Chapter VI.

THE IMPACT OF CLASSICAL DANCES ON THE FOLK DANCES OF INDIA.

FOLK DANCES

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Instinct of dance is rooted in the soil of our country from the very ancient times. Wherever groups of persons gather together for some collective work, as for example harvesting, they perform the work in a rhythmic manner. In ancient times we find that people of various communities were engaged in group dancing on all festive occasions: if there was no rain, they danced to propitiate the god of rain; if there was a good harvest, they danced to celebrate the happy occasion; if there were some calamities, they danced to please the god for getting redress. In all these dances one thing was clearly seen that each such group dance was performed to celebrate a particular occasion and was thus seasonal. In such dances, people of a community, as a whole were engaged and they identified themselves with nature. Such group dances were popular throughout the country and that is why they may be termed as popular dances. The most common phrase now used

1. Supra, Preface, Page v.
for denoting such group or popular dance of the community is 'Folk Dance'. Thus, folk dance depicts a group dance in which the common folk of a particular community take part. Folk dance depicts the cultural and social life of a particular community and it is rooted in the community life as a whole.

At the outset it may be pointed out that such popular or folk dances differ from the classical dances. The classical dances are intricate and require adequate technical knowledge of the art of dancing and can only be performed by dancers after continued practice for a long time. These classical dances are based on certain codified traditions. The folk dances, on the other hand, are performed by the whole community, men and women, children and old persons alike without much conventional technical knowledge of the art of dancing. A folk dance necessarily implies the idea that it is a group dance performed by a number of persons on certain occasions by the whole community itself, but by no means by a solo performance. Classical dances, on the other hand, are generally performed by an individual, and also by a group of persons occasionally. Inspite of these differences, it must be mentioned that the influence of classical dancing has been quite considerable on some folk dances. Since folk dancing is performed by a group of people of a particular community,
it varies in form from people to people, from community to community and from region to region. An attempt is made here to study these folk dances vis-a-vis the particular region or place to which they belong indicating influence of the corresponding classical dance.

All the main four classical dances, i.e., Bharata Nātyam, Kathākali, Manipuri and Kathak have influenced all regional popular dances directly or indirectly to a great extent, which can be ascertained when we correctly understand the meaning of all main schools of dancing. For example, Bharata Nātyam which is also known as Dasi-Attam possesses the original root of dance prevalent in ancient period and the best example of Navadāsi is still prevalent throughout India, specially in south. Formerly all the dances were performed by the Navadāsis, who were particularly attached to the temples. These Navadāsis were responsible for the entertainment as well as worshipping the presiding deities of the temple. The impact of Bharata Nātyam in the folk dance of the east may well be seen in Orissa dance. This fundamental aspect of dance is, however, undergoing a gradual change by the passage of time and this religious aspect is receding day by day in all the popular dances of
India. If we come to Kathākali, the story-play, then it will be taken for granted that the different aspects of Kathākali are performed not only in India but even in other parts of 'Greater India' as well where Hindu culture made its way. In ancient period, dance-drama was very popular and later on its impact is still predominant in various parts of India. According to ancient tradition dramas were acted and sung and they comprised all the three aspects of dance, i.e., Nṛtta, Nṛtya and Nāṭya. So this form of Kathākali may be seen in any folk dance drama of India, as for example in 'Daśāvatār' dance of Maharashtra, which is a dance cum drama. It is in some respects analogous to the Avatār dance of Bengal and Kathākali of the south.

Similarly Manipuri, though it is one of the foremost schools of dancing, yet it has fostered her own indigenous folk-dances in a technique popular to herself, which has been already pointed out in Chapter IV. In the western region the various Rāsa Līlās which are performed have been greatly influenced by Manipuri Rāsa Līlā or Natwari Nṛtya Rāsa Līlās and more specially in Rāsa dance of Gujrat.

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2. Supra, Chapter III, page 44.
4. Supra, Chapter VI, page 201.
Even Kathak or the Natwari Nritya which commences with an invocatory prelude to lord Krishna and the depiction of His life, has its influence on various folk-dances of India. For example, in southern region the Dahikala dance of Maharashtra, in western region the Rāsa dance of Gujrat, in northern region the Rāsa Lilā of Uttar Pradesh have derived their theme from Natwari Nritya. Thus the impact of an age is even more apparent in the dance forms of today. The dance platforms of our country resounded to the rhythms of Bharata Nātyam, Kathak, Kathākali and Manipuri and the evolution of the classical form of Indian dance was later on again systematised in the form of various traditional schools as known to us today, each with its own elaborate technique, beautiful in form and expression.

In southern region the impact of Kathākali is clearly visible in 'Dasāvatār' dance, which is very popular among the cultured class in Konkan and Ghat side. Similarly in Kerala 'Velakali' and 'Pulayarkali' have their origin form Kathākali. Velakali dance is performed by Nairs, as these Nairs gave patronage to the classical dance art of 'Kathākali'.

1. Supra, Chapter V, page 89.
2. The Tourist Division, The Dance in India, page 23.
FOLK DANCES OF SOUTH INDIA.

Firstly, we take up the popular dances of Maharashtra, Andhra and Kerala.

**MAHARASHTRA.**

From the very beginning, besides the various seasonal occasions, which occur during the course of a year, the important events in the average social life may be classified as birth, initiation, marriage, hunting, war, sickness and funeral. Usually these occasions are celebrated by suitable ceremonial dances in every region.

There are several important occasions which are celebrated by the whole Hindu population of Maharashtra. For example, Gudi Padwa is observed as a New Year's day and the whole day is spent in merriment and festivity. It also marks the beginning of the Chaitra Gauri festival. Another important festival and auspicious day of Maharashtra is Akshaya Tritiya. On this day all women of a village with the exception of those advanced in age gather on the bank of village river. They dance in a circle with Tipries. Purely religious dance is performed on the occasion of Ashadhi Ekadashi. The month of Shravan is also celebrated with splendour specially by the agriculturist class. This month

1. See Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, page 8.
is supposed to be a special one for fasting, festivals and other auspicious purposes by the religious minded Hindus. Similarly, Naag Panchami, Narali Purnima, Gokul Ashtami, Ganesa Chaturthi, etc. are the special occasions on which ceremonial popular dances are performed.

The Dindi Dance:

The dance performed on Ashadhi Ekadasi (the 11th bright night of Ashadha) is known as Dindi dance. In Marathi, the word Dindi suggests a piece of wood. According to Principal J.V. Landekar of the S.P. College, Poona, Dindi is the name of a particular musical instrument similar to Vina. People from all classes participate in this dance but Varkari saints of Maharashtra and their disciples participate in this dance with great eclat and interest. They march towards the temple of Vithoba, dancing and singing Bhajans.

The Kala Dance:

This dance is also known as Dahi Kala or Dahi Handi dance. It is performed on the next day of the Gokul Ashtami. Kala dance is very popular in Maharashtra. In Marathi, the word 'Kala' is used for bread, rice, etc. mixed with curd. As the name suggests in this dance, one of the important aspects of lord Krishna's childhood is depicted, viz., stealing of milk and milk products. Pyramidal formation is arranged in this kala dance. One circle of
participants is formed in a compact way, and then another circle is formed by standing on the shoulders of the first group. In this way, the third circle is formed on the shoulders of the second group and it goes up until the Handi which is full of curd and is hung above, is reached. One of the youngsters breaks the Handi and showers Curd on the half naked body of dancers. The dancers, on whom the milk products are poured, take it as a symbol pf prosperity. The instrumental music id provided by a set of musicians called 'Khalu'. Sanai, Dhol and Timki are the main instruments which are played on this occasion.

**THE TIPRI AND GOPH DANCES:**

Tipri is a wooden stick and Goph is made of long strips of cloth. Due to the prominence of these two articles, it is called 'Tipri and Goph dance'. It is performed on the Gokul Ashtami day in Konkan and on Kojagiri day, i.e. fifteenth day of the bright half of Ashwin, in Vidarbha. In Tipri dance boys have two coloured sticks in their hands, one in the right being struck on the other in the left. Alternately they strike one or both tipris against those of their partners. The musical instruments used on the occasion are Tabla and a pair of Cymbals.

**GOURICH A OR GOURI-GANAPATICA NATCH:**

In this dance, homage is paid to god Ganapati and goddess Gauri. So the dance is designated as 'Gauri-Ganapaticha Nach'. In some places, it is known as Cheuli Nach and Jakhadi Nach. People of all castes participate
in this function, but the dance is prominent among the agriculturist class, known as Kunbis and Telis. Men wear coloured Safa, fine shirt and designed kerchief on this occasion. In this dance participants come in a circular way around the Mridang and Cymbal players who are at the centre and move in an anti-clock wise direction swinging their right hands to the level of the shoulder. At the time of Gauri immersion, participants go dancing along the road in a line. Mridang and Cymbals are the instruments used on this occasion.

Dholacha Nach:

Some of the dances are named after the instruments, regulating the dance, such as Dholacha-Nach and Tarapicha Nach etc. Dholacha Nach signifies the name of an instrument Dhol or big drum which is played in order to regulate the speed and movement of dancing. It is performed in a circular style and its movements are wild and vigorous. This Dhol is generally used by Thakurs and Katkaris. The dances such as Dholacha Nach, Tarapicha are performed mainly by hill tribes. The exquisite rhythm is the striking feature of this dance.

TaraPI DANCES:

Tarapi is a sushira Vadya which regulates this dance. This wind instrument is also used by the members of hill tribes. Warlis, Malhar, Kolis and the Kathakurs specially use this wind instrument which resembles high lander's bag-
pipe. The Dewali is one of the most important festivals of Hindus which is celebrated throughout India. Similarly, hill tribes also celebrate Dewali with dances and a number of them are danced to the Tarapi tune. In the dances such as Udakyacha Nach, Paya Palatyacha Nach, Gunjavayacha Nach, Bhat Bhalanyacha Nach, Lavaricha Nach, Bhangtilyacha Nach, Govayacha Nach, Salamicha Nach, Hiranacha Nach, Mavalyacha Nach, Bhui-phugadi, Tarapi instrument is played.

**DASAVATAR DANCE:**

Dasavatār dance is the dance-cum-drama of Maharashtra. In this folk ballet, the sūtrakār at the outset announces the incoming of the actors. The function starts with the invocation to Ganesa and Saraswati. As the name 1 Dasavatār suggests the ten incarnations of god Viṣnu, so in this folk ballet, the music party sings the song and describes the various situations and expositions of different Avatārs and the actors play their roles with variety of gestures and actions. Musical instruments like Tuntune, Tamvori, Daph, Dholki and Khanjari are played in this dance-cum-drama. Masks are also used according to their requirements.

**LAZIM DANCE:**

Lazim is the main musical instrument which is played in this dance. Though Lazim dance is associated with

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1. The ten incarnations of Visnu are: Matsya (Fish), Kurma (Tortoise), Varāha (Boar), Nṛsiṁha (Half lion half man), Vāmana (Dwarf), Parasurām, Ram, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki.
Gymnastics and show of physical activities but it is one of the important folk-dances of Maharashtra; and is performed in many places on different occasions. This dance is performed in a variety of movements and every movement is performed in unison with the strokes of the Lazim.

**SHINGA DANCES:**

Generally low caste people participate in the various Shinga dances among whom Bhils and Lamas are perhaps the only tribes who take much interest in performing this dance. This is more popular in Konkan than on Ghat side. Bhils observe the holy festival with a great zeal and perform several dances on this occasion. Rang Panchami, the fifth day of the dark fortnight of Phalgun is the last day of the Shinga festival.

**RADHA DANCE:**

This is performed during the Holi festival. In this dance the boys play the role of Radha wearing gorgeous and ornamental dress, Chalás (Jingling balls) are worn on her feet and Radha gently slides her steps to the stage with her right hand fully stretched and the left held at the waist. In this dance language takes the form of gestures, different mudras and facial expressions are shown in action. Songs which are sung by dancers are repeated by a group and interpreted by various mudras. Dholki, Daph and Tuntune are the main instruments which are played on this occasion.
KOLYACHA NACH (Fisherman's dance):

This dance is performed by fisher-men and is prevalent on the Konkan Coast. The dance is performed by two sets of dancers who stand face to face in two rows. A boy dressed as Koli (fisherman) acting the role of Nakhwa (Captain) and the other as Kolin (fisher-woman) stand between the two rows. Kolin with her left hand on the waist and holding a kerchief in the right, makes a sliding movement without lifting her feet off the ground and makes amorous gestures to Koli, who plays the part of a drunkard. The dancers in rows move backward and forward, imitating the tossing movements of the boat on the waves of the sea. A pair of Cymbals and a Dholki form the musical instruments.

Tamasha is also one of the dance forms of this region and its party is known as Phadkari. This dance was prevalent in the families of prostitutes and now it is rarely seen.

Phugadi, Nach-go-ghuma, Kombda, Salunki Salunki or Pagdaphu, Tinga, Kathot-Kana, Agota-phagota-zinzota, Zimma, Pasodya are the popular dances of a minor type which are restricted to women-folk.

AN DHRA.

With the exception of the important popular dances such as Kuchipudi, Yakshagan and Kurvanji there are several

1. Folk Dances of India, page 20.
   Also see Mulkraj Anand, The Dancing Foot, page 31.
folk dances known as Dappu Vadyam, Mathuri, Bath Kamma, Kummi and Kolattam which are performed in Andhra Pradesh.

