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Vertical Approaches of Performing Arts in Current Education System in India

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Abstract

All aspects of Indian history, society, culture or economy have experienced rapid changes in which education has witnessed a remarkable modernization. Indian art education also shows a gradual development in terms of spreading and transferring of knowledge about elements of Indian art, technical expertise, and science of extensive art forms with regards to the traditional structure and regional adaptations. Treatises on arts and legends had been explaining about this educational set up throughout the centuries. This article provides an opportunity to understand the gradual development of performing arts in Indian education system. Performing arts teaching and learning has been significantly associated with the culture of India. This study will provide a vision of vertical proclamation of art education in India. This paper will also highlight the struggle of arts to achieve social and educational value. Also, the researcher tried to bring the evidences together about the support of several individuals and organizations in this paper. Researcher has explored about the government, private, non-profit organizations, national or international setup supporting performing arts in India, funding or granting to promote this art form. This study will collate the longitudinal progress of performing arts in Indian education system and the approaches of performing arts which includes the curriculum institution and assessment process.

Keywords

Art Education, Performing Arts, Holistic Curriculum, NEP, Assessment, Pedagogy, Art Integration

Introduction

What do you mean by a sustainable art education? Do we agree that the new vision for art education should understand its community better and start building its foundations from the roots? Teachers who come out of existing art education need to do a lot of unlearning to be a part of this journey. Researcher's earlier work revealed that, only a very explicit population of this generation is getting the opportunity to learn authentic art forms and not efficiently utilizing their knowledge of art in holistic development of every student studying in academic schools. There are multiple reasons of this gap in art education:

- 1. Over the period of time migrations and invasions left a strong influence to Indian performing arts & culture. May it be dance, music or drama people are influenced towards modernization of the forms.
- 2. Indian classical art forms and the traditional way of practicing have taken root globally but in India its traditional philosophy, pedagogy, and teaching practices to attain perfection have also been slightly drifted.

"Do some of these practices, if not adapted to new educational system, might arguably endanger the authenticity of art forms?" Contrary to this statement, an evolved and embraced traditional





(A Peer Reviewed Quarterly Online Journal)

techniques, range of quality content and extended knowledge must be incorporated in the pedagogy to foster learners with an excellent command on art subject, curiosity to know from unknown, responsibility to keep tradition intact, creativity to integrate the knowledge with interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary subjects, confidence in performance, ability to respond on performances of their own and others art work, above all the aptitude of appreciation and promotion of the classical artform. An up-to-date curriculum and educational requirements along with NEP 2020 guidelines, the syllabus and specifications need to be updated to ensure that students and teachers are aligned with their teaching and learning expectations.

Objectives

Research on longitudinal progress of performing arts subject from primeval to current education system needs a lot of knowledge on the subject, intellectual, intense hard work and commitment, and precision about a meaningful outcome which intent to be beneficial to the society. To understand current educational value of performing arts and to support for its enrichment this paper will enlighten longitudinal research on gradual development of performing arts and its identity in the society by knowing the historical background through a deep review of literature. It was also very important to make a clear vision for the future perspective of art education and its reconstruction with support of the steps taken earlier by the legends. To understand the gradual developmental progress in art education throughout the generations after the invasion period, it is significantly important to study about the intensions of introducing performing arts in schools, the futuristic scope, provisions and limitations of dance education in schools. The support of federal government in terms of promoting performing arts education was an important area to investigate by the researcher to find the best ways to make this study more valuable.

Performing Arts Teaching in India

Teaching and learning of performing arts have been traditional culture of Indian society. According to the mythological belief, dance has originated through the cosmic movements of lord Shiva and Lord Bramha imbibed the knowledge in a treatise "Natyaveda" which was compiled by using elements from four vedas. Musical Elements were taken from Samveda, the drama skills (Abhinaya) from Yajur Veda, the literature (songs, Poetry etc.) from Rig Veda and feeling and expressions (Rasa Theory) from Atharvana Veda. Natyaveda was deeply studied by sage Bharatmuni, who imbibed all the detailed knowledge of Dance, Music and Drama in a treatise called Natyashstra. This spread of knowledge has been continued and we have a number of great performing artists and teachers in this present world. All the prevalent methods of art forms, genres and styles in India claim their origin in Natya Shastra, an ancient established work, outlining the theory and practice of the art of theatre and dance written by sage Bharata. Since ancient time performing arts has been a part of Indian culture according to Natya Shastra.

