

The Hitavada Sunday Sundae

5 CityLINE

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ROYAL TREASURE



Divekar's collection of currency from pre-Independence times speaks about the transformation and development of Indian economy. His treasure also has money from primitive ages which is amusing to peep into the financial dealing of those days when any specific currency was not in circulation.

"I started collecting these ancient objects 25 years ago and my inspiration was Kelkar Museum of Pune. Piece by piece, gradually a museum came into being," said Divekar.

Besides the worthy pieces of history from ancient India, Divekar also has a 'royal' collection, especially from the Bhonsla empire. There are the artistically designed ash-trays that grab the attention as one enters the museum. Small in size, but they speak volumes about richness of the rulers. The unique collection of smoking pipes is also particularly attractive. The must watch section is collection of clocks and cameras that has century old pieces. Clocks made of silver and gold are beautiful and very much in working condition even after 70 years of their making. And the col-



NAGPUR CHICAGO NAGPUR

Journey of Nagpur girl **Gauri Jog** whose dance school is teaching much more than just dance to youngsters in Chicago

■ **By Chaitanyya Deshpande** a no-profit activity.

LIVING in Chicago, America for years, might have given her the cool American accent, but at heart Gauri Jog is Nagpurian to the core. Be it her love for dancing and propagating the very elegant Indian dance form far and wide or her chaste *Nagpuri* Marathi, Gauri exudes her love for her city and country.

'The Hitavada' called on the city girl, who runs a leading dance school in Chicago, and has hundreds of students of difference ethnicities learning various Indian dance forms, folk dances and Bollywood numbers from her. Her journey as a dancer is indeed inspiring for many young dance enthusiasts.

"I started dancing perhaps before I started talking," Gauri says, recalling days when she literally dragged her father Bharat Kale to a classical dance school of Guru Madan Pande, where she learned basics of Kathak. Unlike other young girls, who give up their hobbies for studies, Gauri pursued dance seriously along with academics. She completed her post graduation in food science along with 'Visharad' degree in Kathak and graduate degree in Education. This made her a certified teacher.

"After getting married to IT professional Nitin Jog, I got an opportunity to live in many Indian cities where I kept performing on amateur-level. However, dance school concept came into reality only when we shifted to Chicago," says Gauri. She started 'Indian Dance School',

"We don't teach for money. Our school does not just teach dance but inculcate values of respect for each other, hard work and positive attitude," says Gauri. Her students mostly comprise of third or fourth generations of Indians settled in USA. "These kids are very much eager to know about our culture. While teaching Kathak, I tell them about Indian mythology - Ramayana and Mahabharata. We present stories from our ancient literature. I have to explain them the references. This enriches their knowledge about our cultural heritage," Gauri states underlining the bigger initiative of her school. She also visits schools, colleges and conducts special lectures about Indian dance forms for foreign students.

"I work out innovative concepts and fusions in order to make them familiar with our dances," Gauri says pointing to an interesting picture in which students are performing Kathak with basketballs used as props. Her daughter Isha, also a versatile dancer, now helps her in conducting school activities. "Thanks to Isha, I got some free time to visit my hometown."

Sharing her future plan, Gauri said he would like to perform in India with Isha sharing stage with her. "In Nagpur, SCZCC will host our dance performance in December. I am looking forward to perform and my theme will be 'Nagpur-Chicago-Nagpur - a journey' - she signs off on an interesting note.



(Top) Gauri Jog (left) and her daughter Isha during a performing Kathak (above) A recent innovation of Gauri Jog in which her students are performing traditional Kathak using Basketballs as props.