The classical southern Indian dances such as Bharata Nātyam and Kathākali have influenced these dances to a great extent. For example, in Kuchipudi dance-drama the special feature is that each character enters the stage and introduces himself to the audience by singing songs. The dances are similar to Alarippu, Varnam, Padam and the dance patterns and the final sequences are basically related to the Bharata Nātyam. Mohan Khokar also is of the opinion that apart from Sadir Nātya and Kuravanji, the two other forms of Bharata Nātyam are the Bhagwat Mela Natak and the Kuchipudi. These are practically identical in character and constitute what may be called the dance-drama forms of Bharata Nātyam. This dance was also performed by Devadāsis as has been stated earlier in the chapter of Bharat Nātyam. The temple of Sri Kakulam, near Kuchipudi was a centre for pilgrims and Devadāsis performed their dances dedicated to the deities. Thus, the depiction of Bhakti cult is seen in Bharata Nātyam as well as in its identical dances of Andhra such as Kuchipudi, Yakshagana and Kuravanji. As has been mentioned in Kathākali, the Kuchipudi dancers also devote a long time in learning this

art form and it is not considered necessary for a woman to participate in this dance-drama, therefore the female roles are played by men.

**MATHURI, BATH KAILA, KUDLI DANCES:**

These folk dances may be called ceremonial dances and they are specially performed on the occasion of marriage ceremony. Among the early societies in all times, ceremonial dances have been considered an occasion of great importance. Proper marriage selection was facilitated through the medium of group dances which provided ample opportunities to the young members of both the sexes to display their sexual charm, capacity and grace in a natural way. If we go through the dance of Melanesian girls, we will see that the rhythm of dance is further exemplified by the movement of the girl dancers, which consists essentially of a slow rocking movement of the pelvis on the thighs, each leg being alternately slightly flexed and the heel being lifted from the ground. In Mathuri dance of Andhra Pradesh men and women form two groups. On one side men strike sticks which they hold in their hands and on the other side women follow them by clapping.

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Members of the party put on their best clothes on this occasion. For instance, male members use dhoties, turbans and jackets. Women also are particular about their dress and decorations, they wear colourful skirts, orminis and blouses which are designed with heavy tassels of coloured cotton. The musical instruments used on this occasion are drums and cymbals.

Both Kamma dance is performed only by women and in this dance the story of Saijanbai is depicted. Kumm dance is also performed by women folk of Andhra Pradesh. Its movements are circular and this dance resembles the Kumm which is performed in Tamil region. In Kolattam dance the movements and songs are basically similar to those of Kumm dance, but the main difference is that the dancers in Kolattam strike small sticks and they do not clap their hands.

**TRIBAL DANCES**

**LAMBADI, SITIJ, CHENCHU DANCES:**

These are the tribal dances of Andhra. In tribal dances generally every body, except those physically disabled participates. Men and women both take great interest in their dance. The movements of tribal dances are very simple. Usually they form an arc approximating a straight line and
big drum or dhol guides their movement. As they lead a tribal life so naturally their movements are vigorous and their songs refer to their own life and surroundings. In the tribal dances of Andhra such as Lambadi, Siddi, Chenchu, etc., both men and women participate. Lumbadis are the gypsies of Andhra and they also perform the ceremonial dance on the occasion of marriage, etc. The women of this tribe specially decorate their dress for a dance occasion and make full use of flowers. The movements of this dance are very simple. They celebrate their holy festival with great merriment and festivity and the images of Kama and Rati are worshipped. They sing and dance around a big fire. The movements of Siddis are peculiarly vigorous and resemble the tribal dances of Africa as the Siddis migrated to Hyderabad from Africa. Men participate in some dances with swords etc. Regarding Chenchu dance, Thurston is of the opinion that men and women executed a series of step dances in time with a drum (thapatta) resembling a big tambourine, which, at the conclusion of each dance, was passed to and from through a blazing fire of Cholum straw to bring it up to the proper pitch. A man dressed up in straw and fragments of mats and another disguised as a woman, with bells round his ankles, supplied the comic.

GADABA, POROJA, KONDH DANCES:

These dances are performed in Vizagapatam and Ganjam districts. Gadaba, Poroja and Kondh tribes perform their own tribal dances. In the tribes Gadaba and Poroja, both men and women participate in their festival and occasional dances. One of the festive dances of Gadabas who belong to agriculturist and hunters tribe has been described by Captain Glasford thus. At the time of Dussehra, Holi and other holidays both men and women dance to the music of a Fife drum. Sometimes they form a ring by joining hands all round, and with a long hop spring towards the centre, and then hop back to the full extent of their arms, while they at the same time keep circling round and round. 

Projas who who belong to a caste of cultivators have also their occasional dance. W. Francis, while describing it says that picturesque in the extreme is a dancing party of these chery maidens, dressed all exactly alike in clean white clothes with cerise borders or checks, reaching barely half-way to the knee;  

Kondh dance is similar to the hunting dances which were prevalent in the primitive times. It seems to be fairly certain that this type of dance is a survival of the ancient symbolic magic intended to increase the supply of

2. Ibid.
game, the evidence of which is clearly noticed in rock paintings of the Cro-Magnon man. Kondhs have also their sacrificial dance which is performed after sacrificing a buffalo. They dance around the animal in intoxicated mood.

Dappu Vadyam dance suggests the name of a musical instrument called Dappu, which plays an important role in this dance. In Harijan caste only men participate in this dance. Their dancing movements are very simple.

KERALA

Kerala holds a very important place in the history of classical and folk dances in India. Kathakali which is one of the foremost classical dances of southern India is a product of Kerala. Rajendra Shanker also is of the opinion that 'Kathakali is a special and characteristic product of Kerala—that exuberantly verdant and snug little region lying in the south-west corner of India, isolated geographically by the sea on the west and skirted on the other sides by the ranges of Malaya Parvata and the Pyscima Paridhi. Kerala has on this account developed her own marvels in the way of drama, dancing music and literature'. So dancing is an important element in Kerala life.

1. See Davison Dorothy, Men of the Dawn, page 114. Also see Hambly W., Tribal Dancing and Social Development, page 213 - 214.

THERAYATTAM OR THAIVATTAM, PARAYANKALI, KANIYARKALI DANCES:

These are the purely religious dances of Kerala and many of the orthodox cults of the people are inextricably linked with these dances. Since time immemorial music and dance have been the chief forms of religious expression in India, so on the same basis these dances are directly performed to propitiate the gods and goddesses. The worship of Bhagwati is an important aspect of these dances. In Therayattam or Thaivattam festival various forms of Bhagwati or Kāli, and her attendants appear in disguise, they dance before the people and bless them. Some of the characters wear masks and some of them paint their faces. Tiyattam, Uchaveli and Nenaveli dances are performed with a view to ward off evil spirits, as a protective measure against trouble to any individual. Of the ritualistic dances of Kerala that spring from the Bhagwati cult there is a rich variety, but of these only a few - such as the Mutiyettu, Tirayattam and Tiyattam - are important. Most of these dances are intended to glorify Bhagwati, and this they do by using for their exposition themes which deal with the triumph of Bhagwati over Darika and various Asuras. So the same depiction of Bhagwati

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cult is seen in Parayankali and Kaniyarkali dances and it has been rightly admitted by Mohan Khokar that in many of these dances the performers who impersonate the various gods and demons, appear attired and adorned in exotic resplendence which is tinctured with a weirdness and hideousness that becomes the character and temperament they portray. In Therayattam, Pareyankali, Kaniyari kali and Panan kali dances goddess Bhagwati or kali holds the supreme position. Every Parayan village has a Bhagwati temple and on important occasions people gather around the temple to see the devil dances. In Kaniyar kali dance devotional songs are sung in praise of Siva, kali and Subramaniam and the dances which are performed near the shrine represent these Avatars. The Velans and Panans of Kochin perform the Panan kali dance. The exorcists play an important role in Tiyattam as well as in Panan kali dance, but the real purpose of this dance, as has been described in other folk dances, is to glorify the goddess Bhagwati.

VELAKALI AND PULAYARKALI DANCES:

These dances may be called martial dances of Kerala and they are restricted to Nairs. As has been described in the chapter of Kathakali that this dance drama, however, remains to be practised mainly by the Nayars, the fighting

men of Malabar and originally Kathākali was performed in Kali temples where the Nayar warriors were attached, so on the same basis the influence of Kathākali has been shown not only in other dances but in Velakali and Pulayar Kāli dances also. Miss Beryl de Zoets has rightly remarked that there is a relation between Kathākali and Kāli temples. According to her, the Nayar warriors were trained in a place called Kelari, which is still a gymnasium where the Nayars turned dancers. Similarly, Velakali dance of Kerala is performed by Nayars on the occasion of the Utsavam of the Padmanabhaswamy temple at Trivandrum. This dance represents the theme concerning the battle of Kurukṣetra in which Nair dancers take the part of Kauravas while Pandavas are represented by towering wooden effigies. In Pulayar Kali dance which is similar to Velakali dance, Pandavas are represented by painted figures of various demon gods.

(Kaikottikali and Thiruvadirakali Dances:

These dances are performed only by women folk of Kerala. Their movements are very simple and the songs deal with the themes of common interest to women and sometimes verses from Malayalam poetry are also sung. Onam festival is the important occasion for this dance in Kerala.

1. The Other Mind, A Story of Dance in South India, (1953), page 92.
KOLAKALI:

This dance is restricted to the Mopla Muslims of Kerala. The special feature of this Muslim dance is that the songs pertain to Hindu gods and heroes. This dance is performed in a circular manner around the burning lamp.

So far folk dances of North Region are concerned, I shall discuss the dances of Kashmir, Punjab, Himanchal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

Kathak or the Natwari Nritya has mostly influenced the folk dances of Northern Region. For example, its impact may well be seen in 'Hafiza' and 'Bacha Nagma' dances of Kashmir, as they are performed on the same pattern as Kathak. So far as Uttar Pradesh is concerned, it is dubbed with the Kathak style of dance as pointed out in Chapter V as well as in the folk dances of Uttar Pradesh.

KASHMIR:

Though Muslim population is predominant in Kashmir, it does not mean that there is no Hindu influence on their art and culture. Reference of Kashmir is found in very ancient Sanskrit literature. This heavenly part of earth has been the Centre of Indian religion and culture. In his famous book Rajtarangini, Kalhan described that in very ancient time Kashmir existed in the form of a big lake. People living near the lake were known as Gandharis, Khas and Dradis. The name of Kashmir is derived from the Khas
community. The folk dances of Kashmir have also their original roots in classical dance of Northern India which are dedicated to different deities installed in various temples. For example, Hafiza dance of Kashmir symbolises Muslim form by name but as a matter of fact it was performed by devadāsī before the advent of Islam in India. Rasika also observes, "Hafiza dancing is believed to have evolved from the devadāsī cult, for the Hafizas were originally sacred dancers, who danced to the music known as Sufiana Kalam. The devadāsī were great devotees of gods and goddesses in temples. As has been described in Bharata Nātyam Chapter, devadāsī had played an important role because they were professional sacred dancers and they only exhibited their art of dancing, not for the pleasure of common public but in order to please the gods and goddesses. On the same basis northern Indian dances were formerly performed to please the gods and this act originally depended upon the devadāsī, but like the devadāsī of south India, in northern India also with the passage of time, their social status declined and in course of time they had to lead a life given up to the pleasure of the courtiers. That is why this dance was finally banned in Kashmir.


BACHA NAGMA, JUNHAL DANCE AND PATHER FOLK DRAMA:

All these dances are performed by male members in Kashmir. Bacha word signifies boys. Bacha Nagma dance is influenced by north Indian classical dance, Kathak (Natwar Nritya). As Kathak dance starts with That and Salami tora similarly in Bacha Nagma dance Salami is the first item and it is very gracefully performed. Fabrice Bowers says, "Kashmiri dance evening by one of these young male artists starts off with a basic warming up dance. The boy kneels and salutes, then standing he begins to articulate the parts of his body to be called into play during the evening. He starts with the neck, the hips, finally the feet. The dancer then salams and snaps his fingers at the audience signifying welcome and felicitations". Bhāva is also an important item in Bacha Nagma dance. In Kathak dance while performing Gat Bhāva or singing Thumri the dancer shows the variety of expressions of a single line of a song. In Bharata Nātyaṃ this aspect takes place in Padam. So on the same basis in Bacha Nagma folk dance, as well as in Hafiza dance (which is not performed now a days) Bhāva played an important and influential factor. In Bacha Nagma dance dancer sings a line and shows its meaning by performing different varieties of expressions. Charha, Sarangi, Rababi and Tundaknari, Shehnai and Ḍholak are the musical instruments

1. The Dance in India, (1952), page 1955.
played in Bacha Nagma. Qumhal is a very simple and circular dance. It is performed around the banner and while stepping and jumping there is no specific pattern. It is performed by wattal nomads of Kashmir while Pather dance is performed by Bhands. Pather is a folk drama so it takes a long time. In this drama women role are played by men and it takes place at the time of Urs.

The Rouf is a festival dance and it is performed only by women folk of Kashmir. The Rouf songs are sung in chorus. In Hijkat dance of Kashmir both young men and women participate. It is performed like a game. Thus tempo gradually rises and reaches its climax. In this performance simple musical tune is sung.