Evidences of rich cultural art heritage: Along with the evidence which one can gather from sculptural reliefs and extant works or Sanskrit literature, there is a third rich source, namely, texts and manuals. Medieval temples also provided ample evidence that sculptors had considerable technical knowledge of the classical art forms. The Khajuraho temples of the Chandela kings also extend its time from the 11th century to the 13th century. There is a whole range of medieval sculptures extending from Rajputana and Saurashtra to Orissa and from Kashmir to Trivandrum also dating from 13th to 16th century. These temples have captured in stone what the chroniclers could not record in words. Each temple portrays a variety of dance poses and movements, which are accurate illustration of both the artists and their artistic work.

Impact of Invasion: The classical art forms in India, in the course of last 2000 years has evolved somewhat differently in the North and the South. It is said that South India is a sanctuary for Art



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(A Peer Reviewed Quarterly Online Journal)

& Culture. The classical forms of Indian art prevalent in the south today can still boast to preserve many features that disappeared in the North during the various successive culture and military invasions. Free from the alien invasions, the southern part of Indian subcontinent uninterruptedly provided a congenial and peaceful environment for the preservation of the ancient Indian art forms.

It is good fortune of India that the original nation and common classical art tradition was preserved intact and developed with purity and system by sustained patronage from successive generations of Kings and nobles in south India and especially in Tamil Nadu. Kathak, another classical dance form was initially taught during bhakti movement with regards to devotional trend in medieval Hinduism. This was later got influenced and acknowledged by kings in Mughal courts and became entertainment source for Mughal kings in fusion with Persian style and the Anarkali and Mughal style dresses came in place of sari, whirling movements became prominent as got influenced by Sufi whirls, and Gajals and Shayaris took the place of Bhajans. Under such influences of Mughal period, where music got enriched and grew as the glorious Hindustani system, classical dance was found neglected and died from its very original form in the North, and was given the place to the rise of the other mixed styles.

Social and Cultural Value of Performing Arts (Early 20th Century)

Performing art is the most valuable Indian culture, which has a special religious significance in India. As our ancient treatises says art is a gift of lord Shiva and other Gods as wells as it's a best way to worship God. In general, to celebrate festivals people play Dandiya & Garba to worship Maa Durga and same in Kerala where people perform Kai-Kotikali during Onam. India had a great teaching tradition called Guru Shishya parampara, where students or disciples leave their homes and starts living with their Guru in their academies and acquire education with extensive practice in a particular art form.

In the beginning of 19th century some missionaries and British rulers started anti dance movements and deformed dance in court and disgraced this system of dance in temples, later there was a total ban on this system. Due to which many Indian classical art forms slowly became extinct in many states of India. The British ruling class, who did not understand the art of the Devadasis, nor the customs and social environment of these gifted dancers, began to condemn the dance and publicly criticized Devadasis as immoral. Eventually a particular orthodox society turned against the devadasi culture and stemmed this art form in social isolation, as consequence many a gave up their profession.

Legend's contribution

There were ancient teachers and schools who supported Indian classical art forms to attain its social and economic value, where this art from was slowly dying towards death. In dance, it was then Chinnaya, Poonnaiah, Vedivelu and Sivananda, they reedited the program of Bharatnatyam as it today. E. Krishna Iyer, an advocate, who was able to demonstrate the beauty of the dance as a convincing argument. Finally, the Madras Music Academy took the initiative and stage performances by the Kalyani Sisters, Rajalakshmi and Jeevaratnam of the Devdasi community, before a civilized audience in 1936. People began to take an interest in the art of those who were born to the devadasi tradition.

Balasaraswti, Varalakshmi Bhanumati and jaya Lakshmi were appreciated as accomplished exponents of classical dance. Rukmini Devi Arundale, a young girl of a cultured family, studied the art and audaciously gave public performances. Suddenly the dance was reborn, when legends like Rukmini Devi Arundale the founder of Kalakshetra worked hard to regain respect for the dving art because of its bad reputation. The art was thirsted for its reinvention. She destroyed the



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(A Peer Reviewed Quarterly Online Journal)

crudeness and vulgarity in the inherited tradition of dance and brought in sophistication, purity, bhakthi and a very refined taste for the audience and artists. She was the one who picked up the broken pieces and placed them together for its greatest and prolonged survival.

