

Kolam In Tamil Nadu

Introduction:

Kolam originated from the state of Tamil Nadu which is basically a floor art. Kolam is drawn at the entrances to welcome the Goddess Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth. Kolams are drawn early in the morning by preparing the surface by sprinkling cow dung and cleaning the front yard. Then kolams are drawn either dotted or without dots. The morning kolams are drawn big and elaborately done while evening with small kolams. The kolam differs on different days. Some draw lines kolams on Fridays and add kaavi (red soil) to the kolam to make it look grand. On festival days, the kolams are beautified with colours.

The philosophy of Kolam:

The Kolam is much more than just an aesthetic art. It symbolizes happiness and prosperity. Insects and birds feed on the rice flour used for drawing the traditional Kolam at the entrance of houses. Thus, the Kolam represents man's concern for all living creatures. The Kolam and the bright red border or kaavi enclosing it are also believed to prevent evil and undesirable elements from entering the houses.

Pongal Festival and Kolam:

On the day of Pongal, family members jointly draw the kolam with rice flour that can be plain as well as coloured. The kolam defines the sacred area where the Pongal is prepared. Within the perimeters of kolam, typically, firewood is used to cook the rice. The Pongal is set up in the direct view of the Sun (East). Traditionally, the kolam is laid in the front or side of the house, but in cold climates where cooking indoors with firewood is hazardous, the Pongal can be prepared in kitchen and brought to the location where kolam is set up.

Kolam Festival at Mylapore (Chennai) and Kolam competitions in our orphanages:

The month of 'Margazhi' (mid-December to mid-January) is considered particularly auspicious in Tamil Nadu and 'kolam' making is an integral aspect of the celebrations during this month. As part of the Mylapore Festival held annually in Chennai, one of the

approach roads to the famous Kapaleeswarar Temple at Mylapore, transforms into a grand canvas for 'kolam' artistes. Ever since 1990s, it is now a major cultural event attracting huge crowds, including several visitors from other countries. People from different walks of life participate in this competition to create exquisite 'kolam' designs on the street, over a 2-day period.

We are proud Tamilians and so we celebrate Pongal in a lavish manner. As part of our four days' celebrations, we conducted Kolam competitions in each houses and distributed prizes to the winners. Our children participated in the group-wise competition with a lot of happiness. It was indeed a colourful and memorable day for all of us.

Types of Kolam:

1. GRID PATTERN

Kolams are drawn by forming a grid pattern with or without dots. Dots are placed in straight or intermediate, to understand this placement of dots, I have given the pattern in the post.

2. STROKES

Usually in Tamil Nadu women would use two fingers to slip the powder. The index and thumb fingers have the major role in drawing sleek line. It is called Single Line Stroke, where single line is drawn in a stroke. Broad Line Stroke is drawing using three fingers. The thumb, index and the middle finger. Super Broad Strokes This stroke is drawn with four fingers.

3. LINE KOLAMS

Line kolams are made by joining the dots forming designs and Sikku Kolam drawn around the dots. Sikku kolams are also known as Neli/Kambi/Chikku kolam. Line kolams are drawn using a dot mat and lines are joined to form a design or pattern.

4. SMALL DOTTED KOLAMS

Small kolam can be as small as 2 dots kolams. Normally these sorts of kolams are drawn in apartments because of space constraint. Normally apartments have a small doorstep maybe a 3 to 4-foot space and small kolams are ideal to draw on those space constrain area.

5. FREEHAND KOLAMS

Freehand kolams are freestyle type kolams, which are drawn without dots. For a freehand kolam any shape, design can be drawn.

6. SIKKU/CHIKKU KOLAMS

Sikku Kolam isn't preferred by everyone due to the illusion caused by the lines tangling in and round the dots. Chikku kolams are drawn around the dots forming loops and knots enclosing the dots.

7. PADI KOLAMS

Padi kolams are drawn in square shape with even number lines, starting from two lines. Three lines are not usually drawn; it is drawn only during mourning period.

Conclusion:

In Tamil Nadu, 'kolams' are an integral part of daily life and are drawn not only outside homes and temples, but also outside shops, commercial and corporate establishments. During festivals, weddings and other family functions ladies of the family and the neighbourhood come together to make elaborate 'kolam' designs. Children usually pick up the tradition by observing and helping their elders.

Few Kolams done by our Chidlren



Kolam : Group Competiton



Bro. Sebastian and Devi Bala Appreciating Our Children

