

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF KATHAK UTSAV ON 5TH DECEMBER, 2017 AT THE AUDITORIUM OF MANIPUR FILM DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY, PALACE GATE, IMPHAL.

Kamalini Asthana ji, Chairperson, Kathak Kendra,
Prof. H. Tombi Singh ji, Vice-Chairman, JNMDA,
Director, Kathak Kendra,
Director, JNMDA,
All the distinguished Gurus and Artistes,
Friends from Electronic and Print Media,
All the distinguished invitees,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Khu-rum-jari,

It gives me a great pleasure to be in your midst today, particularly among Kathak Dancers at this inaugural function of Kathak Utsav. This is the right place for the Kathak Dancers to showcase their performances as Manipur is equally popular as a state of rich cultural traditions. I am happy to note that today's Kathak Utsav is a collaborative venture of Kathak Kendra, New Delhi and JNMDA, Imphal.

Kathak Kendra which is the National Institute of Kathak Dance is a premier Dance Institution of the country and its dedication to promote the practice, development and awareness of Kathak Dance as a performing art tradition is well known. The Kathak is a component of the rich classical heritage of the nation.

Kathak Kendra was established as a constituent unit of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi in 1964. The Kendra forms a strong centre of training in Kathak by talented and dedicated team of Gurus and their selfless endeavour for promotion and dissemination of this art form deserves appreciation by all. The Utsav is dedicated to the rich heritage of Kathak as upheld in its traditional legacy of performance, training and creative expression. It is a celebration of the performing arts that bring together legendary artistes, dance lovers, scholars and connoisseurs through dance performances, seminars, lectures and debates.

I am fully confident that organization of such Utsav in different States will greatly help promoting and disseminating this performing art. The

relentless efforts made by the Kathak Kendra for promoting and disseminating this art form will go a long way in popularizing and perpetuating this rich heritage.

As we all know, Kathak is one of the ten major forms of Indian classical dance. The origin of Kathak is traditionally attributed to the travelling people of ancient northern India known as Kathakars or storytellers. The term Kathak is derived from the Vedic Sanskrit word Katha which means "story", and Kathaka which means "he who tells a story". Wandering Kathakas communicated stories from the great epics and ancient mythology through dance, songs and music in a manner similar to early Greek theatre. Kathak evolved during the Bhakti movement, particularly by incorporating the childhood stories of the Hindu God Krishna, as well as independently in the courts of North Indian kingdoms.

Kathak as a performing art survived and thrived as an oral tradition, learnt and innovated from one generation to another verbally and through practice. It transitioned, adapted and integrated the tastes of the Mughal courts in the 16th and 17th century particularly Akbar.

With these few words, it gives me immense pleasure to inaugurate the Kathak Utsav and I do not intend to take much of your time as everybody must be eagerly waiting for the wonderful performance to be staged by famous Kathak Dancers within a few minutes from now. I also thank the organizers for inviting me to this memorable event.

Thagatchari,
Jai Hind.