In the beginning of 20th century many dance legends came forward and played significant role in supporting dance to achieve social respect, academic significance, and economic value. It is said that Sri Krishna came in Ishwari Prasad's dream and instructed him to develop dance as a form of worship and this dance was focused on Lord Krishna Leela and the external love of Radha Krishna, later this dance form was taught by Ishwari Prasad to his sons and it was pass down from one generation to the next, likewise they carried this rid culture form of art and acknowledge as Lucknow gharana. That was the time when major schools of Kathak were established, like Jaipur gharana by Bhanuji, Banaras Garana by Janaki Prasad, Lucknow Gharana by Ishwari prasad, and Raigarh Gharana by Raja Chakradhar Singh.

Pt. Uday Shankar who had no formal training in dance established a new genre of dance called modern dance. He established a dance school in 1930 and invited many renowned dancers to perform. He travelled across the world and collected knowledge of movements and his innovative and forms and techniques brought him widespread fame. Singhajit Singh a famous Manipuri classical dancer also brought many regional Manipuri dances like thang-tha, Natasankeerthana, Lai-haraaba and Rasleela in to the framework of traditional classical Manipur form of dance.

Indian Education System & Performing Arts

Recently schools started having a dedicated performing arts teacher and a holistic art department in K-12 education system in Indian school. Indian curriculum includes math, science, languages and extra-curricular activities such as dance, music, visual art (Painting, Sculpture etc.), but at school level there is no much focus on what to be taught, learn, assess during the course of annual syllabus for performing arts, in fact there is no defined syllabus for these subjects. All possible teaching and learning strategies to promote a comprehensive learning through a holistic performing art curriculum with a vertical articulation is significant.

Written Curriculum: Organized Content on the subject

Curriculum needs to be set in the way to identify the relevant content about the performing art subject, which should be explored by the students along with their prior experience and understanding. This curriculum should be planned according to the need, interest and competencies of student and also should be able to find the best for their development in the long term, which is a substantial reason in this dynamic world. It should also include the global significance of all art cultures across world and offer students the opportunity to explore the commonalities of world experience. It needs to be supported by knowledge, concepts and skills from the traditional teaching and learning.

Taught Curriculum: The Teaching & Learning Strategies

Pedagogy supports the content curriculum by using multiple strategies in classroom to engage the children in efficient and prolonged learning. To find the solution of creating or developing the best curriculum for the dance education in schools, there is a need to understand these teaching and learning strategies to integrate dance with main academic streams like Science, Math, Social studies or even Computers in easy and comprehensive manner which is significantly mentioned in NEP 2020.

Assessment Curriculum





(A Peer Reviewed Quarterly Online Journal)

Evaluation process contributes to collect information regarding continuous improvement of the overall development of student in the area of learning in performing arts. It identifies what students know, understand, can do and feel at every stage in the learning process. Teachers remain up to date about every stage of teaching and learning process. Assessment provides them opportunities to support and celebrate student learning time to time.

Assessing the students to 'Discover' what students know & have learned, 'Recording' to collect the learning outcomes, and then 'Reporting' to communicate with students and parents. The assessment needs to be recorded in order to represent a clear picture or outcome of the students learning to the school. Recorded videos, pictures, and children work during classroom activities can also be used to assess learning progress. Observations, performance assessments (teacher-self-peer), Process focused assessment, selected response (Test and quizzes).

NCERT has developed exemplar material on continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE), with the support of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). This package helps all teachers to understand how to assess, record and report the student's progress during the teaching and learning process in a very effective way. According to CCE, assessment should be there to gather the evidence of student's progress not to give a final judgment on student's proficiency on subject.

Performing Arts Education in Schools of India

There is a yearly country Report on Art education in India get published in order to make a vision for teaching art in schools by the boards of education. According to this report, the department has made many recommendations to promote art education in India and gives high importance to the art considering it as a synonym for Indian culture and also it plays a very significant role in the overall development of a child. The criteria are suggested by the Indian constitution for performing arts education. These reports tells about the significance of art education and have excellent set ideas promote art in Indian education system. But there are questions like How...? When...? What...? Who? These question leads to find the answers like,

- 1. To promote dance in schools with respect to the interest of each student in class
- 2. To define right age to start the education
- 3. To find the right direction for the children during educating dance
- 4. To define suitable strategies to inculcate dance education (Pedagogy)
- 5. To find the best person who can take the initiative, to teach dance in best way
- 6. To identify the best way of making a dancer "a qualified dance instructor"

We have a huge respect and proud of our cultural heritage but then again, we are barely inculcating this art in our 21st century generation in right direction. What is this right direction? Father of the nation "Mahatma Gandhi" on our art diversity and richness said, "I do not want my house to be rounded by walls and my windows to be closed to other cultures. I wish to become familiar with the culture of lands as much as possible, but I will not permit them to affect me or shake me from my own status." Cultural exchange activities for students to encourage learning different art forms to expand knowledge in dance are required in schools.