**PUNJAB**

India is a vast country, having variety of races and climatic effects and consequently persons living in different parts show their expression of happiness in different ways on different occasions, and thus a large variety of folk dances have also originated. The famous Bhangra dance of the Punjab originates from the Baisakhi festival. In Baisakhi the mass of people fascinated with the bloom of nature express themselves merrily in song and dance. So a true picture of Bhangra dance can be seen at the time of Baisakhi festival in Punjab. Mulk Raj Anand is also of the opinion that the
season for the Bhangra dance starts with the sowing of wheat, when the young men of the village gather together in some open field, under the light of the full moon, in answer to the beat of the Bhangra drum. The Bhangra season concludes with the Baisakhi fair when the golden wheat is harvested and the granaries are stocked full for the year. In this dance the movements are vigorous, energetic and a vital aspect of jumping and stepping can be seen in this style. While performing this dance men shout in greater tempo, "Balle, Balle, Oh Balle Balle and hoy". Starting with slow movements moving forward and backward, stretching both the elbows sideways, the tempo goes higher and higher till it reaches its peak and all the participants show their extreme excitement and are maddened in ecstasy altogether forgetful of their fatigue.

**JHUMAR AND GIDHA DANCE:**

Jhumar dance of the Punjab is restricted to men only but married women are permitted to participate in this dance. On the other hand, Gidha dance is performed only by women folk. "Gidha is a dance of the Punjabi women. It is an ancient ring dance, with simple and graceful movements, which are as pleasing to the eye as the accompanying music is to the ear". Jhumar is similar to stick and tipri dance and there

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2. Folk Dances of India, page 19.
is a depiction of Jand Basak of Manipur dance, because in this dance small sticks are frequently used. The dancers strike the sticks through various poses, sitting, standing, moving in several circles. Jhumar has also other varieties like Jhinal, etc. In women folk Ghidha dance, instead of small sticks, only clapping plays an important role and the small dholaki (musical instrument) is played, whereas in Bhangra and Jhumar dance drum guides the movements. So far as the dress is concerned, in Punjabi folk dances men wear long shirts, waist coats, tehmat and turban, whereas long frock, salwars and long dupattas are used by the women folk. Salwar is common for males and females. For example, in Rudi folk dance men wear salwars. Works like "Balley, Balley, etc." are specially used in folk dances of the Punjab with a view to create excitement.

**HIMACHAL PRADESH**

Himachal Pradesh is a hilly and mountainous region. People belonging to this region have to face great hardship for their livelihood. The lower part of Himalayan valley comes into this region and it extends to the Jiwalik mountains below which are the Punjab planes. They work from early in the morning till the late hours of night, fighting with the nature. While used to hard work they have a tendency to elevate their lives through song and dance which is their
only form of recreation. John Lawson observes "At first
man imitated nature in his efforts to sustain life, but as
he taught himself to control nature, so he began to think, he
could persuade nature to do what he wanted by exacting in his
rituals the events he wanted to come out. This is noticeable
in the traces of sun rituals existing in European areas, where
climatic conditions are unstable and the summer is short." "
Thus the geographical conditions play a very important role
in determining their cultural aspect. All the folk dances
concerning not only India but the whole world take their form
according to their climatic conditions and geographical
situations.

DA-NGI AND PANGI DANCES:

These dances are performed by women of Himachal Pradesh
in Chamba region. A song known as Ghurochi is also sung at the
time of Dangi dance. Women of Pangi mostly wear shirts and
salwar. Musicians may stand on one side of the dancers or in
the centre of the performers. Their steps and movements are
not vigorous, speedy and complex, but they are simple, their
body is gracefully moved to face first one side and then the
other and the hands are raised and made to perform supple
movements. They generally stand in a circle. It has been rightly
observed that the climatic changes that the world
has undergone, have created its ____________________________

1. European Folk Dance, Its National and Musical
Characteristics, Pages 9-10.
geological structure of deserts, rolling steppes, fertile plains, river valleys and mountains in all of which men find a home. The style of movement he performs is greatly determined by the kind of ground on which he dances, and it must be remembered that among some people the dancers still retain an occasional characteristic movement of the land from which they originated, generations earlier. It is this mixture of movements that makes the dances of some people, such as the Russians, Hungarians, Czechs and Spaniards, seem varied.

In Himachal Pradesh the people do hard labour and they sing and dance in order to forget their fatigue and do more labour. Due to rocky roads in the mountainous region very swift movements and speedy pattern are not visible in their popular dance. Mulk Raj Anand is also of the opinion "scaling the heights with heavy loads on their backs, these people walk slowly. Therefore, they dance slowly, and the soft music of their songs is a drawl". Though in this part dance is performed for the sake of pleasure but community dances can also be seen during the Dashera festival. In Himachal Pradesh community dances also hold a prominent pla

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2. The Dancing Foot, Himachal Pradesh, page 12.

position for example, the well known circular 'Deepaka' folk dance is performed by the Gaddies (Shepherds). Song named as Chhinjoti is sung in this performance. Dhol and Narsinga are the main musical instruments played in this dance from outside the circle.

**Jhanjar and Sangla Dances:**

In both dances men and women dance together. Jhanjar dance is purely a circular dance because within the larger circle which is formed by men, women also form an inner and small circle. Thus by forward and backward movements of their steps, the circles become closer to each other and sometimes the circles expand. This type of circle dance can be compared to the American round dance. For the sake of illustration "another distinct type of American folk dance is the round dance, deriving its title from the fact that individual couples dance usually in a large double circle and progress in the same direction in order to facilitate movement upon a crowded floor in contrast to other definite and more stationary groupings of couples, as in American square or longways sets". In Sangla and Dangi the song is sung in the form of questions and answers.

**Uttar Pradesh**

The most renowned classical dance 'Natwari Nritya'

1. See Anne Schley Duggan Jeanette Schlottmann Abbie Rutledge, Folk Dances of the United States and Mexico, page 39.
(known as 'Kathak') has its birth place in Uttar Pradesh. 'Natwari' is derived from the word Natawara, an epithet of lord Krishna. The Krishna cult had its origin in Mathura, the birth place of lord Krishna. Gradually Mathura and the region around became sacred on account of Krishna's association. Gradually, the Krishna cult came into prominence in Uttar Pradesh. According to Projesh Banerji, this part of the country did not conceive of Siva as the Dancing God, Nataraja, but always regarded Krishna as Natawara, the Supreme Dancer. As the class of devadasis serve in south Indian temples in order to please the gods and goddesses by their dance, so on the same lines in Uttar Pradesh, this class was predominant in worshipping the deities by their performances. Naturally a temple without its group of dancers and musicians was inconceivable. The dancers were mainly 'devadasis' or maidens dedicated to the service of god. Mathura and Vrindaban hold an important place in Uttar Pradesh and the folk dances which are performed here are the off shoots of the classical dance 'Kathak or 'Natwari'.

There is a long history of the development of fine art in the Braja region. Mathura being a centre of

1. MARG, Vol. XIII, No. 1, page 76.

all the main religions of India, viz., Buddhism, Jainism, Vaishnavism and Saivism, attracted artists, who carved numerous statues pertaining to various faiths. Sculpture and architecture found a congenial atmosphere here for their all round development from about third century B.C. The sphere of music and dance was no exception. Mathura as a chief art centre of India developed a special art style of its own. Before describing the folk dances of the Braja area, it is necessary to refer to the two famous dance dramas of this region, which retain a fine blending of song, the musical instruments and dance. These two dance dramas are Rāsa and Bhagat.

RĀSA:

The ancient Braj-bhoomi is chiefly associated with the most popular dance 'Rāsa' which depicts the boyhood and early manhood of lord Krishna, his frolics with the gopis and his passionate love for Radha. The Rāsa Līla performed by lord Krishna with the gopis is described in detail in the Purāṇas, such as the Harivamśa, the Viṣṇu and the Bhagawat.

2. Viṣṇu Purāṇa (Ansha 5, Chapter 13)
3. Bhagawata Purana, Dasham Skandh, Five Chapters from 29 to 33 known as Rāsa Panchadhyai. Also see Brahma Purāṇa, Chapter 80, Slokas 13-42.
The ancient name of Rāsa was Hallishak, Mandala Nritya and Rasaka. In the Nātya Śāstra of Bharata, Rasaka is described as of three famous forms viz. Tala Rasak, Danda Rasak and Mandal Rasak. The Garba dance prevalent in Gujrat is known as Tala Rasak. The dance of Ahirs of Braj with sticks in hand on the auspicious occasion of the journey of bride-groom for performance of marriage is known as Danda Rasak and the circular dance without rhythm and instant aid of sticks is known as Mandal Rasak. The last form of Rāsa is still prevalent among the goojaris of Braj. Ranjana Jhaveri also describes that 'Rāsa Lila' is an expression of an awareness growing from senses to the spirit. It symbolises the process of self-realisation. Six different varieties of Rāsa Lilas are performed on six different occasions. They are:

'MAHARASA' on the full moon day of Kartik.
'VASANTARASA' on the full moon day of Chaitra.
'KUNJARASA' on the eighth day of the month of Ashvin.
'NITYARASA' performed on any occasion.
'GOPARASA' (Gostha) in the month of Kartik.
'ULJHARASA' in the month of Kartik.

The first four depict Krishna's amorous play with Rādhā and Gopis. The last two deal with the adventures of lord


2. Ibid.
Krishna and his sports with the gopās.

Opinions differ regarding the advent of the present form of Rāsa in Braj and who introduced that form. Some give credit for the same to Śrī Ghamand ācārya of the Nimbark community while others to Śrī Narayan Bhatt. It is said that when Śrī Ballabhachārya visited Mathura, Śwāmi Hari Dāsa during the discourse on Vishramghat on the bank of Yamuna expressed his desire to revive the Rāsa. Both the saints asked for eight boys for Rasa from the Chaturvedis of Mathura. Śrī Ballabhachārya and Śwāmi Hari Dāsa personally decorated the boys playing the roles of Krishna and Radha respectively. At that very time a crown was seen coming down from the sky which was put on the head of Krishna but all of a sudden the boy vanished. On this Śwāmi Hari Dāsa gave up the idea of holding Rasa Līla and asked Ghamand ācārya ji to take up the work. Ghamand ācārya ji started Rasa in the village Karahla near Baraana with the help of two brahmans Udbhaykaran and Khemkaran by name. Since then Karahla has been a centre of Rāsa Līla. Undoubtedly Narayan Bhatt lent a very helpful hand in the revival and publicity of Rāsa. He wrote several famous books, e.g. Brajbhakti Vilasa etc. and started tour over Braj region.

2. See Prof. K.J. Bajpai, Sanskrit Sahitya and Rasa Līla, page 26 - 27.
In Braj, Rāsa has two main forms, one in the form of folk dances free from the complexities of the Nātya Śāstra and the other classical dance on scientific lines and traditions. The first form i.e. folk dance is prevalent among males and females both. The folk dances performed by Gijarīs on special occasions near Nandgaon and Barsana are very charming. They exhibit different gestures through their hands while dancing in a circular form without the accompaniment of any instrumental music. There is no mention of any instrument in Harivamsa Purāṇa which contains description of Hallishak. There is reference of only gopis clapping and hopping. The dances performed by Gijarīs remind us of the old Hallishak. The commentator Yashodhar while commenting on the word 'Hallishak' occurring in the treatise 'Kamsutra' written by Vatsyayana, has written that there should be a leader in the circular dance of the women in the same manner as Kṛishṇa in the middle of gopis. But there is no male member or lover in the midst of Gijarīs. Probably the dances of Gijarīs relate to the time after disappearance of Krishna. They sing in a tender tone which is full of pathos. It is possible that with the effect of time the old tradition of co-dancing in Braj has become extinct and males and females began to dance separately.

Also Chintamani, Sringarmanjari, page 121 - 126.
BHAGAT:

The other name of this folk drama is Swang. It is known as Bhagat in Mathura and its adjoining places. It is known as Nautanki in Meerut and near about. About Bhagat it is written in 'Aine-Akabari' that Brahmin boys used to sing and dance assuming different guises.

In Bhagat the Rāsa connected with the early life and play of lord Krishna is sometimes described but it cannot be called Rāsa. Although there is great similarity in costumes used in both, the manner of their presentation is different. The music, instruments and dance accompanying the Bhagat and the Rāsa are also different. It is learnt from the treatise Rāsa Sarvaswa that in the eighteenth century certain Rāsa mandalies forsaking the poems of the devotees began singing Gañal, Rekhta, etc. It is possible that the mandalies following the old tradition were named Rāsa mandalies and the mandalies adopting the new trend may have been called Bhagat Mandalies.

Mathura and Hatharas have been the centre of Swang or Bhagat. It became more popular at Hatharas from the time of Natha Singh. It had already gained popularity in Mathura. The early form of Bhagat was associated with stories connected with the life of lord Krishna but the credit for giving a turn to this trend goes to Sri Shyama Charan who was a Bengali learned man and used to live in Mathura, being a devotee of lord Krishna. First of all, he played the drama Prahalad
Charitra and subsequently he staged swangs relating to several dramas e.g. Sapera, Ushā Charitra and Rukmini Haran. These swangs were in Hindi in the real sense and were played successfully on open stage. The musical instruments played in the swangs were Dholak, Bela or Violin and Harmonium.

