

Kolkali Art, Dance, History, Music, Instruments, Style

April 30, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



Kolkali Art is a traditional folk dance of Kerala's Malabar region with nearly 200 years of history and strong cultural roots. Kolkali Art reflects community unity, devotional traditions, and rhythmic performance using sticks. Kolkali Dance evolved with influences from Kalaripayattu and is widely performed in festivals and social events. Kolkali Art gained prominence through Kerala School Kalolsavam and continues to represent cultural harmony across communities in South India.

Kolkali Art Features

Kolkali Art is a rhythmic group dance combining martial influence, devotional songs, circular movement, and community participation traditions across Kerala.

- **Origin:** Kolkali Art originated in North Malabar region of Kerala with about two centuries of history.
- **Historical Background:** It evolved from Kalaripayattu traditions and reflects Dravidian cultural practices, later spreading influence to states like Gujarat, Punjab, and Maharashtra.
- **Performance Style and Formation:** In Kolkali Dance, 12 to 24 performers stand in a circle around a Nilavilakku lamp. They strike wooden sticks rhythmically while moving in expanding and contracting circular patterns with synchronized steps.

- **Music and Instruments:** Kolkali Art relies on rhythmic stick sounds as primary music, supported by instruments like Chenda, Elathalam, Mathalam, and Chengala. Songs narrate devotional themes related to regional deities and traditions.
- **Variants and Styles:** Kolkali Art includes two major styles, namely Actual Kolkali and Thekkan Koladi. Sub-forms like Thacholikali and Rajasooyam exist, though traditional Kolkali forms are now nearly extinct in practice.
- **Cultural and Social Significance:** Kolkali Art was traditionally performed after harvest seasons to promote unity among villagers across caste and creed. Today, it is performed during festivals, weddings, and cultural events.
- **Regional Influence and Adaptations:** Kolkali Art influenced similar stick dances across India, known as Kolattam in Tamil Nadu and Kolamu in Andhra Pradesh, showing its widespread cultural impact.
- **Modern Recognition and Practice:** Kolkali Art is a key attraction in Kerala School Kalolsavam, considered Asia's largest cultural event, ensuring its continued relevance and preservation among younger generations.

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Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/kolkali-art/>

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