



Martial Art forms in India

For Prelims: Martial arts in India

For Mains: Indian Heritage and Culture

Why in News?

Recently, in Kashmir, a maulvi stepped in to save **thang-ta**, a martial law practice. Thang Ta is a martial art technique highly **prevalent in the state of Manipur**.

What are the Various Martial Art Forms in India?

▪ Thang Ta - Manipur:

- **Huyen langlon** is an Indian martial art from **Manipur**.
- In the **Meitei language**, **huyen** means **war** while **langlon** or **langlong** can mean net, **knowledge** or **art**.
- Huyen langlon consists of two main components:
 - Thang-ta (armed combat)
 - Sarit Sarak (unarmed fighting).
- The primary weapons of **huyen langlon** are the **thang (sword)** and **ta (spear)**. Other weapons include the **shield** and the **axe**.

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▪ Lathi Khela - West Bengal:

- Lathi is a wooden weapon to fight and is an ancient weapon used in martial arts in India.
- Lathi or stick are used in martial arts in the state of Punjab and Bengal.
- Lathi is also popular for its utility in sports specially in the Indian villages.

- A practitioner is known as lathial.



▪ Gatka - Punjab:

- **Gatka** is a traditional **martial art** form associated with the **Sikh gurus**.
- It imbibes **sword** and **sticks** fighting skills and self-control.
- **Gatka** is believed to have originated when the **6th Sikh Guru Hargobind** adopted '**Kirpan**' for **self-defense** during the **Mughal era**.
- A style of **stick fighting** between **two or more practitioners**, **Gatka** is a toned-down version of the deadlier **Shastar Vidya**. The sharp swords of **Shastar Vidya** have been replaced by **wooden sticks (soti)** and **shields** in **Gatka**.
- It is considered as a **battle technique**.
- **10th Guru Gobind Singh** made it compulsory for everyone to use the weapons for self-defense.
- It was earlier confined to **gurudwaras, nagar kirtans and akharas**, but now it finds presence in the sports category after the formation of the **Gatka Federation of India (GFI) in 2008**.
- Today, it is used to showcase **self-defense** and **fighting skills** and is open to people of all faiths and communities.



▪ Kalaripayattu - Kerala

- **Kalaripayattu** is a **martial art** based on the **ancient knowledge of the human body**.
- It originated in Kerala during 3rd century BC to the 2nd century AD. It is now practiced in Kerala and in some parts of Tamil Nadu.
- The place where this martial art is practiced is called a 'Kalari'. It is a Malayalam word that signifies a kind of gymnasium. Kalari literally means 'threshing floor' or 'battlefield'. The word Kalari first appears in the Tamil Sangam literature to describe both a battlefield and combat arena.
- It is considered to be one of the oldest fighting systems in existence.
- It is also considered as the father of modern Kung - Fu.



▪ Mallakhamb- Madhya Pradesh

- **Mallakhamb** is a traditional sport, originating from the **Indian subcontinent**, in which a **gymnast** performs **aerial yoga** or **gymnastic postures** and **wrestling grips** with a vertical stationary or hanging wooden pole, cane, or rope.
- The name **Mallakhamb** derives from the terms **malla**, meaning **wrestler**, and **khamb**, which means a pole. Literally meaning "**wrestling pole**", the term refers to a traditional training implement used by wrestlers.
- **Madhya Pradesh** and **Maharashtra** have been the hotspots of this sport.



▪ Silambam - Tamil Nadu:

- **Silambam** is a **martial art** which allows the use of weapons. It is very famous in **Tamil Nadu**.
- **In silambam**, a broad range of **weapons** are utilized.
- Silambam art incorporates animal motions such as snake, tiger, and eagle forms. **Use of footworks** is a very prominent characteristic of these art forms.
- **Lord Muruga** (son of Lord Shiva, also known as Kartekeya) and **sage Agasthya** created this martial art style.



▪ **Musti Yuddha- Varanasi:**

- It is basically an unarmed technique of fighting.
- This technique of the martial art basically belongs to the city of **Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh.**
- In this martial art the use of **punches, kicks, knees** and **elbows** are very prominent.
- It teaches how to protect himself without the use of arms and ammunition.
- This technique of the martial art needs complete physical and mental coordination.



▪ **Kathi Samu - Andhra Pradesh:**

- **Kathi Samu** is a very famous ancient martial art from Andhra Pradesh.
- Use of various kinds of **sword** is very prevalent in this technique of the **martial art.**
- 'Garidi' is the name given to the location where Kathi Samu is performed.
- In Kathi Samu, the stick fight known as '**vairi**' plays a significant part as a precursor to the real sword fight.
- Other essential components of sword skills include '**Gareja,**' in which a person holds four

swords, two in each hand.



▪ Sqay - Kashmir:

- Sqay is a martial art that belongs to Kashmir.
- It is a kind of sword-fighting.
- A curved **single-edged sword** and a shield are used by **armed sqay**.
- Armed sqay can use one sword in each hand.
- Kicks, punches, locks, and chops are examples of unarmed tactics.
- Various approaches are used by Sqay. Techniques and lessons in both freehand and sword for single and double swords.



▪ Paikha Akhadha - Odisha:

- **Paikha akhadha**, also known as **paika akhara**, is an **Odia name** for "warrior scholl."
- It was used as a peasant militia training school in Odisha.
- It is used to do **conventional physical activities**.
- **Rhythmic gestures** and **weapons swung** in synchronization to the beat of the drum are used in this performance art.



Source: PIB

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