The swangs were so widely prevalent in Braj that there were two parties or Akharas in Mathura alone, one of Mania Bhatt at Laldarwaza and the other of Ustad Birjis Singh at Vishramghat. There are two forms of classical Rāsa in Braj, one is Rāsa relating to the stories connected with the life of Rādhā and Krishna, who are conceived of as ideal lovers, which is performed by different Rāsa mandalies and the other is Mahārāsa about which it is said that lord Krishna had performed it at the full moon in September (Sharad Purnima) or December on Yamuna bridge. When lord Krishna commenced the Mahārāsa, he manifested himself into as many numbers as there were gopis. There was one Krishna in each of the sets of two gopis or one gopi in each of the sets of two Krishnas. When the Rāsa mandalies of Braj perform the Mahārāsa, one can see the combination of all the three Rasaks described in the Nātya Śāstra of Bharata.

The Nātya Śāstra of Bharata bears testimony to the fact that in ancient times Rāsa was widely prevalent and was duly classified in different forms but gradually several forms became extinct. For the revival of these forms the saints of
Braj made an effort in the sixteenth century.

The existing form of Rāsa prevalent in Braja is about four hundred years old. Before commencing the Rāsa a few selected persons of the party offer salutation and sing the introductory song. Those persons of the party who play on different instruments in the Rāsa, play on instruments on this occasion also. The instruments played upon are Sarangi, Pakhawaj, Kinnari, Jhanjh and Majira. The director of the party, who is also the proprietor generally plays on Sarangi. After salutation Kirtan is held in Dhrupad. Then prayer and arti are held. After arti the female actors pray to the Heroine and the Hero to appear on the stage. During this interval several songs are sung.

These palys are mostly related to Bhāgwat. There are certain plays which are based on the sentiments of the devotees and in which the verses composed by saints like Ashtāchhāp, Vyās, Swāmī Haridāss etc. are sung. It is believed that formerly there was no literature concerning the plays and these and other devotee saints having filled in this gap, have contributed to the development of Hindi literature.

The song-stress of Rāsa Lila in Braja sometimes shows her inclination to Rasiya and Ghazal etc. leaving her old tradition of Dhrupad, but a majority of parties continue to adopt their old tradition. The word 'Swang' also means acting.
In Braj, its show takes place on the occasion of Holi and people take part in different guise. In temples where men flock together to pay their respect to the deity at night, the parties sing and dance in attractive attire. Often the players deal with the evils of society and the Government by taking out variety of tableaux, but the swangs are almost extinct now under the modern influence.

CHARKALÁ:

The folk dance known as Charkalá is performed particularly in villages Umari, Nagari and Rampur of Mathura district. Charkala is a wooden structure which has holders on its sides on which earthen lights full of oil are placed. Thirty eight lights are lit. A married woman puts the Charkala on her head and one pot of water on each of her two hands. Lights are lit on these pots also. Then she dances. The peculiarity of the dance is that the lights are not extinguished during the dance.

The form of Charkala resembles the Garba dance of Gujrat. This is performed on the first five days of dark fortnight of the month of Chaitra. Instruments like Mridang, Damama etc. accompany the dance.

LALMANIA:

Lalmania dance is also a sort of Deepak Nritya like Charkala dance which is performed on the occasion of marriages
when the bride-groom's party sit down in the courtyard under the marriage mandap to dine. It is performed before the father of the bride-groom as well as of the bride and the dancer keeps her face veiled.

CHANCHAR:

This is a dance performed on the occasion of Holi in village Jatipura situated beneath the Gobardhan hill. There is a reference of Chanchar play in the compositions of devotee poets like Ashtchhāp from which it is gathered that Chanchar is a sort of play but those who have seen it, say that dancing forms its major part. So it will be more appropriate to call it a dance rather than a play. It is performed on the night of the second day of Holi. In the morning of the day following Holi, some Braj women move about in their best dress and invite the village folk to dance. In the evening men and women gather in a field where instrument like dhap is played upon. Men and women stand on opposite sides. Women strike men and men hold them up. After sometime men and women dance in pairs formed of husband and wife or husband's younger brother and brother's wife.

JHOOLA DANCE:

This is an ancient Holi dance, which is performed in village Pukhrai near Radhakund on the night of the second day of Holi. Lights are lit round a wheel. In the middle of wheel
are placed seven pitchers. This is called Jhoola, which is placed on the head of the dancing woman and the dance starts. No musical instrument accompanies the dance but it is so pleasing to the eyes that spectators stand spellbound.

**Narsingh Dance:**

Kathputli occupies an important place in the folk dances of India. The Narsingh Lila held on Narsingh Chaturdashi can be said to be its developed form but dance predominates in place of drama. It is known as 'Narsingh ka nach' in Braj. This is a dummy dance in which mask is used on face. It commences at midnight. Dances connected with Ganesa, Mahadeo, Varah and then Tadaka are performed and then follows the dance based on the Puranic legend Narsinghavatar. The dancer wearing the mask of demon king Hiranyakashyap, dances. After this, Prahlad enters with his preceptor Sandamarkat, who is strangely dressed and holds a stick in hand and is an object of great interest to the boys. It will be appropriate to call him joker of the dance party. He directs the boys to read, waving his stick and the boys talk irrelevantly. Then commences the main part of Narsingh dance. The man playing the role of Narsingh keeps fast on the preceding day. Next day he worships the god Narsingh and then only puts on the mask. He enters a pillar made of paper which is torn by the demon king Hiranyakashyap with his sword. Narsingh appears in the mask of a dreadful lion and the dance commences to the vigorous accompaniment of Tabla and Jhanjh. He dances vigorously to the tune
of music swirling his body in a grand style and making different postures towards the sky by his hands. At that time so much strength is infused in his body by strong emotion that two persons keep standing to check the movements of his hands. In the end after the death of Himakashyap, the arti of god Narsingham is performed, Prasad is offered and then the performance comes to an end.

**DHANDA AND DHANDI DANCE**:

According to Aine-Akabari, Dhanda was a tribe which lived in the lower part of the Punjab. People of this tribe earned their livelihood by playing on Dhandha and singing on the occasion of births and marriages. Their females Dhadins first used to sing in the inner apartments but later on began also to dance in public. The poet Surdas has referred to Dhanda Dhandi on the occasion of celebration of lord Krishna's birthday and has written that they sang sohla and danced and begged reward from Nandji, the father. The Dhanda dance is still prevalent in the temples of Ballabh sect. This is performed on the occasion of the festivals Krishna Radha Janmashtami. These days people of Dhanda clan do not exist in Braj. Two boys are made to appear as Dhanda and Dhandin in male and female dress of Braj. First they act as clown and then they dance and sing. Formerly this form of dance was widely prevalent in the temple of Dwarkakheesh in Mathura and was called Nandotsava. Persons representing Dhanda and
Dhandin who offered felicitations were adequately rewarded by the management of the temple.

Due to Muslim influence and the orthodoxism of Brahmanism, some popular dances are confined in the low castes like Ahirs, Kahars, Chamars etc.

**AHIR DANCE:**

As the name suggests, this dance is performed among the Ahir community and they give their show at the time of marriage and birth etc. Dhola and Kansi (Cymbals) are the musical instruments which are played in Ahir dance.

**CHAMAR DANCE:**

Similarly Chamar community also performs their dance and act in a comic opera style. Projesh Banerji also observes that "the dances of the Chamars are simple, dramatic or operatic performances, freely interspersed with dance numbers rather than true dance performances". The theme of their play is taken from the legends of the gods and goddesses and it also relates to the events of daily life. Thus theme of the dance is generally legendary and of religious type. Similarly the 'Chasiara dance' is performed by grass cutters.

**KAJARI AND JHULA DANCES:**

These dances are performed by the women folk of

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1. The *Folk Dance of India*, page 115.
Uttar Pradesh in the month of Shravan. As the summer ends and the rainy season sets in, the women folk express their joy and emotions through this medium (dance). Seeing a speck of rain cloud in the sky, refreshed with cool air and the greenness all around, their hearts full of joy set them dancing with gay abandon. Swinging on Jhula and singing sweet songs, the village women vividly express the ecstasy of relief from the burning heat of summer. The best composition of Kajari song can be heard in Mirzapur district. In this very season women of eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh observe Tij festival in honour of Śiva and Pārvati. They keep fast for the whole day and night and keep awake at night mostly singing and dancing to propitiate Śiva, the Natrāja and his consort Pārvati.

**BRATA DANCES:**

The dances are also performed by women folk in order to ward off the evil spirits. It is believed that disease like small-pox can be cured when the presiding goddess Sītā is worshipped and in order to save a sufferer, this ritual dance is performed. It is also known as Sītā-puja.

**NAUTANKI:**

Nautanki also holds an important place in Uttar Pradesh. It is a type of Dance-drama because it takes almost whole night to complete the performance. The theme of this dance-drama is not restricted to a particular subject. It may be day today problem of social life, it may deal with
patriotic historical event or any subject of religious epics. It is generally welcomed in villages where the villagers have no better source of entertainment than the Nautanki. Formerly Nagara was the only musical instrument played in the performance, but nowadays Harmonium, Dholak, Tabla etc. are also used. Since vulgarity has now crept in the play, the high class gentry do not feel inclined to see Nautanki. Due to prominence of cinema in modern days, Nautanki has almost disappeared from the cities and it can be seen in villages on the occasion of some Melas. In this dance-drama both men and women participate.

The extensive land of Uttar Pradesh is the originator of a large variety of folk dances. One can also see variety of folk dances in the Himalayan valley in north, among which Chhapeli, Jagar, Thora, Jadda, Jhaintia, Jhora, Chawliya deserve special mention.

**Chhapeli Dance:**

This dance reminds us of the couple dances of Russia and central Europe. For example "couple dances from Russia and central Europe which have courtship for their theme are particularly colourful. The most characteristic feature of these dances as a whole is the change from slow to fast tempo. The two most popular courtship dances in the Caucasus are the Lezghinka and
the Lekuri. These are dances of great beauty in which the man dances around the woman - - - - - ".

**JAGAR DANCE**:

This type of dance is performed in order to remove the evil spirit and that is why it is performed by those people who are adept in the art of warding off evil spirits.

**THORA DANCE**:

It comes into the category of war dances because it is performed while holding swords in their hands by the participants and the big nagaras are played in order to create excitement. It originates from the sword dance as Moris and Country dances of British Isles have originated from the sword dance 'Morris dance was evolved from the sword dance when sticks and hankerc Chiefs were substituted for original swords - - - - -'.

**JADDA AND JHAINTIA DANCES**:

In both the dances men and women participate on festive occasions. Men and women also participate in Jhora dance. Linking arms with each other or holding each

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1. Anne Schley Duggan, Jeanette Schlottmann Abbie Rutledge, *Folk Dances of European Countries* (1948), page 94.

other at the shoulder or the waist they dance in a circle. Sometimes they start in semi-circle, sometimes moving in the same direction, they perform the dance with simple steps.

"The males of the hill dance 'Chawliya' with their fair sex. The males brandish their swords while dancing. 'Chawliya' has another variety, in which only men take part. Among the mixed dances 'Chanchari' has a popular appeal, because of the colourful costume of the dancers". Hurka and flute are the important musical instruments played in the dances of hills.

_MADHYA PRADESH_

Folk dances, being considered a very interesting form of entertainment, seem to hold greater popularity among the common mass of Madhya Pradesh. On certain occasions dancing is considered very essential so much so that it is the very life blood of the tribal people. They dance in a group and both men and women participate often forgetting their hard life. Sarhul, Gawar, Sila-Rina, Karma etc. are popular dances in Madhya Pradesh and occupy an important place in the life of the masses.

SARHUL DANCE:

The Sarhul dance of Urao Community living in

Jashpur Tehsil of district Raigarh occupies a significant place in the folk dances of Madhya Pradesh. This dance and the accompanying songs are associated with the worship of Sal tree also called Sarai. There is a common belief that the village god and the souls of fore-fathers are pleased with this dance and they bless the village with health, wealth and prosperity. Sarhul is a group dance which has been organised by the simple Adivasis out of their religious faith in the worship of nature.

When the sky is clear after rains, the people of Urao community dance and sing almost daily but on the occasion of any festival they specially decorate themselves and arrange dances. Sarhul is such a kind of dance which is arranged on the full moon day of Chaitra. In the morning Puja of Sal tree is performed which is known as Sarna Puja. It has a special significance due to the fact that the people of Urao community had first sought shelter under the Sal tree, which grows in abundance in the forest area of that region. They believe that their community god 'Mahadeva' resides on those trees. A Pujari conducts the puja. At the time of Puja, two pitchers are placed full of water and Sal flowers are put in them. Fruits, flowers etc. are offered to the god and goddess of the forest as well as to their fore-fathers. Dancing and singing go on along with the Puja.
Both males and females take part in the dance. They combine hand to hand, shoulder to shoulder and sometimes put their hand round the waist of each other in the dance. Sometimes they dance in a circle and sometimes they move forward and backward in a line and sometimes dance like the sea waves rolling to and fro in ecstasy.

