who perform the function of sub-leaders. The rhythm of the dance is simple 2/4 or 3/4 and the song is also a simple melodic tune. The words are couplets from the traditional oral poetry of Punjab, called Boli or Dhola. Although a couplet may be taken initially from a known piece of poetry, there is immense scope here for improvisation. With each new couplet, the dancers change their steps and respond to the singing of the couplets with typical refrains like Bale- Bale, Oai-Oai and Vah-Vah. The dancers naturally first begin with a slow rhythm, with an abrupt jerky movement of the shoulders

and a hop-step; this is followed by many vigorous movements of the whole body and the raising of both hands to the shoulder or above the head level. After the circle has been well established and the tempo of the dance has accelerated, the two main dancers dance within the ring in a kind of duet. This is followed by pairs emerging from different sections of the circle, dancing in the central arc and returning to their respective places in the circle. The pairs of dancers can execute many variations, ranging from graceful to virile movements, circles, pirouettes, jumps and extensions of legs, jumps, and leaps. A skilled Bhangra dancer may even perform some highly complex acrobatic movement of the torso touching the floor, through a spinal back-bend or letting another dancer stand on his shoulders, while he dances on his knees or his feet.

### **Jhumer**

The Jhumer is another folk dance of the harvest season. Although it shares many features with the Bhangra it can be clearly distinguished from the latter on account of its thematic content and its emphasis on recreating the gaits of animals and birds. In the Bhangra, there is no attempt to show the movements of sowing and reaping the harvest; in Jhumer all the functions of daily life are recreated and the pairs of dancers who come into the central area, often imitate the movements of the animals they rear. It is a kind of slow dance with a very melodious slow rhythm. Two men become bullocks of the field, a third a plough and the fourth a farmer. The gaits of the animals, the ploughing of the field, sowing of the seeds and harvesting are shown step by step. The crops are cut and then the dancers again rejoin into a circle and dance very much in the manner as of the Bhangra.

### **Gidda**

The Gidda is an exclusively women's dance, a counterpart of the men's Bhangra. Dressed gorgeously, the women gather together in the open courtyard to perform the Gidda. The Gidda is an ancient ring dance with simple graceful movements without crisp jerks and abrupt turns and twists so characteristic of the Bhangra. The dance begins in a circle, which is then broken up into two semi-circles and sometimes into groups of four or six. As in the Bhangra, the pairs emerge from the circle to perform different variations on a theme. The couplets of the song describe their daily chores ranging from cleaning of the wheat to thrashing and to spinning, weaving and embroidery. The sounds of the spinning wheel, the village well, the

gurgling of the water, the beauty of the fields, and the tensions between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, love of the brother-in-law for the sister-in-law are woven into the fabric of the song. Sometimes, the movements are imitative of these chores or narration of episodes, at others they are purely abstract. The dance ends in women pairing to do a 'spin'. Extended arms cross and hold the other dancer and the two together perform a kikali. In Kashmir also, we have a kikali of the women in the Rouf; a kikali seems to be typical sport and dance of the Women of North India. In spite of the seeming contemporary paucity of a large variety of tribal and folk dances in Punjab, it must be remembered that this was the home of many ritual and trance dances, and many musical styles. The Tappa, an integral part of North Indian music grew out of these simple folk tunes.

## **Haryana**

The past hangs heavy on Haryana. Legend has it that this dance has its origin in the times of the Mahabharat. It is performed jointly by men and women in the open in moon-light during "phalgun" days (March). The men play on their "dhap" (a big flat circular drum with one flap-only) while women sing the full-throated refrain: "Dhap Medhur Bajaya, Chhora Leelgar Ka, Dhap Madhur . Apa Jamuna Ka Jat Ho jaye Re Magan". (The dancer's young son plays so sweetly on his "dhap" that even the waters of Jamuna get enchanted by it). This dance-form is popular in the Gurgaon and Mohindergarh districts of Haryana. The "dhap" itself is used for various aesthetic formations and choreographic effects. When the dance reaches its crescendo a dancer climbs upon "dhap" held by his co-dancer and gives individual performance atop it.

## **Madhya Pradesh**

### **Tertali**

The Kamar tribe performs the Tera Tali, which is an elaborate ritual with many elements of dance. It is generally performed by two or three women who sit on the ground. Manjiras, or small metal cymbals are tied to different parts of the body, mostly the legs, and with a cymbal in either hand the dancer strikes these in rhythm. The head is covered with a veil, and at times a small sword is clenched between the teeth and an ornamental pot balanced on the head.

## **Charkula**

This dance is performed in the Braj region of Uttar Pradesh- the land of Krishna and his consort - Radha. Veiled women balancing large multi-tiered circular wooden pyramids on their heads, alight with 108 oil lamps, dance to the strains of 'rasiya' - songs of Krishna. Charkula is especially performed on the third day after Holi - the day, which Radha was born. According to legend, Radha's grandmother ran out of the house with the charkula on her head to announce the birth of Radha, since then, Charkula has formed a popular dance form of Brajbhoomi, performed during various festivities. Jawara[edit] The Jawara is performed in the Bundelkhand area of Madhya Pradesh. It is essentially a harvest dance-reflecting the gaiety and pleasure of the peasants who have reaped a good harvest. The dance is performed by men and women together. The costumes and jewellery worn by the women are colorful. The women carry baskets full of jawara on their heads and although the dance is very vigorous they are able to balance these baskets very skillfully on their heads. The accompaniment includes a rich variety of percussion, stringed and wind instruments.

## **Matki Dance**

The tableland of Malwa has comparatively very few dances. On wedding occasions, the countryside women of this part perform the 'Matki' dance with an earthen pot balanced on the head, the Matki is mostly danced solo. Sometimes just for merriment a couple of women join the main dancer who usually dances with a veil on her face. The two other variations of the Matki are the Aada and Khada Nach. Phulpati Dance[edit] The Phulpati is another dance, exclusively for unmarried girls. It is a dance of the semi-rural womenfolk. The agriculturist class of Malwa is not very much inclined to any dance by nature. During the Holi festival the revelers cannot restrain themselves from coming out with some sort of dance movements to the uneven manipulation of drums.

## **Grida Dance**

When rabi crops sway in the fields in full bloom, the parties from different villages join together and perform the Grida dance. It continues from morning till evening. The host village returns the visit next year by going to the village of their guests of the preceding year. The dance has three distinct phases: (1) Sela - The feet

movements are slow and comparatively rigid. (2) Selalarki - The feet movements become brisk and faster. (3) Selabhadoni - With the acceleration of the tempo, every limb of the body begins to sway in mood of exaltation.

### **Maanch**

Maanch is a lyrical folk drama and a form of operatic ballet that is very popular in Malwa in Madhya Pradesh. "Maanch" means the stage or place of performance and as an indigenous & distinct folk-form. The presentation style & technique of the Maanch, its various thematic elements, & suitable music and gaudy costumes all contribute in making this play a unique one.

### **Conclusion**

So in this episode we have learnt about the various folk dances that are prevalent in various parts of the country and we have learnt how they are played a part in the culture or heritage of the various regions in our country.

I hope the information presented was of some use to all of you.

Thank you so much for watching.