



Folk Dances of India

Kajari

Kajari dance is one of the most popular and well known forms of folk dance in Uttar Pradesh of India. Kajari dance is performed just before the arrival of the monsoons to express joy and happiness. The land of Uttar Pradesh experiences hot summers and the only relief at that time is the arrival of black monsoon clouds that bring with them rain drenched with relief and great joy. To celebrate their arrival, women in the village sing songs and express joy for the upcoming monsoons bidding adieu to the scorching summer. They swing together singing enchanting songs in the village gardens.



Legend

A famous folk tale of Mirzapur suggests that, King Kantit Naresh's daughter Kajali loved her husband very much but she could not meet her husband throughout her life. When the Monsoon came and she couldn't meet her husband, the separation became unbearable and she started crying at the feet of the Kajmal Goddess. These cries took the form of the popular Kajari songs. She remains alive through these songs.

About Kajari Dance

Kajari dance is performed with the accompaniment of 'Jhula' lyrics. The term Kajari could also be derived from the Hindi word Kajra, or Kohl which is a genre of semi-classical singing.

This form of dance is performed in two ways; one on a performance platform and the other is sung by women on monsoon evenings. The second type is also known as, Dhunmuniya.



Did you know?

Charles Doyley while giving an account of a dancing woman of Lucknow says that their dance postures and movements are well executed and graceful in nature. Although they lack variety in steps yet the complicated feet movements are remarkably accomplished.

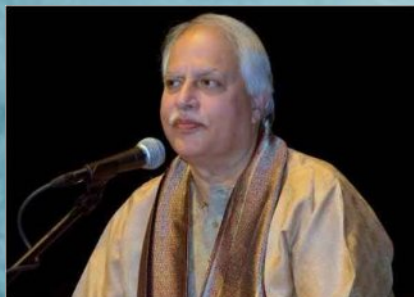
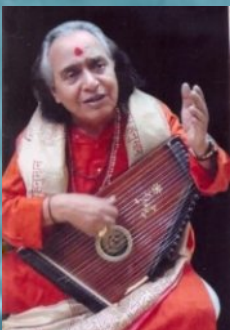
Costumes

Kajari dancers wear a tight fitting and short length blouse known as choli paired with a flared skirt. They also put a dupatta over it which is tucked in the waist of the skirt and is draped around the head and shoulder. These dupattas are generally richly embroidered and feature decorative gold and silver thread in the edges. The skirt extends up to the ankles widening as it moves down with endless folds. The dancers complete the look by wearing heavy jewellery. The jewellery mainly consists of bangles, anklets, ear-rings, necklaces, and others. One can also see some similarity between the Kajari dance and the dance pattern of Kathak.

Personalities associated with Kajari

Kajari is a famous art form and is widely practiced in various villages and towns of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Mirzapur, Banaras, Mathura, Allahabad are a few famous cities that practice this form of dancing. Similarly, the Bhojpur region of Bihar also organises Kajari dance functions.

Some famous names associated with this form of dancing are; Pandit Channulal Mishra, Shobha Gurtu, Siddheshwari Devi, Girija Devi, and Rajan and Sajan Mishra.

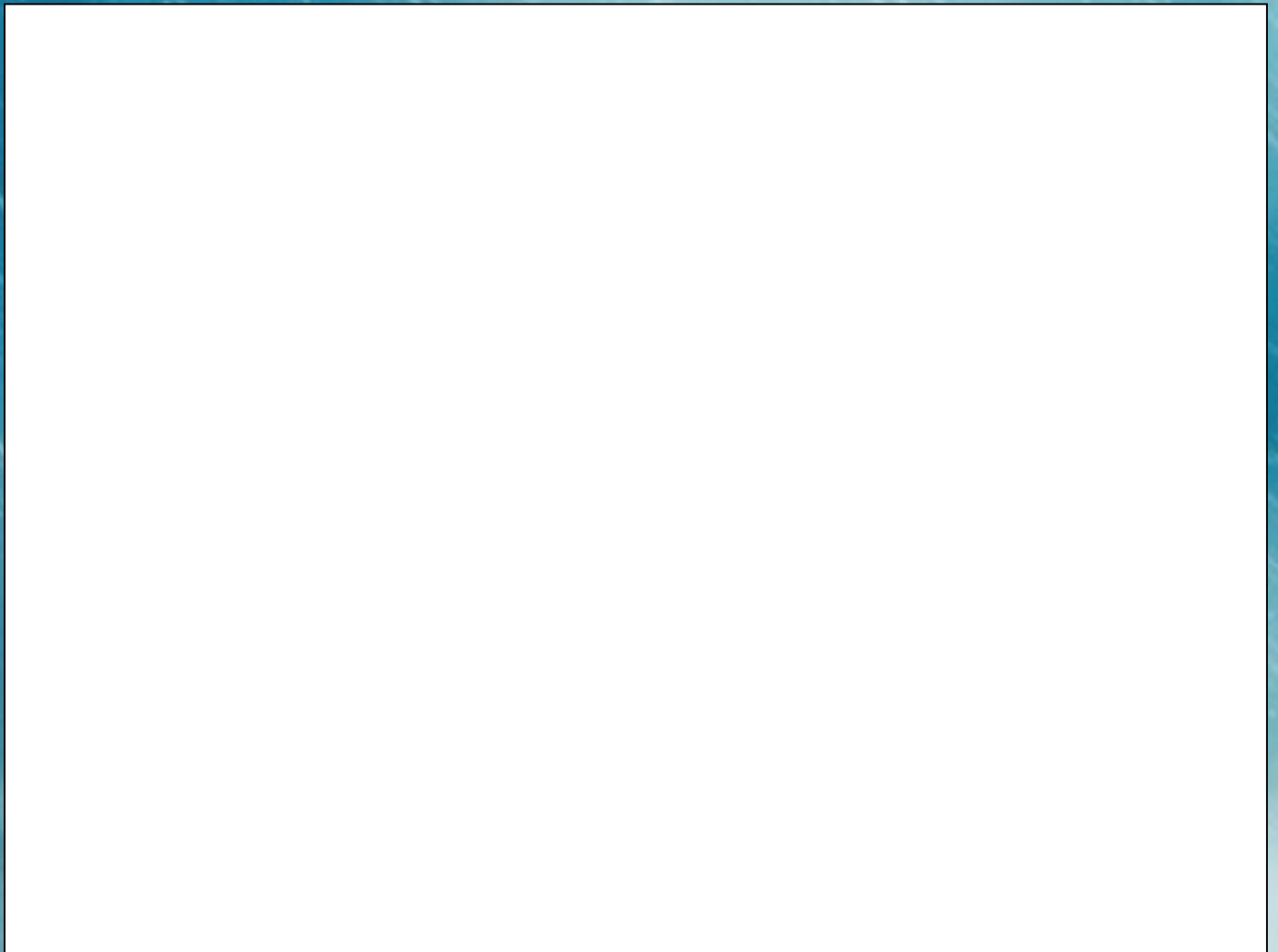


Activity: Name two forms of dances from different regions of India that are performed during the monsoon season.

1. _____

2. _____

Activity: Draw a rainy day with women performing Kajari.



Activity: Identify which dance form belongs to which region of India.

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| 1. Kinnauri Nati | i. Karnataka |
| 2. Yakshagana | ii. Jammu & Kashmir |
| 3. Dumal | iii. Himachal Pradesh |

Sources: yac.bih.nic.in, www.indianetzone.com, www.dance.anantagroup.com