The costume of the dancers is of rural type. They being of dark wheatish colour, stout built, having marks of tatoo on their arms and attired in country woven clothes, look very graceful. The girls wear cloured sari which is called Saruha Kichri, one corner of which bears coloured print of flowery design. The red print particularly looks very beautiful. It may rightly be said that ornaments worn by the adivasis of different regions of India are exotic if not nostalgic. Adivasi women is decked with jewellery. They wear a particular type of ring in fingers, which is called 'Chhampmuddi'. The ornaments used in neck are Kantha, Khania, Pan, Chandwa etc. In ears they used Tarkul, which is an earring made of palm leaves and which is also called Bidic. They use several Balies or Kanausi in their ears in which leaves of Peepal tree are attached. They also use feathers on their hairs which are woven artistically.

The boys also wear clothes made by weavers. They tie gamchha or pajri round their waist and big ghungroos which are called Chaurasis in their feet and round the waist. They wear Chura in wrists and anklets of red coral in arms and fix peacock feathers on the back portion of their waist. The instruments played on by them are Madar, big drum, Chatkula and jhanjh etc., all of which, when combined produce pleasing sound and provide different rhythmic patterns. To increase the splendour of the dancing group, a banner is placed in the centre which bears insignia of full moon on one side and of half moon on the other. The dancers themselves sing.

**GAWAR DANCE**:

This dance is prevalent in the thick jungles of Bastar (estate) and particularly in the hills of Datewara tehsil among the Gonds of Madia community. The Gonds who belong to the aboriginal tribe on whom the modern civilization has not yet dawned, still lead the life of the primitive age with life concepts adequate to the quiet life in the forest. They have, however, started cultivation in the hilly tracts of Bastar. When the corn is collected in the granary in the harvesting season, it is first offered to the gods. The dance is arranged on this occasion and that is why the bending and swaying of crops in the air is vividly depicted in this dance. The dance is also organised at the celebration of marriage ceremonies.
A head dress in the shape of a crown is prepared for the dancers by wrapping a cloured piece of cloth on the horns of wild buffalo and putting on them wreath of kowries and tender feathers of cock. Having put on this crown, the dancers dance with pomp and a feeling of dignity. The crown of horns has been their traditional emblem of clan dignity. They also worship it once a year.

One person invokes the dance by playing on Turhi made of bent bamboo. With a stick in one hand and giving hard stroke on the Dhol, the dancers of dark colour wearing dhoti tight up to the knee and with crown of horns on their head, come out of their huts. The sound of the drum resounds in the hill and attracts others also to the scene. Wearing heavy ornaments made of gilt, copper, brass and silver etc., hairs strangely woven, with marks of tattoo on arms, with a band of thin brass sheet tied on the forehead and fixing cock feathers on hair knots and with an iron stick in hand the female dancers keeping hand round the waist of each other come out and dance in straight lines opposite the men who form another line.

SAILA RINA DANCE:

Saila means hill or mountain. Being performed on hills it came to be known as Saila dance. In ancient times the Gond tribe lived on hills in small groups. They had to struggle hard for their existence. It is a type of dance which
though a means of entertainment in peaceful days was also a source of inspiration to the tribe to fight during trouble-somethings. Thus the dance comprises different ways of wielding different weapons e.g. lathi, spear, sword etc. Saila is primarily the dance of male persons. When men get exhausted by dancing then females enter dancing Rina dance to infuse them with enthusiasm. This dance is now mostly performed in cold season commencing from November to February i.e. from Deepawali to Holi. When unhar (Rabi) crops grow up in fields luxuriantly, the entire hilly tract is vibrant with the strain of songs and dance in the villages. A group of persons of one village go to another village in their best of attire for dance. There they dance from morning till evening. The village folk welcome the group and sometimes dance with them. At the time of their return the leader of the group is presented buffalo, mohar etc., on behalf of the village. Occasionally the dance is arranged at the house of well-to-do and respected persons of the village and in that case the burden of welcoming the dance group rests on that particular person. The custom of such group dances in village is known as Girda.

Next year the persons of the village playing the host pay a return visit to that village for dance to repay their Girda. This group is also accorded a hearty welcome. Thus Sail Rina has proved to be a good medium of establishing
friendly relation between different villages. With a slight change in musical tones and modulation the dance has developed three forms as shown below :-

Saila :- The movements of feet are slow and the flexibility is less in this dance.

Saila Laiki :- The movements become gradually swifter with more flexibility. There is exultation in movements.

Saila Bharoni :- With the quick movements of legs every limb of body seems to dance with emotion with the high pitch of dancing.

The male persons use white turban of Muslim on head. Peacock feathers are fixed on the turban. They wear tight jacket up to the waist and a wreath of silver or gold coins and red corals round the neck. They use a number of silver bangles in arms and thick hollow iron bangles in legs which contains pebbles inside to produce jingling sound along with the movements of legs. The female folk wear coloured dhoti which is tightly wrapped round the legs upto the knee. The musical instruments which are played in the Saila Rina dance are Mandar, Tinki, Qudumbh, Flute, Chatkola and Thiski.

KARMA DANCE :

This is considered as the best group dance among the Adivasis of Chhattisgarh. This dance has an invigorating effect on the aborigines who being illiterate and poor, have
to lead a hard life. It gives a new life and infuses fresh spirit in them. As soon as autumn sets in, one of them gives a big stroke on their pet instrument Mander on a bright moonlit night and then the whole forest where they reside, resounds with the jingling sound of ghungroos. The men and women both participate in this dance. The women hold arms and dance in straight lines forming rectangles and swaying rhythmically. The men form a separate circle and dance vigorously, displaying their physical strength. After sometime some dancers climb on to the shoulder of others and this formation moves in measured step, bodies swinging to the rhythm of the drum and the clapping of women. Subsequently the dancers get down from the shoulders of the other dancers, go inside the dancing circle and continue getting in and out. The drum beating is accelerated with the increase of tempo and when exhausted, they disperse.

There is a story behind the origin of the dance which is as under:

Seven brothers lived in a village. Six of them were engaged in trade. Once they went out on pilgrimage leaving behind the youngest who was lover of music. When the six brothers returned, the youngest brother did not care to welcome them and kept on busy in singing and dancing all the while round the Karam Plant which had grown in his courtyard. The elder brothers got enraged, uprooted the bush and threw it in the near-by river. The youngest brother
so much liked the bush that he followed it in the direction in which it was floating and ultimately when it stuck to one side of the river, he took it out and planted it nearby and continued his singing and dancing round it. His extreme regard and love for the bush and music had a miraculous effect on the bush that it soon grew up to a green leafy tree. This attracted a large number of persons who revered him and paid him the respect due to a saint. In course of time the condition of his elder brothers deteriorated. They came to their youngest brother who welcomed them warmly. They also felt devotion for the kama tree and began to sing and dance round it. Since then it has been a tradition to plant a branch of Kama tree at the place of dancing and the dance is also known as Kama dance.

FOLK DANCES OF BUNDELKHAND:

The most popular dances of Bundelkhand may be divided into two parts: (i) Folk dances of Adivasis (ii) Folk dances of Itar castes.

Kama Dance: It is performed to please the king and the queen.

Shaila Dance: It is performed in order to please adideva.

Atari Dance: In this dance the dancers climb on to the shoulders of others and give the look of a balcony. This is connected with a legend of lord Krishna. Women do not
participate in this dance.

_Śuwa Dance:_ Three or four women keep basket on their head and put a parrot and barley grains inside it and then dance.

_Hingala Dance:_ This dance is chiefly prevalent in the region of Vindhyā Valley. Taking a danda the dancers jump about. This dance is performed with a view to please the god Hingala.

_Nainjugāni Dance:_ Only females participate in this dance and it is performed in the spirit of offering worship.

_Folk dances performed by the Itar castes:_

_Kehra Dance:_ Only females participate. It is danced in a circular way.

_Dadra Dance:_ It is performed by both males and females.

_Badhaw Dance:_ This dance is performed on the birth of a child. Females holding hands of each other dance.

_Raī Dance:_ This dance is prevalent among females of Berini and Ahir communities. The hands are so moved that they express amorous playfulness.

_Jhumakia Dance:_ This name is given to it due to bending and swinging movements in this dance. This is confined to females.

_Baraiya Dance:_ In this dance females dance flirting their clothes by hand to depict that wasps are clinging to their limbs and they are trying to keep them away.
Jogiya Dance: This dance combines with it an art of acting. It is performed on the day when the barat of bridegroom's party goes to the bride's house. The females of the bridegroom's house dance and act that day.

Langi Dance: This is a group dance of males and females which is performed during Holi festival. Men stand in one line and females in another line opposite to them. They move their legs quickly. When females move forward, men move backward dancing and when men move forward then women recede dancing.

Chachar Dance: This is a dance of the male folk during the Deepawali festival.

Momia Dance: This is another dance of male folk. Men tie a strap round their waist which holds ghungroos.

Jhihiri Dance: This is a dance of the women folk. In the Autumn season when girls worship Suta, they go out begging corns door to door. They hold a pitcher containing several holes with an earthen lamp (diya) inside it, on their head and dance singing Jhihiri song.

Most of the other dances of the tribal peoples of Madhya Pradesh, Vindhya Pradesh, Orissa, Bengal and Andhra are similar in movements as well as in the living imagination they bring to this activity. On the full moon night of Bhadon they perform the Nava Rani dance. In Megh they dance the dewali, and in Chaitra the Chait Danda dance. When they sow the seeds they perform Beej Phutni dance, in
Sawan the Godo dance and at the time of rains the Goncha dance is performed. Lakshmi Gagar dance is performed in praise of goddess Lakshmi.

RAJASTHAN

TRIBAL DANCES:

Valar, Ghoomra and Ger all these dances are performed by the tribal people of Rajasthan. Garasia tribe performs Valar dance and the Bhils perform Ger and Ghoomra dances. There are two kinds of Valar and Choomra dances. In one type only women participate and in the other both men and women take part. In Valar dance sometimes men hold bows and arrows or swords while performing the dance. The musical instrument used in Valar dance is Dhol, but no musical instrument is played when it is performed by women only. The Ghoomra dance may be performed on any festive occasion. In Ghoomra dance each line of song is sung by men and then it is repeated by women. The movements of Ghoomra dance are simple and it is performed in a circle like the Ger dance. In Ger dance of the Bil tribe only men participate and often they form two circles one inside the other and the participants of one circle keep changing places with those who are in the other circle. The mock shooting with bows and arrows is also

1. Folk Dances of India, page 24-25.
Also see Mulk Raj Anand, The Dancing Foot, page 23.
practised in Ger dance as it is performed in Valar dance. The Dhol and Thali are used as musical instruments. The participants stand in a circle and as they dance, they strike the small rod which they hold in their hands.

"During the Holi festival, men with sticks in hand, perform the Ger dance vigorously. The ceremonial Ghoomra has features of both the Ger and Ghoomar and is by far the most fascinating Bhil dance."

**FIRE DANCE:**

The tribe of Sidha Jats who live in Thar desert performs a fire dance in which fire is lit, big drum is played to create excitement and song is also sung. It is performed in the memory of Guru Jasnath during the months of March and April.

**FESTIVAL DANCES:**

Dandiya, Rasiya and Geedar Dhamal dances are performed mostly by men folk at the time of Holi festival. The movements in all these dances are generally circular and the drummer sits in the centre of the circle and the chief characteristic which is common to all is that the participants hold a long stick in their hands while performing the dance. In Dandiya dance the number of the

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1. Folk Dances of India, page 22.
dancers is twenty and dancers strike the sticks and often change the feet movements while hopping and jumping. In Rasiya dance along with big and huge drum, metal Thali which is put upon the earthen pot is also struck by the sticks. In Geedar and Dhamal dances songs are also sung by the performers and they are prevalent in the Sekhavati region. "The Gindad is a popular community dance in the Sekhavati region of Eastern Rajasthan. A fortnight before Holi, people of all castes and creeds join and dance together. A large platform of manch is erected for the drummer in every mohalla and people dressed in attractive colours, flock together with sticks in hand to dance.

**BAGARIA DANCE:**

This dance is also performed at the time of Holi festival. Bagaria's chief profession is making and selling of brooms and specially on Holi festival Bagria women go on dancing from one place to another. They show a variety of movements in their dance.

**GHOOMAR AND JHOOMAR (Community Dances):**

These dances are generally performed by women folk only on different festivals. For example, Ghoomar dance, the most popular and national dance of Rajasthan is

1. Folk Dances of India, page 22.
specially associated with Navaratri and Gangour festival. The movements of Ghoomar and Jhoomar dances are purely circular according to their names and performers also sing the songs. In Ghoomar dance women also hold the small rods or swords in their hands. Jhoomar dance is similar to Garba dance of Gujrat and is associated with Teej festival. The movements are simple and clapping further intensifies the enjoyment.

**KATHPUTLI AND Dummy HORSE DANCES:**

These dances are not only popular in Rajasthan but the professionals carry the dance to other parts of country also. They are adopted as a profession. The Kathputli dance is famous in Marwar and performance is generally shown in the night which takes about two to three hours in which male handles the dolls and female plays the Dholak. In Dummy horse dance male performers come with an artificial horse made of wood or bamboo and dance in accompaniment of exciting sounds of Dhol and Tasha.

**KHAYAL DANCE:**

This is a dance drama and is performed by different professional troupes but Bhaiwai community deserves special mention. Nagoji is said to be the founder of this community and the dancers learn the art of this dance from an early age and they specialize in making speedy and variety of movements.
The theme of this dance drama depicts the daily life of the village community. Sometimes it also shows the epic love of Jhola and Maru. Boys only perform this dance drama and also play the role of women.