Initially, Government of India worked a lot in support of dance for its cultural significance, like they have started many formal set up and established dance schools or supported the founders like Kathak Kendra Delhi, Jaipur Kathak Kendra, and North-East Zone Cultural Centre. Government also promotes art by providing scholarships for their training. In the school K-12 setup there is no detailed work is done so far. After school there are degree programs available in some universities.





(A Peer Reviewed Quarterly Online Journal)

To apply for degree courses, performing arts students need some authentic certification by some government, semi-government or non-government setups. Some Universities or private organizations are providing opportunities for young artists to complete their formal certification through the exams. These institutes or examination boards such as Bhangia Parishad, Prayag Sangeet Samiti, Pracheen Kala Kendra, Gandharva Kala Kendra & now CCAERF (Cadenza Cultural Arts Education & Research Foundation, Bengaluru) arrange external examination setup for the students who are learning performing art forms in private classes all over the India and abroad.

Government Support & Funding Organization

Funding for promoting dance education is also a point to consider with its critical situation in Indian society. Though the cultural art is very much significant but a specific set of people, who identify the value of dance art form only get to know about the way to come over the financial hurdle by finding out the Government schemes. This study indicates the current and future promotional status of performing arts persistence. Performing art has a long tradition of over many years and has evolved with its various regional and traditional forms within the diverse population of India.

Contrariwise the foreign and traditional elements of Indian classical and folk/tribal dance forms got emerged and noticeably gained the attraction of the young generation. Slowly, dance art started depriving from its traditional and regional values and remained as a part of entertainment. These entertaining external elements were accepted by the Bollywood industry and created their own signatory style of dancing with the blend of Indian classical/folk and western forms of dance. People are attracted to the massive production set up and lavishly designed costumes. Authenticity of Indian classical dance and regional traditional dance forms looked starving for the attention. Lack of investments and grants to support dance education are the major hurdle in transforming the value of dance from the entertainment to the education. Ministry of Culture running some schemes for the performing arts industry.

Indian government and funding organizations have been working to promote performing arts and artists through the governing body "the ministry of culture", which has opened pathways for artists to achieve their professional goals at national and international levels. Anonymous setups are established by the government of India with the support of legends and funding organizations like Sangeet Natak Academy (SNA), National School of Drama (NSD), Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) and zonal cultural centers. These establishments support art and culture by providing fellowships, travel expenses, research grants, production grants and fund to organize national and international performing art festivals with support of government. Some of these festivals are Khajuraho Festival, Taj Mahotsav, Konark Festival, etc.

According to a report, in India, performing arts grant schemes provide funds to non-profit organizations for the promotion of performing arts by training or staging productions they also provide schemes of grants for building studios and theatres government promotes international cultural exchange programs by assisting travel expenses of artists to go abroad for cultural activities. Scheme of Tagore Cultural Complexes provides financial assistance for building cultural spaces like auditorium, open-air theatre or to renovate such buildings. Cultural production and production grant scheme support all non-profit organizations, trusts, universities and individuals for conducting seminars, conferences, research, workshops, festivals, exhibitions, symposia, dance productions and research projects of art and culture. Artists Pension Scheme and Welfare Funds: The government provide financial assistance to the retired or senior citizen artists, who have significantly contributed to the field of Performing Art.



ISSN:2582-9513



(A Peer Reviewed Quarterly Online Journal)

Corporates and service sectors hardly support cultural arts and do not show any interest in rural arts as well. Festival conducted by government of India or some individual organizers brings some attention by attracting budding artists, audience and media people. Artists and individual art institutes are struggling to collect funds by promoting themselves. Some companies and corporates favor and demands the popular artists and celebrities for personal profit agendas.

Other Countries supports Performing Arts According to several reports, the federal government in other countries generated the bodies to support Performing Art Education in their own ways and levels.

In USA the government, financial investors, individual donors, art related foundations, etc. works hand in hand to support art and education and in return the cultural productions boost the creative economy of USA and contributes to its best. The citizens support performing arts by attending events and festivals very often and appreciate the artistic works. National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is one of the best practices for federal and state practice to support the creative art sectors.

