

Lavani folk art form

February 16, 2023

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.