

# Sattriya Dance of Assam

The Sattriya Dance began in a monastery in Sattrā, Assam, and was integral to the neo-Vaishnavite movement, which Srimanta Sankardev started in the 15th century.

- He believed in chanting God's name with faith, which led to the inception of the dance form.
- The Sangeet Natak Akademi gave Sattriya classical dance status in 2000.
- The Sattras, or Vaishnava mathematics or monasteries, have nurtured and preserved this dance and theatre for generations.
- Sattriya adopted this dancing style due to its religious nature and affiliation with the Sattras.
- Sankaradeva created the Sattriya Dance form by combining components from many treatises, local traditional dance, and his unique perspective.
- Before the neo-Vaishnava movement, Assam had two dance forms: Ojapali and Devadasi, which had numerous classical influences.

The dancers in the Ojapali chorus sing, dance, and use gestures and stylized movements to illustrate the story.

- In terms of Devadasi dance, the similarity of many rhythmic syllables, dancing postures, and footwork to Sattriya Dance is evidence of the former's impact on the latter.
- Assamese ethnic dances, such as Bihu and Bodos, also apparently influence Sattriya Dance.
- Many hand movements and rhythmic words are startlingly similar in these dancing forms.
- Strict rules apply in hasta mudras, footwork, Aharyas, music, and other aspects of the Sattriya Dance heritage.

## History of Sattriya Dance

Sattriya is an Indian classical dance form. It outlines its roots in India's old drama and music readers, especially Bharata Muni's Natya Sastra.

- Its first dates were between 200 BCE and 200 CE, but the estimated range is between 500 BCE and 500 CE.
- Natya Sastra's most studied version comprised 6000 verses divided into 36 chapters.
- The text described the idea of Tandava dance (Shiva), the theory of Bhava, Rasa, expression, gestures, acting styles, basic actions, and standing poses.
- Dance and performance arts depicted that these ancient texts were a form of expression of spiritual visions, purity, and the importance of holy scriptures.
- The history of this Assam arts goes back to ancient times, as revealed by copper plate inscriptions and statues relating to Shaktism and Shaivism traditions.
- Musical practices and singing have also been outlined in the Assamese chorus singing custom for the Hindu legend: the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.
- The Sattriya art developed as a component of the Vaishnava bhakti movement in the 15th century around Hindu monasteries called Sattrā.
- The art was produced and rehearsed by monks in the form of dance dramas about legends and myths of Krishna, mainly from texts like Bhagavata Purana.

## Sattriya Dance of Assam - Features

The basic stance of Sattriya Dances is quite different from all the other classical dances in India. Purush Pak is a posture taken up by males during the dance, while the females take up the Prakriti Pak posture.

- The dance celebrates different mythological creatures.
- They perform elaborate dances and steps, and various singers write the portions of the songs, and 'Borgeet' is played during these dances, which is traditional music from Assam.
- These dances involve massive instruments and bright costumes.
- Ankiya Bhaona and Ojapali dances are Sattriya Dances where the primary singer acts while singing is called 'abhinaya,' an art of telling stories.

## Streams of the Sattriya Dance

- The first is the Bhaona-related repertory, which runs from Gayan-Bhayanar Nach to Kharmanar Nach.
- Second, individual dance numbers such as Jhumura, Nadu Bhangi, Rajagharia Chali, and so on.

## Sattriya Dance - Themes and Styles Used

Several themes are used in a Sattriya Dance. However, the theme of Radha Krishna is the one that is the most prevalent. Sankardev, a famous author of those times, used to write the script for these dances, performed in both Masculine and Feminine styles.

The Sattriya Dance is one of India's most famous classical dance forms. It is usually practiced in the northeast states. It would help if you memorized everything about them as it is a necessary dance form from an exam's perspective.

## Sattriya Dance Costume and Jewellery

There are two types of Sattriya dance costumes. These are:

- Male costumes include the chadar, dhoti, and the Paguri (turban).
- Female costumes contain the chadar, Ghuri, and Kanchi (waist cloth).

Pat Silk saree (also known as Paat) is the most famous saree used in Sattriya dance, illustrating the location via its colorful motifs and designs.

The dance costume includes traditional Assamese jewelry made in a unique technique in Kesa Sun (raw gold). Dancers wear MuthiKharu and Gam Kharu (bracelets), Kopali on the forehead, etc.