

Shumang Leela

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In news— Shumang Leela is a traditional form of theatre in Manipur

About the dance-

- **Shumang Leela translates to “courtyard performance”**. It is performed in an open courtyard surrounded by spectators on all four sides.
- The tradition is believed to be **descended from Lai Haraoba, a ritual of the Meitei community of Manipur**.
- The plays serve as a medium to spread awareness among people of social, political and economic issues. Shumang Leelas may also **discuss moral values, unity and integrity**.
- This theatre form has for long been trying to strengthen the bond of brotherhood and friendship among various communities in the State.
- In this dance **the roles of women are all played by men, called Nupi Shabis**.
- **In the case of women’s theatre groups, the roles of men are played by women**.
- Today, **Shumang Leela is of two types**:
 1. Nupa Shumang Leela, performed only by men.
 2. Nupi Shumang Leela, performed only by women.
- In a society marked by heteronormativity, the gender-bending nature of Shumang Leela makes it a unique art form that is fraught with complexity.
- The men who take up female roles or vice versa are both lauded and laughed at. However, the traditional theatre form has preserved its niche, and its aim to inform and entertain has remained unchanged.
- **Contemporary themes have been incorporated into Shumang Leela**. Often, the female roles are taken up by transgender actors.

Meitei community-

- The Meitei people, also known as the Manipuri people, is the predominant ethnic group of Manipur in Northeast India.
- **They speak Meitei language**, one of the 22 official languages of the Indian Republic and the sole **official language of Manipur**.
- Meitei language was **included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India in 1992**.
- The Meiteis primarily settled in the Imphal Valley region in modern-day Manipur, though a sizable population has settled in the other Indian states of Assam, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram.
- There is also a notable presence of Meitei in the neighboring countries of Myanmar and Bangladesh.
- The Meitei ethnic group represents about 53% of Manipur's population.