**SHANKARIA AND PANIHARI DANCES:**

These dances are performed by the Snake-charmers known as Karvelias. They adopt this dancing profession in order to earn money. Sringār rasa dominates in these dances because the theme of the Shankaria dance shows the love of a young man for a woman who is already in love with another man. Similarly in Panihari dance is performed by a couple and is based on the romantic song of the same name.

**TERA TALI DANCE:**

So far Tera Tali dance is concerned, the word itself signifies its nature because the women who participate in this dance show their various graceful striking movements of manjirasā in thirteen types. Though this dance is performed by women of Kamar caste but men also take part as they sing the songs when they strike the manjirasā. "The Kamads keep the record of Bhumiya families and sing and dance for them. A Kamad troupe consists of two men and two women who generally come from the same family. The men sing and play on the Ektara and the women who have manjirasā tied all over their bodies in a particular manner, dance in unimaginable and difficult poses. Through gestures they
depict actions such as cleaning, thrashing, cutting and removing the corn, kneading the flour, preparing chapatties, making ghee out of cards, spinning on the charkha and winding the yarn.  

**EASTERN REGION**

Before the various folk dances of eastern region are dealt with, it is apt to point out one distinguishing feature between the folk dances of eastern region on one hand and the folk dances of the west of India. The folk dances of the south are largely based on classical tradition and involve the use of rhythmic patterns and gestures i.e. mudras of the classical dance. The same is the case with the north. But it is not the case with the folk dances of the east. The folk dances of the east are not based on classical dance. The folk dances of the east are at the foundation of the religious, social and educational life of the people. But it is in the folk dances of the east that we find an urge not only for spiritual self-expression and war but also for work and social fellowship. As it is stated already, Sangeet or music is composed of three

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1. Folk Dances of India, page 24.
elements: singing, instrument playing and dancing. Thus according to the ancient Indian tradition, the basic education of humanity, which differentiates man from the beast, consists in training of singing, instrument playing and dancing. The orthodox Indian conceived the whole of life as art and the ideal was to train every boy and girl and every man and woman from the very beginning as a complete artist, able to express himself or herself perfectly.

There is one more distinguishing feature of these folk dances that there is a distinguishing physiological appropriateness of the dances for males and females respectively. For men there is great stress on the development of the upper part of the body i.e. of chest and arms, whereas for women, the movements of the lower half of the body. There is also a complete absence of the special types of costumes for the folk dances, specially in Bengal and these folk dances as a rule are performed in open air. The folk dances of the east which consist of the popular dances found in the regions of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Manipur need be examined in this sequel.

**Religious Dances:**

**Kirtan Dance:** This dance is purely religious in which Kirtan and Bhajans are sung in praise of gods and goddesses. It has an ancient origin specially when Vaisnava
cult was first propagated by Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. In this dance there is no restriction of male or female, every one who is desirous to participate, may join and dance, without regard to caste, creed etc. As the beating of drum sounds so the dancers also raise or lower their hands in a circular movement. This dance is called Nagar Kirtan when the dance party moves through the streets.

_ Jatra Dance : _ As the name suggests Jatra means journey and the special characteristic of this dance is that it is performed like the Nagar Kirtan dance moving from one place to another. But in Jatra dance a group of dancers are trained under the supervision of a professional expert who is known as adhikari. The theme of this dance generally depicts some important aspects of Krishna's life but sometimes sociological theme also pervades.

_ Avatar Dance : _ In this dance participants play the role of different Avatārs which are supposed to be ten in number. Avatar dance is performed by chanting of Mantras uttered by 'Bala' or the chief dancer. The 'Avatar' as well as the 'Incense' dance are performed at the end of the Bagali year on 'Charak Ghamburga' festival.

_ Brata Dance : _ As 'Sitala Puja' is performed in Uttar Pradesh similarly in Bengal it has an important place among the ritual dances and is performed by women only. The dance performance takes place when the vow-taken woman goes from house to house for collecting some funds and the lady
of the house spreads the Asan and the sacred pot is placed on it. Prior to this dance performance the vow-taken lady has to march with the invited women and has to take bath putting the sacred pot on her head on a Kula or a bamboo winnowing tray. "After the Kula with the sacred pot on it, has been placed on this Asan (Hence the name of this dance 'pot placing') the processionists perform dances around to the accompaniment of the 'dhak' or drum played by a man of the 'Rishi' caste (one of the depressed classes whose profession it is to play on the drum).

Mahādev and Kāli Dance, Rādhā Krishna Dance, Har Pārvati Dance and Ganga Dance: All these dances are religious in character and as their names suggest they depict the performances accordingly. For example, in Mahādeva and Kāli dances, the participant performing the role of Mahādeva smears the ashes on his body, wears the rudraksha garland around his neck and keeps a trishul in his hand, on the other hand, Kāli dancer who plays the role of Kāli comes to the arena and depicts that scene where Kāli is shown placing her foot on the chest of Mahadeva and then performs a vigorous whirling dance. Similarly in Rādhā Krishna and Har Pārvati dances generally the romantic feature of their life is depicted. In Ganga dance, the origin, its course and its other description are depicted. The chief characteristic of all these ritual dances is that they are performed with the help of 'Masks' as in Kathākali dance. The old man and old woman
performance which is called the Burha - Burhi dance is also played by wearing masks. The musical instruments played in these ritual dances are Jhol, Dhak and MaHol. The Madol musical instrument holds an important place in Bengal. It is also worshipped and a special performance is arranged which is called Madol Puja. Flowers are offered in Madol Puja dance. It is also a part of wedding ceremony.

**Khemta Dance:** Khemta dance which was performed by the professional dancing girls at the time of Durga Puja and Dol Jatra has by the passage of time, now come to a stage of degradation and is seldom to be seen. Bhajo is also a type of ritual dance because it is performed in praise of god Indra. It is restricted to unmarried girls only.

In Bengal 'Baul dance' may be performed at any time and at any place. It is neither restricted to time and place nor it is related with any special religious ceremony or festival. Ektara is the only musical instrument played with Baul songs and the dancing performed with these songs creates a pleasant atmosphere.

**WAR DANCES :**

**Raibeshe, Dhali and Kathi Dances :** Excluding some dances which are purely associated with religious ceremony and festival there are also some dances namely Raibeshe, Dhali and Kathi which depict war like character. 'Raibeshe Dance' is mainly in character and it is performed by the depressed
classes like Bauris and Domes of Burdwan district in Bengal. The performers wear the brass anklets called nupurs on their feet and shout the vigorous warlike sound. The musical instruments played on Raibeshe and Dhali dances are Dhol and Kansi. In Dhali dance wooden swords and shields are used. Dhali dance reflects the idea of mock fights. The chief characteristic of Kathi dance is its rhythmic footwork and the synchronization in the beating of the sticks which the dancers hold in their hands. It is a circular dance and the performers though perform the various diversions and patterns but never miss the beat or lose the rhythm and among the dancers who are moving in a circular form one throws himself in the centre and continues to dance round and round without losing the beating of time with his feet and sticks. The dancer who is in the centre of the circle is supposed to be the victim of the tribe's wrath.

There are some other dances performed in Bengal namely, the Kera Jhumar and Duet Jhumar. Kera Jhumar dance is performed by women dancers of Kora caste forming into several single rows with the contiguous dancers in each row clasping hands so as to form a chain and duet Jhumar is generally danced by two women to the accompaniment of the dhol.

1. Projesh Banerji, The Folk Dance of India, page 90.
Marsiya and Jari dances are performed at the time of Moharrum by Mohammedans and hence they are called mourning dances which depict their grief.

BIHAR

Chhota Nagpur district of south Bihar holds a very prominent place for popular dances. As number of tribes reside there among whom Santhals, the Carans and the Mundas must be mentioned for their folk dances which deserve special reference.

Dassai Dance, Jhika and the Danga Nritya and Buru Dance: These dances are performed by the Santhals who are supposed to be born singers and dancers. They perform these dances which are associated with their respective festivals. For example, dassai dance is performed on Dassai Parva or at the time of Dassehra when Lurga puja is celebrated. This is performed by men and the performers go from village to village for collecting funds. The collected money is spent in the dance performance. They use Morpankhe in their dance. Jhoka and Danga Nritya is performed at the time of Ba Parva festival which is associated with Holi. They express their joy and emotions in dancing and merry making with gay abandon holding each other by hands and performing circular movements or dancing in criss-crossing movement. Similarly the Buru Dance is
associated with Maghi Parva. In this dance the god Bar Pahar is propitiated. The actual ceremony begins with the putting of vermilion mark on the head of a cock, and it is flown away after invoking the god Bar Pahar. The men and women put on new attire, partake in feasting on special preparations which include meat and finally help themselves with rice bear. Thereafter the young men and women form a circle and go round dancing.

**Jadur Dance:** This dance is performed by the Oraons at the time of Sarhul festival, which is associated with nature worship and planting of trees. In this dance the performers dance like the sea waves moving to and from in linear formation and the movements are like those of peacocks as they tuck plenty of peacock feathers. Women folk decorate themselves with flowers in their hair and men folk wear white dhoties. 'Jadur' means spring in the Oraon dialect. A drummer plays on the madal which produces a sound suggestive of the roar of the ocean. The feet of the dancers move as if to describe the undulation of the waves in the sea. The girls with their hands interlocked stand in row, hop two steps forward and return with their bodies bent forward. Then they take two steps to the left and repeat the first movement. The men beating on their drums and uttering loud cries, jump towards the women. When the women move forward the men retreat in the same tempo.

2. Folk Dances of India, page 15.
Karma Dance: This dance is performed after planting a Karma tree and this function is common to all tribes. The musical instrument drum plays an important role in this Karma dance. Men and women both participate in this dance and they drink rice beer called Handia in joy and to dance in a high spirit.

Paika Dance: It is prevalent among the tribes of Mundas who perform this dance on festive occasions like marriages. Paika dance has war like character as it is performed with swords and shields in the hands of dancers. The jumping, clanking and the brandishing of swords are the other characteristic of this dance. Drum is played in this performance.

Jatra Dance, Dhol Dance, Kharia Lahasua and Khoyal Dance: With the exception of Santhals, Oraons and Mundas and tribes the other tribes also have there popular dances. For example, Jatra dance is not restricted to any one particular tribe. Jatra word denotes journey and any performance acted by travelling will be counted in this category. In Bengal Jatra players perform their play under the supervision of a manager who is known as 'Adhikari'. As it is not possible to perform the Jatra dance in rainy season so it takes place before and after the rains. Dhol dance is performed by the Asur tribes. The Kharia Lahasua and the Khoyal dance are performed by the Dudh Kharia tribes. The tribal people named Hos who are the inhabitants of
Chhotanagpur plateau also perform their popular dance. They are the lovers of nature. In order to propitiate the deity named 'Dasauli', the Maghe dance is performed and as the abode of deity is supposed to be in sal groves so every villager pays respect and grows this in his house.

In Bihar some religious folk dances which are performed in Mithila deserve special mention. Among them Rama Lila nach, Kirtaniya nach, Kunjvasi nach, Naradi nach, Bhagata nach, Vidpat nach and Puja Arti nach are most popular. As the names indicate these religious folk dances are performed in order to propitiate the gods and goddesses. Not only recently but from the very beginning Mithila had been the centre of cultural development. Specially at the time of Maharaja Nanyadeva (1097 - 1133) music and dancing flourished under his patronage. In twelfth century Jaydeva the author of 'Gita Govind' also made an attempt to flourish this art by his works. In Mithila along with these ritual dances there are other dances which are performed only by women folk and some are performed by both men and women. Dances which are performed by women folk only are Jhijhiya nach, Jata Jatin nach and Sama Chakwa nach. Jata Jatin dance is performed on moonlit nights during the mansoons. In this dance a group of young girls and housewives assemble in courtyard and the dance is performed from midnight to the morning. The musical instrument played in this performance
is the drum. This dance depicts the love story of Jata and Jatin. In Bakho nach husband and wife dance together on festivals as well as on the occasion of the birth of a child. In Mithila Saturei nach is performed by the mixed group of both male and female. As in Uttar Pradesh some dances are specially prevalent among Ahir, Kahar, Chamar etc., similarly in Bihar some popular dances are performed by low caste people, and their dances are called according to their names for examples; Kamla Nai nach, Dampha Basuli nach which is confined to shoe makers, Mahrai nach performed by boatmen, Salhush nach of Musahar caste and chamar natuwa etc. Jhami nach is performed by Muslims. Bhikhari Das Thakur has introduced the Bidesia nach in Mithila. Pamariya nach is also very popular. The Kathputli nach is also prevalent as in other States.

Brajvasi nach, Hansi Lila nach, Kadam Lila nach, Nag Lila nach etc. depict the various events from the episodes of lord Krishna as their names suggest. These dances are of non-maithil origin.

