



ALEKHYA PUNJALA

Akademi Award: Kuchipudi

Born on 9 April 1962 in Hyderabad, Shrimati Alekhya Punjala took her initial training in dance under Guru Dayal Sharan. Later, she trained in Kuchipudi dance and Bharatanatyam under Uma Rama Rao, and received intensive training in abhinaya under Guru Pasumarthy Krishnamurthy.

Over the past three decades she has established herself as an outstanding performer of Kuchipudi dance, as well as a dedicated teacher and researcher in the field. Currently Professor and Head of the Department of Dance at Potti Sri Ramulu Telugu University, she has trained several batches of students for the Master's degree in Kuchipudi dance and for the university's Ph.D. programme. She is also imparting training in Kuchipudi dance to young and upcoming artists at her own institution, Trishna. She holds a Ph.D. for her study of Kshetranya Padams and their importance in abhinaya in Kuchipudi dance. Besides performing at prestigious arts events both at national and international levels, she has presented papers at various seminars. She has also conducted lecture-demonstrations on Kuchipudi dance.

For her work in the field of dance, Shrimati Alekhya Punjala has been bestowed several honours including the Ugadi Visishta Puraskar (2002), the Hamsa Award and the Prathiba Rajiv Puraskar (2009) conferred by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, and the Abhinaya Tapasvini title awarded by the Sahitya Peetham, Rajamundry.

Shrimati Alekhya Punjala receives the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for her contribution to Kuchipudi dance.