



**SPEECH
OF
MADAM SMT ANUPAMA SINGH,
FIRST LADY OF THE STATE,
ARUNACHAL PRADESH**

**ON THE OCCASION OF
“FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL”**

**ORGANISED BY
DEPTT OF ART & CULTURE,
GOVT. OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH
IN COLLABORATION WITH
SANGEET NATAK ACADEMI,
NEW DELHI**

**AT
ART & CULTURE COMPLEX
NAHARLAGUN**

**ON
09TH NOVEMBER, 2009
AT 1600 HRS**

On this special occasion of the Folk Dance Festival 2009, I, on behalf of His Excellency Gen JJ Singh the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh and on my own behalf extend heartiest greetings to all of you. On behalf of all Arunachalees, I extend our warm welcome to the representatives of Sangeet Natak Academi, New Delhi and all others coming for this very important cultural event of the State.

Friends, I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Sangeet Natak Academi, New Delhi and Department of Art and Culture for giving me this wonderful opportunity to be associated with such a folk dance festival. This is a kind of programme, which I always wanted to be associated with and I always regarded it with high esteem.

India is a land of diverse cultures and traditions. Each region of the country has a unique culture, which is also prominently visible in its various art forms, dances and rituals. Almost every region has its specific folk music and dance, reflecting deep rooted beliefs and traditions of communities and cultures. The folk dance is a form of dance developed by a group of people that reflects the traditional life of the people of a certain region or country. It is closely bound with folklore, which pervades and reflects the region's communities, its economics and social activities, history, relationship, religion, and beliefs. Hence, we can conclude that folk dances are our identity. It exudes our ethnic roots and tells us about our traditional values. But, it is with a heavy heart, I have to say, that interest in the folk culture is diminishing among our younger generations. It is very sad, that this cultural heritage of ours, handed over from generations to generations is being disregarded. Therefore, I would like to appeal to all, especially our elders, Goan Burahs, intellectuals and my beloved children to take utmost interest in it, so that we don't lose touch with our roots.

Folk dances are simple and are performed to express joy. The folk dances of every community are performed on almost every special occasion and festival to celebrate the arrival of seasons, birth of a child, a wedding etc.

These dances are also considered to be auspicious by many of the tribal communities in the country. Many folk dances are dedicated to the presiding deity of a specific community. The most interesting

part of a folk dance is the attire required for its performance. Every folk dance has its own specific costume and jewelry, which differs from dance to dance. They are, in general, very bright, vibrant and colorful, with traditional jewelry. These dances have in them, the mythologies, histories, legends, proverbs, children songs and riddles.

Friends, Arunachal Pradesh is not only rich in biodiversity but also rich in ethnic and cultural diversity. We have Mangbuong dances of Noctes to Deer and Yak pantomimes of Monpas. We have ponungs of Adi and Buiya dance of Digaru Mishmis. Among all its 26 major tribes and more than 100 sub-tribes, Arunachal Pradesh has distinct and varied cultures with a strong tradition of art and music. Almost every festival of our State is celebrated with a folk dance, making the dance form an integral part of our culture.

If our folk dances are lost, native culture is also lost and we lose our identity. We cannot allow this to happen. We need to revive and preserve folk music, folk dance and folk drama of different tribes of our State. We have to encourage the development of tribal music, dances and pantomimes. We need to promote research in the fields of indigenous music, dance and drama. And for that we can co-ordinate activities with State Academies of music, dance and drama, encourage the setting up of institutions providing training for such activities and most important we need to provide proper sustainable economic package for our artisans. I am sure the State government under the initiative of the Directorate of Art and Culture with guidance from Sangeet Natak Academy will sponsor folk music, dance and drama festivals, seminars, conferences and encourage regional cultural festivals in the future.

As I said before, every folk dance has its own specific costume and jewelry, which differs from dance to dance. I am sure, it will indirectly promote our cottage industries and also help in financial empowerment amongst womenfolk, as it is the ladies who weave Gale to Galuk, Jellang to Alipudung.

I hope this four day festival will go a long way in preserving our treasured cultural heritage. I congratulate the Sangeet Natak Academi, New Delhi and Department of Art and Culture for organizing this festival, which I believe will, not only be entertaining but very educative for the participants and as well to the audience.

So, let's join the festival and celebrate our great ancient cultural tradition.

Thank you very much.