**CHHAU DANCE OF SARAI KELLA :**

This dance is performed in spring festival. The special feature of Chhau dance is the complete absence of facial expression as masks play important role in this dance. The participants wear the mask on their face according to their roles. So due to use of mask there is no scope for
the movement of eyes, lips, teeth and the mode of expression by face. On the other hand the skill of dancer is shown by the movement of his head, neck, hands, legs, with the exception of the facial expression. Chhau dance is not restricted to a particular theme. It may depict the mythological and historical stories like Hara Visnu, Madan Gopal, Krishna Balrama, Chandra Bhaga etc. It may portray an animate dance like Mayur Nritya and Sarpa Nritya etc. It may cover a natural object like Sagar Nritya (ocean dance), Sarat Sashi Nritya (autumn moon dance) as well as day to day life of any professional man like Nāvik Nritya (boatman's dance), Dheebbar on (fisherman dance), Sābara (hunter dance) etc. For the stabilization of Chhau dance credit goes to Kumar Bijoy Pratap, the Santhali Prince of Sarakella and his successors. In Chhau dance the music is provided by a Chorus of singers accompanied by a Dhol. Projesh Banerji is of the opinion that the individual dances of series include Solo duet and group performances.

Mohan Khokar has also divided the Chhau dances into three categories.

**RANGIN SĀSTRIYA, NACHANI AND NATUA DANCES:**

Among these dances Rangin and Sāstriya dances are

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1. Folk Dances of India, page 55.
performed by tribal as well as non-tribal people and only men participate in the dance. Mask, the special feature of Chhau dance of Seraikella Kharsawan region predominates in Sāstriya dance. Nachani dance may be performed at any festive occasion and as the name suggests, Nachani is a female dancer and she gives her performance with a male partner who is known as Rasik. Sahanai and Nagara are played as musical instruments in Nachani dance. Singing and clapping by two male members add to the enjoyment. On the occasion of Kartik Purnima all the Nachanis and Rasiks gather at a particular place and perform Rāsa. Natua is also a duet dance and the same musical instruments which are used in 'Nachani dance' are played in this dance. Natua is also performed on festive occasions and other ceremonial functions like marriage etc.

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**ORISSA**

Crissa has been known as the Utakala and it is rightly observed that among the places of pilgrimage all over the regions of the earth, India occupies a prominent place and of all the States of India, Utakala can boast of the highest renown.

So far as Orissa is concerned Orissi dance deserves special mention the other dances of this state and can stand

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at par with the classical dances of India. As per historical facts it is clear that devadāsīs or dedicated dancing girls had always been associated with the attached to the temples throughout India. Similarly Crissi dance also begins with the history of these devadāsīs, who are known in Crissa as Maharis, and in course of time Nat mandir or the dancing hall was needed to complete a temple. Chaitanya is the apostle of the common people in Crissa. An idea of spiritual independance of women flourished through the followers of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who formed a separate sect after his death. W.W. Hunter also observes that in their monastic enclosures male and female cenobites live in celibacy, the women shaving their heads, with the exception of a single slender lock. The two sexes chant the praise of Viṣṇu and Chaitanya together in hymn and solemn dance.

Crissi dance can be classified as mentioned below:

I. BھUMI प्रANAM

II. BIGHNARAJA पUJA

III. BATU NRITYA

IV. ISHTA DEVA BANDANA

V. SWARA PALLABI NRITTA

VI. TARIJHAM OR NATANGI

1. Digest of Indological Studies, page 197.
BHUMI PRANAM: As the name suggests, this item begins with the touching of the stage or floor. Thus, as in Bharata Nātyam, in this item salutation is paid to the earth.

BIGHNARĀJA PUJA: Bighnarāja is another name for Lord Ganesa. In this item slokas are recited in praise of Lord Ganesa.

BĀTU NRITYA: This dance is performed in the honour of Lord Śiva.

Both the aspects of Nṛitta and Nritya are displayed in Batu nritya.

ĪŚHTA DEVA BANDANĀ: In this dance, the dancers recite the slokas in the honour of one's favourite deity and the meaning of the sloka is explained through various expressions.

ŚWARA PALLABI NRITTA: This dance begins with the singing of ālāp of the rāga. In this way the basis mood of the rāga is created and the dances shows the rhythmic movements of the eyes and eye-brows accordingly.

Then follows Sabhinaya Nritya, in which Sahitya and abhinaya are given equal importance. Songs, mostly in śringāra rasa, are sung with expressions by the dancer.

TARIJHAM OR NATANGI: THE LAST item of Crissi dance is known as Tarijham or Natangi which is similar to Tillānā or Bharata Nātyam or Tatkar of Kathak Nritya.
Mahris are of two kinds: one is called Bhitargani mahris and the other is known as Bahargani mahris. As the name suggests, Bhitargani mahris are permitted to enter the sanctum of the temples and Bahargani mahris perform their dance outside the temple. Similarly, dancing boys who are dressed as dancing girls are known as gotipuas. Due to being attached with Akhadas, they are also known as Akhada Pilas.

In the field of Orissi dance, Debabrata Das is one of the foremost contemporary exponents. Dhirendranath Patanaik has also researched in Orissi dance. Kelu Charan Mahapatra, who belongs to Puri is also an expert Orissi dancer. He learnt this art from Pankaj Charan Das who comes from Maharis family. In this way, with the help of these experts, Orissi dance is becoming prominent day by day.

Of the dances prevalent in Orissa, Bhuiya dance and animistic dance deserve special mention.

**BHUIYA DANCE:**

This is a courtship dance performed by a community known as Bhuiya. Both boys and girls participate in this dance and at the end of performance the marriage of one pair is announced.

**ANIMISTIC DANCE:**

This dance is specially performed by a hill tribe known as Juang. The dancers depict the features of different animals in their performance and the dance is known by the name of the particular bird or animal which
is imitated. For example, the pigeon dance, pig dance, tortoise dance, etc. The famous parrot dance is performed by the dalgas and Gonds tribe. They imitate their various features as they are ever in motion, in search for food, in attack, in flight, etc.

The dance of Savarasa, who live mostly in the hills of Koraput and Ganjam in Orissa, has a strong religious and ceremonial character. It is performed on the occasions of marriage, funeral, harvest, etc.

ASSAM

Assam is a land of hills and valleys. Hills are populated by tribal people and their place suggests their tribal name accordingly. For example Naga Hills is occupied by Nagas, Abor Hills is a place of Abores, Mikir Hills is occupied by Mikirs, Cachar Hill by the Cacharis, Khasia Hills by the Khasis, Garo Hills by the Garos and so on. Villages, which are situated in hills consist of only one tribe. Therefore, so far as the folk dances are concerned, they are mostly performed by these tribal people. They enjoy dancing at the time of harvesting as it is done in other parts of India. Generally dance and merry making are held in the house compound of the village chief. In order to please their spirits, sacrifices of pups and goats are made and all men, women and children take part in the dance. They drink rice beer and sing and gong is beaten continuously.
for music. Such type of performance can be seen all over the hills after the paddy harvest. The harvest dance mai-gai-nai in Assam is performed by the Bodo people of Assam. In this dance both male and female participate taking spades and water pots respectively. Pazutawla dance is performed on the occasion of maize harvesting. Boys and girls both participate in this dance which is popular among Lakher who live in Lushai hills. Khasis of the Khasi and Jaintia hills also perform their harvest dance with sickles and baskets in their hands. There is also a dance by Angami Nagas which is performed on the occasion of the Thekrangi-Genna which is a ceremony marking the sowing of paddy. All young men and women participate in this performance. Apart from this other types of dances are also performed in Assam.

WAR DANCES:

Garai Dabrai Nai, San-Galao-banai and Sakhrauli dances come into the category of war dances because they somehow depict an idea of fighting. The Garai Dabrai Nai dance is performed on horses. The San-galao-banai dance is performed by two groups depicting contest over a boundary line. In Sakhrauli dance a few women participate. Each woman holds two swords in her hands and they dance in rows and then in a circle. These dances are performed by the Bodo Kacharis people. The dances performed by Dhuliyas and Bhawariyas are of warlike character. They perform it in acrobatic style and instruments
like Dhak Dhol etc. also produce the martial sound.

Sawlakia, Chochhipa, Sawlakia dances: These dances are performed by Lakhera of Lushai hills on the occasion of successful victory over their enemies. Participants use Gongs and Cymbals in their dance. War dance is also popular among the Garos community of Assam.

RITUALISTIC DANCES:

Religious rites like Nanu is directly associated with ceremonial dance in which rice pounding is depicted. It is prevalent among the Angami Nagas. They wear heavy and long head-dress. Hornbill feathers are also used in their head-dress. Khaphri-Sip-Nai, Dao-thai lang nai and Barai-masa-nai are purely ritualistic in character. A dance is performed by the Bodo Kacharis at their main rite called Kherasi. Drum Sarangi, Harp, Kartal, flute are the musical instruments which are played in these ritualistic dances.

In some of the ritualistic dances the common feature of war dances is also depicted. For example, Khaphri-Sip-Nai; the daudimi or deodhani's (a woman who is dedicated to some god) dance, with a sword in one hand and a cloth in the other. Similarly in Barai-masa-nai dance sword is used in hand and it is performed in a group. In Nat Puja dance also a group of girls take part holding a shield in one hand and a cane in the other. Bodo Kacharis worship Siva in the form of Cactus plants under the names, Budha and his consort, Budhi.
The worship of snake goddess Manasa is also performed with a dance by a woman known as Deodhani, who functions like an oracle. In Gauripur at the time of worship of Kartika a dance is performed in a circular way by a single girl with a bow in her hand.

**Nongkrem and Laho Dances:**

Nongkrem dance is performed by the Khasis and it is associated with worship of the snake god, U Thlen. Laho dance, performed by Jaintias is dedicated to the mother goddess Pangkit as a prayer to bring wealth and prosperity to the race. Drum, cymbals and flutes are the musical instruments in this dance. Another dance is prevalent among the common people who perform a ceremony opechara Sabah in which the nymphs of the air are invoked when some calamity occurs in a village. A few women keeping their hair loose sing and dance in a circular movement to appease the nymphs. Garos also perform their religious dance on the occasion of Wangala festival. Caro men in their tribal coats and women with their various ornaments dance in a circular way with the help of drums and flute.

**Marriage Dances:**

Bau nach is a dance of the newlywed bride. Generally it is performed in the inner courtyard of the house. Drums, Gong and Shahnai are the musical instruments played in this marriage dance. It is performed by the women folk in the southern part of Assam. Along with this Bau dance, the
Barman rasa dance is also performed by the Kacharis of southern Assam. It is a type of Rāsa Lila dance. Another type of marriage dance in Gauripur is performed in which five girls participate with baskets and sing the marriage songs. There is a custom among the common people in the Kamrup district of Assam to have a Comic dance at night before a girl whose marriage is to be celebrated on the next day. It is performed by a boy or girl who take a winnowing basket on back and dances a few steps backward and forward. The dancer is known as Kula-budhi.

**DEVIL AND MASK DANCES:**

This type of dance is performed in North Eastern Frontier Area of Assam. As the name suggests in this dance, masks are used which depicts an idea of devil or Rakshas and their actions and movements also show that some devil performance is going on. In Devil dance mostly some fighting scene is produced. The Bhutiyas of the Bhutan hills and their base also use mask in their dance. For example, a dance which is performed by a girl among the Bhutiyas, the dancer is placed between two men, one of them wears a skirt and the other wears a demon mask and the crown of the girl dancer is made of metal plates and men on both sides of her dance in graceful movements. Drums and cymbals are used as musical instruments.
KUKI BAMBOO DANCE:

This dance is performed by both males and females. Mr. Hutton observes while describing a dance known as Jutalam "in which the dancer dances between four men, who face each other from opposite sides of a square, each pair holding two bamboos, one end in each hand. As one pair brings the bamboos together, the other pair parts theirs at right angles, and so alternately in varying time, while the dancer has to skip from the spaces formed by the closing bamboos into those formed by the parting bamboos, in time to the singing and "with enough agility to save his ankles from severe confusion."

BIHU DANCES:

Bihu dance is associated with Bihu festival. It is performed in Baisakh. All the people take great interest and specially agriculturists perform with gay abundance. Huchari and Bihu are the two important varieties of Bihu dances. Both are performed in open air field. Huchari is a circular type of dance and Huchari Keertan is also sung in this dance. Shol, Tals, Taka, small flat cymbals, Jews harp, the buffalo hornpipe are the instruments played in Bihu dance. It is performed in several patterns and is prevalent among the miris and Wikris.

ANIMISTIC DANCES:

Neulai-Gela-Nai: This is mongoose dance depicting the movements of Mongoose. Gan-daula-ban-nai dance also depicts catching of insects.
Khaijama Phanai: This is a circular dance performed by men with a sword in one hand and a cloth in the other round a tree showing the action of felling trees or removing red ants from them. A fish dance is also prevalent among the Ao Nagas. This is associated with moatsu festival. Firstly, the dancers walk slowly round in a body; then they move in fours and show graceful movements of a fish. Drum is used in this performance. A dance showing serpentwise movements is also popular among the Khonoma Angamis Nagas.

FEAST DANCES:

Chai dance is performed on chap-char-kul feast day. "The Chai consists in all the young men sitting with their backs to the walls, each with a girl sitting between his knees with her back to him. Individual performers dance in the middle, the remainder singing and clapping hands. On the third day of the feast the young men and girls collect in the centre of the village and form a circle, every girl being between two youths, whose arms cross over her neck, holding in their hands, cloths which hang down behind like a curtain. Inside the circle is a drummer or gong-beater, who chants continuously ——-—-. The Pakhupila dance is associated with jhum cultivation and when its cutting is

over, a feast named Khutla takes place and this dance is performed. Both young men and women participate in this function. Drums and gongs are the musical instruments used in this dance. It is performed in a circular way. The Tsungsang dance is also associated with a feast among the Ao Nagas. Both men and women participate in this dance. Among the Sema Nagas a feast dance is performed round a fire. This dance starts with a procession called aghogho. Along with this dance yachumi-keghile and Yetsimi-Keghile dances are performed by Yachumi and Sangtam Semas.

