

# Lavani folk art form

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**In news**— A younger generation of women dancers are accused of vulgarising Lavani, the traditional folk art form with their allegedly risqué dressing and sexually suggestive moves.

## What is the Lavani folk art form?

- **The word Lavani comes from 'lavanya' or beauty.**
- Lavani is **a traditional folk art form in which women dancers wearing nine-yard-long sarees**(a nauvari saree) in bright colours, make-up, and ghunghroos **perform on dholak beats** on a stage before a live audience.
- As an **indigenous art form**, Lavani has a history going back several centuries, and it attained particular **popularity in the Peshwa era in the 18th century.**
- Traditionally, performances were held in front of kings or lords, and for the entertainment of tired soldiers resting during breaks in fighting.
- Lavani dance was generally performed by Dhangars or Shepherd living in Solapur, Maharashtra.
- Lavani developed in **two distinct performances, namely Phadachi Lavani and Baithakichi Lavani.**
- The **Phadachi Lavani is performed publically in front of a large audience while Baithakichi Lavani is performed in private in an enclosed chamber** performed for a selective audience.
- Essentially, **themes of Lavani are divided into two-** The Nirguni Lavani (philosophical) and the Shringari Lavani (sensual).
- **It is traditionally performed in different social settings: Dholki-phad Tamasha and Sangeet Bari.**
- The Dholki-phad Tamasha is performed as a heterogeneous act that goes on for about four to eight hours.
- Tamashas are performed by travelling groups in jatras

(village fair), weekly markets, etc. in front of large audiences.

- The Sangeet Bari on the other hand, is stationary. It comes under the Baithakichi Lavani type. Sangeet Baris traditionally feature only female artists.
- Over the years, Lavani has gained more acceptability among the people, even though certain taboos around it continue.
- The audience has historically been all-male, but in recent years, some women too have begun to attend performances.
- Lavani became well known outside Maharashtra, throughout India and even outside the country, following its use in popular media such as cinema.