



Silambam

Why in News

Recently, **an Indian named Ganesan Sandhirakasan has won the top prize** in a government-initiated competition for migrant workers in Singapore **for his performance of Silambam.**

Key Points

▪ About:

- Silambam is an **ancient weapon-based martial art** that emerged in **Tamilakam, which is now Tamil Nadu region of India.** It is **one of the oldest martial arts in the world.**



- The term Silambam contains a meaning which itself reveals about the sport, **silam stands for a 'mountain'** and **bam stands for bamboo** which is the main weapon used in this form of martial arts.
 - It is closely linked to the Kerala martial art [kalaripayattu](#).
- **Foot movement** are key elements to silambam and kutta varisai (empty hand version). There are **sixteen movements needed to master the movement of the foot** to keep pace with the movement of the stick.
- The main **goal of the training is to defend the user against several armed opposition.**

▪ Weapons Used:

- **Bamboo staff-** It is the main weapon and the length of the bamboo staff depends on the height of the practitioner.
- **Maru-** a thrusting weapon which is made from horns of deer.
- **Aruva** (sickle), **Savuku** (a whip), **Vaal** (curved sword), **Kuttu Katai** (spiked knuckle duster), **Katti** (knife), **Sedikuchi** (cudgel or short stick).

▪ Origin:

- It is believed to have **originated somewhere around 1000 BC** and it was brought by the sage **Agastya Munivar.**
- **Sillappadikkaram** and many other works of [Sangam literature](#) mentions about the

practice and it dates back to **2nd century BC** whereas oral **folk tales traces it back even further around 7000 years.**

- But according to recent surveys and archaeological excavations, **it has been confirmed that Silambam was practiced from at least 10,000 BC.**

▪ **Ban and Evolution:**

- It was employed in warfare by most rulers of south India. The soldiers of the **Tamil ruler Veerapandiya Kattabomman used silambam** to wage war against the British colonists, there was a **ban on it by the end of the 18th century.**
- The **ban, coupled with the introduction of firearms**, did affect the combative nature of silambam greatly and due to which it has transformed into a **performance art.**

Other Martial Arts of India

- **Gatka**- Punjab
- **Paika**- Odisha
- **Thag Ta**- Manipur
- **Kalaripayattu**- Kerala
- **Choliya**- Uttarakhand
- **Pang Lhabso**- Sikkim
- **Musti Yudha**- Uttar Pradesh
- **Mardani Khel**- Maharashtra
- **Pari Khanda**- Bihar

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