MOURNING DANCES:

Rakhatla dance is performed on the occasion of the death of an important member of the community by the Lakhers who mostly live in the south eastern corner of the Lushai hills. Five people sit opposite each other and a log is put on the ground. Each person holds a bamboo in hand. The bamboos are struck against each other and dancers skip in and out between the bamboos. Todas of Nilgiri hill also perform funeral dance. Funeral dance may also be seen among the Aruntas of Australia.

Some Muslims of Assam of Oja-Pali or choral groups while singing songs relating to the death of their prophet.

Muhammad begin clapping and dancing in circles.

Chomangkan is also a type of mourning dance as it is performed on the occasion of offering oblations to the dead. Both young men and women participate in this dance.

A ceremonial dance is performed among the Lotha Nagas at the time of thatching the house. In this dance song is also sung in order to repeat the war like deeds of the brave men of the village. Similarly Konyaks of Namsang and Tamlu also perform their dance at the time when morung (bachelor's hall) is rebuilt.

MANIPUR

Manipur is a land of dancers. Every man, woman and child is habituated to take part in dance. It has become a part of their daily life. Not only the inhabitants of Manipur are interested in dancing but the Manipur State itself has its origin with dancing and therefore Manipur was created so that gods might have a place to dance. Once Natraj, the lord Siva and his consort Parvati were in search of a place to hold their dance performance because formerly they were not cordially invited to see the Rasa Lila of Sri Krishna and Radha and no due attention was paid to them. Thus to start a more charming Rasa Lila in comparison to that, they searched the place of Manipur because this State was attractive as well as beautifully laid by natural valleys.
and mountains. Other gods and nine nymphs stood on
the nine ranges of hills. Naga demon of Patal also helped
him by his Mani or gem which lighted that place. In this
way it was named as Manipur. He was so much elated
with the dance that the Mani was released in a spray over
the entire area and that is why we see that the costumes
of the Rasa Lila dancers are sprinkled with shiny mica
which is similar to diamond. In this way Manipur and its
Rasa Lila have an ancient origin and are connected with
dance.

As classical dances have been described earlier in
the Manipur chapter, so now other dances will be dealt with
here.

CIRCULAR DANCES:

Hansengay, Toonangan Lomna, Hengnaga Toona, Tinkoom
Gneina Tanaggalemay and Shan Lam Dances:— All these dances
are performed by Kabui Nagas. Their movements are of circular
type. In Hansengay, Toonangan lomna, Hengnaga toona both
men and women participate. Tinkoom gneina tanaggalemay dance
is performed by two girls in a circle in which hand movements
are more predominant. Shan Lam dance is performed by young
men and in this dance men engage two and two abreast in a
circle which moves round. In the latter part of the dance,
the circle divides into two and the dancers go round, one circle
within the other, in opposite directions. The circle again
forms as before and they meet in the centre. One of the chief
characteristics of all these dances is that two or four girls
dance by couples in the centre while the whole dance is performed in circular movement.

HARVEST DANCE:

Like the Nagas of Assam, Manipur Nagas also perform their special dances. A harvest dance is performed by the Kabuis Nagas of Manipur. Men wear colourful costumes and having spears in their hands decorate their head with horns while girls come forward wrapped in red and black blankets. Faubion Bowers deserves, "Kabui Naga women specialize in one dance of purely abstract movements. Wrapped in red and black blanket which covers them from breasts to knees, the seated women begin to make geometric patterns with their hands. The hands and arms move rapidly in symmetrical and machine like gesture. All the movements are sharp, clear and sudden, when they rise to a standing position, they take one step forward, then back, and resoundingly smack the back of the thigh of one leg with the top of the other foot."

SPEAR DANCE:

This dance is not only prevalent among the Nagas of Manipur but it is common to all Nagas. Long spears are twirled, jabbed at invisible enemies, and rapidly and dangerously thrust at various members of the dancers own body while he hops away and avoids the attack of his own

1. The Dance in India, page 165 - 166.
weapon. In the spear dance, at one point while the dancer rapidly plunges the spear at his feet which are alternately being kicked forward, he begins to lean backward until he appears to be horizontally suspended by lenitation.

**ANIMISTIC DANCES:**

Nagas have also their dances initiating characteristic movements of animals like the dance of bee or the dance of the hornbill etc. Similarly Quoireng tribe performs their dance in which two parties move in front, cross each other which is similar to snake like figure and after performing in circular way they come again in their original two lines.

**WAR DANCE:**

War like dance may be seen throughout India. Specially among the tribal people it is still performed. In ancient India battles were fought in accompaniment of instrumental music, including Vir Rasa songs. So this tradition lingers in the sword, spears, shield and other War like dances. Similarly Harrings also perform their war dance in which their actions and movements reflect ideas like spear throwing towards enemies, attacking, retreating etc.

**RAKHAL, DHOL AND TAFAR DANCES:**

In Manipur Rakhal dance is also known as Cowherd's

dance. In spring time it is performed by the young boys of villages. In this dance they depict the exploits of Krishna as a child. Manipur also boasts of vigorous dance solos of great virility for male performers, such as the drum-dance. So far as the Dhol and Tafar dance is concerned it is performed with the aid of musical instruments as the name suggests. It takes place at the time when the Juggernaut cart is pulled through the villages and as the musical instrument drum is played so the movements of this dance are not slow and simple but they are vigorous and full of excitement.

WESTERN REGION

The Kathak dance is not only prevalent in Uttar Pradesh but its offshoots may also be seen in Western Region.

The Rāsa dance or the Krishna Lila dance of Gujar in the western region resembles the Natwari Nritya of Uttar Pradesh. Regarding Saurashtra, this state is known as the original place of dance. It is referred as such in the Nātya Śāstra of Bharata Muni. Thus, its various folk dances have some resemblance of classical dance of Uttar Pradesh as seen in Dandiya Rāsa dance of Saurashtra which is associated with the various aspects of Krishna's life.

1. Kay Ambrose, Classical Dances and Costumes of India, page 84.
GUJRAT

It will be apt to point out that goddess Kāli or Durga in the name of Amba Mata is worshipped throughout Gujrat. Though worship of Durga or Kāli is also prevalent in several states of India but as a matter of fact Gujrat deserves more attention because most of the popular dances of this state are directly associated with the worship of Durga Mata and that is why the Navaratri is considered a very important occasion for dances specially in Gujrat. Another ritual which is important at the time of worshipping the Durga or Kāli is the burning of lamp and consequently lamp is also the important symbol of the popular dances of Gujrat.

NATIONAL DANCE:

Garba dance which is performed by women folk only bears all these characteristics because it is performed in honour of Kali known in Gujrat as Amba Mata. The lamp is put in the centre and the performers move round it. Prakash Banerjee observes that the word Garba may be derived from one or both of two sources (a) the song which is sung with these dances is known as 'Garba', and would obviously lend its name to the dance with which it is associated and (b) the girls of Gujrat dance, carrying on their heads a white earthen pot; its sides cut out into designs of flowers, leaves, etc. The pot is called a 'Garbi', the word here being a diminutive of the
Sanskrit word 'Ghat' meaning pot. Pot presents a very pretty sight, and the procession of girls who go from house to house to perform the 'Garba' dance during this festival, forms a particularly pleasing spectacle since each one carries on her head an illuminated 'Garba' pot.

The number of women folk who participate in this dance is not limited. It may be even more than fifty. The movements of this dance is circular and the dancers show a variety of foot steppings and hand movements while moving in circle round the lit pot or lamp. Heench is an off shoot of 'Garba' dance along with clapping of hands and snapping of fingers and in Garba dance Heench also depicts the bending of bodies and movements of arms. Dholak is the musical instrument played in the Garba dance. Song which is sung by one dancer is generally repeated by others. Sometimes harmonium is also played.

RĀSA DANCES OR THE KRISHNA LILA DANCES:

Rāsa dance is also a popular dance in Gujarat but specially in Kathiyawar it is performed with great pomp and show. Though this dance may be performed on Sharad Purnima, Janamastami and other festive occasions but in Navaratri it has a special importance and is danced in praise of Ambā Mata. As a matter of fact Rāsa dance is performed by men folk but women also take part and sometimes both dance together.
As the name suggests, this dance reflects certain important events connected with the childhood of Lord Krishna but generally the idea of his lilas is sung in Rāsa songs. The dance is mentioned in several ancient texts, where it is generally referred to as Hallisaka which is of three types. Dand Rasak which is one of these types is considered as the Rāsa of Ujjain. All the dancers carry short sticks in their hands and as they dance, they maintain the rhythm by striking these sticks. The dancers stand in a circle and sing and strike the sticks and move to the front or back. One becomes the leader and others repeat the lines sung by him. The steps and movements of this dance are simple and not like the Garba dance but the repetition of the lines by the other dancers is in the same way as it is sung in the Garba dance. Dholak, Shahnai and Harmonium are the musical instruments played in this dance.

**GARBI DANCE:**

> Another popular dance of Ujjain in which men only participate is the Garbi dance which is almost exclusively performed at the time of Navaratri in honour of Ambā Mata. This dance is also similar to a great extent to Garba dance because along with the picture of Amba Mata a lighted lamp is lit in the centre and sometimes a basket having moist earth in which are sown wheat, rice and lentils, is kept in the centre around which the dancers move and dance with the simple
steps. The dance is punctuated with clapping and snapping of fingers. The Garbi is never danced with pots. Another common feature of the popular dance of Gujrat i.e. repetition of songs which is first sung by the leader of the dancers and then followed by others is also adhered to in Garbi dance. Hamchee is another variety of Garbi dance in which dancers are not restricted to dance a single style of movements.

_S A U R A S H T R A_

Saurashtra is well known as the birth place of the Lāsya Nṛitya from the very ancient times. It holds an important position in connection with the origin of dance according to Hindu mythology. In the beginning Brahma gave the Nātya Veda to Bharata. Bharata together with groups of Gandharwas and Apsarās performed Nātya, Nṛitta and Nṛttya before Śiva. Then Śiva having remembered his own majestic performance (dance) caused Bharata to be instructed in that (art) by his attendant (ganas). And before this on account of his love (for Bharata) he gave to the latter instructions in 'Lasya' through Pārvati. Having learnt Tāndava (dance) from Tandu, Sages spoke of it to mortals. Pārvati on the other hand instructed Uṣa, the daughter of Bāna in Lasya (dance). The latter taught (the art) to the milkmaids of Dwarika, and they taught this to women of Saurashtra, who
(in their turn) taught it to women of other countries. In this manner this (art) was traditionally handed down, and has come to stay in the world.

Thus Saurashtra holds a very important place in the history of dance. As lord Krishna spent a long time in Saurashtra, so the influence of Natwari Nritya is also noticeable depicted in the various forms of dance like Garba and Dandiya Pāsa dance.

**GARBA DANCE:**

The Garba dance of Saurashtra is almost similar to the Garba dance of Gujrat. It is performed by women folk at the time of festivals like Navaratri, Holi and Basant Panchami. The women form a circle and sing songs.
Other common characteristics like clapping, simple movements during the performance of dance in circle are also seen in this dance. Dholak is the musical instrument generally used in the Garba dance.

**DANDIYA RASA DANCE:**

Small sticks are used in this dance and that is why it is called 'Dandiya Rasa Dance'. This dance also suggests some events connected with Lord Krishna and his consort Radha in a Rasa Lila form but women do not participate in this dance. It is performed only by men. Often it is performed in two circles when the participants are in large number and the dancer of one circle changes his place mutually with the member of the other circle. Thus, it is also a circular type of dance and this feature i.e. changing of place from one circle to another is similar to the Ger dance of Rajasthan. They sing the songs in accompaniment of musical instruments like,Tabla, Manjira and Shahnai. The Dandiya dance is also performed in another variety which is called Gof Gunthan dance in which men only take part. In this dance one end of coloured ribbons or strings is tied to a pole or branch of a tree. The dancers dance in a set style holding the hanging end of the ribbon or string in one hand and a stick in the other while dancing in a circle the ribbons twist and untwist, presenting different patterns. The dancers sing and strike the stick. Singing of songs and striking of sticks form an important part of this dance.
COMMUNITY DANCES:

Some community dances are popular in Saurashtra. Among these dances Tippani and Padhar Nritya deserve special mention. Tippani which is more prevalent near Somnath is performed by women labourers of a special caste at the time of preparing the concrete floor of houses and beating the concrete mixture to make the surface well set and even. The women do this work in the form of a dance. Each woman holds a mallet in her hand which is a block of wood to which long handle is affixed. The movements of the dancers become slow and fast according to the beating of the Tippani on the floor and song is also sung while performing this dance and often small bells or ghungroos are tied to the long wooden handle. In Padhar Nritya which is specially performed by fishermen of aboriginal community, dancers sit in a circle holding Majiras and sing song and perform movements which are indicative of boat rowing. When they are excited they stand and show the acrobatic movements similar to Shirshasan and strike the Majiras or bells with their legs. Sometimes small rods are also used in place of Majiras as oars. Along with Majiras, Tabla and Ektara are also added as musical instruments which are played by others not participating in the dance.

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