The Rouanet law (a federal law for culture incentive) Brazil promotes performing arts through tax incentive through the federal state and municipal level this law created Programa Nacional de Apoio a Cultura (PRONAC, a set of public policies), that aim to stimulate the production, distribution and access of cultural products, the protection and conservation of historical and artistic heritage and to promote the dissemination of Brazilian culture and regional diversity. PRONAC includes FNC, Fundo Nacional de Cultura or (Portugese for national fund of culture) and FICA, Fundo de Investimento Cultural e Artistico or (Portugese for cultural and artistic investment funds).

Federal Government of Australia supports the creative art sector and established many bodies to help in arranging grants to the artists or the art organization. One of these bodies is CPA (Creative Partnership Australia) drives private sponsorships and advisory team to coordinate between the artists, business, private donors and community to support Arts. This program is structured in two layers: [1] APA (Art Partnership Advice) to select best art partnership on the basis of goals and objectives & [2] ACF (Australia Cultural Fund), which gives tax deduction to the individuals and corporate who invests and fund the artist and art projects.

In India there are some bilateral agencies who are being supported for Cultural Art development by foreign governments and private funds, like Indo-Korean Cultural and Information Centre, The British Council & The Max Mueller Bhavan (Supported by German Government), Some agencies supported by foreign private funds like Pro Helvetica of Switzerland and Swedish Council. These agencies support art by providing to conduct performances, conferences, workshops, and seminars.

There are some national and international trusts and foundation who provide funds to support performing art fields in India like: The Japan Foundation grants artists for study tours for research purposes in Japan and to collaborate Japanese artists for production purpose; Hivos, A Dutch NGO, which provide funds to performing art institution to strengthen teaching and learning programs; TATA Trusts, this group support immensely in performing arts field to promote arts and artists for strengthening pedagogy in in Performing arts institutions; India Foundation for the Arts (IFA), a Bengaluru Based organization started a program called Kali Kalisu (learn & teach). This organization promoting integrated teaching and learning in government schools of Karnataka by training teachers in this regard. They strengthen teachers



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(A Peer Reviewed Quarterly Online Journal)

with the art-based teaching techniques to enhance their teaching methodology.

Though the government is supporting artists who have already achieved certain levels but failed to promote this art among each and every child studying in schools. In all these arrangements, performing art in K-12 setup in most schools in India looks like under non-consideration till now. Though the school environment is supposed to develop the multiple talents and support academic and extra-curricular equally, this system is indirectly abolishing the opportunities to generate future artists, for instance the Classical legendries Birju Maharaj, Gopi Kishan Maharaj, Guru Sh. Kelucharan Mohapatra, Saroja Vaidyanathan, Guru B. Bhanumathi, or contemporary Choreographers like Shyamak Dawar, Prabhu Deva, Terrance Louise, or dance choreographers in film industry like Ganesh Hegde, Ahmed Ali, Saroj Khan, Farah Khan, Geeta Kapoor, etc. If they were not self-motivated, we would have never come across the depth of this beautiful art form.

According to NCF 2005 recommendations, every school should plan at least 5 block periods per week for co-curricular subject, and all students should be engaged in learning and exploring process in art field. All children should be encouraged to participate in art activities. According to the guidelines of NCERT on art education, learners should be inspired to be imaginative and exploring new ideas, they should become more creative, which helps them to enhance their cognitive skills. They should be motivated to be more expressive and confident to communicate in artistic way. Students should be able to recognize and appreciate cultural diversity on state, country or global level. They should know the different techniques and elements of art form, creating new artwork, processing the work using all aspects of art. They should become capable of understanding of application, performance and evaluation of their own original or other's artwork.

According to CBSE suggestive guideline on Art Education- Code 502 (2010), Pg. 230-232, the purpose of teaching dance at schools is to create an understanding of cultural diversity, which has various dance forms and movement styles specifically with Indian context. This course develops the motor skills, cognitive skills and aesthetic values to understand feelings and emotions in better way. The course should include all the theoretical and practical aspects of dance.

Conclusion

This study shows a number of governments, non-government organizations and individuals on national and international level are functioning immensely to support performing arts, however the government needs to consider more about promoting art forms on grass root level and isn't considering the school children and their awareness on art education. Though the school time is the best phase of a child to cultivate the traditional and educational value of all subjects including academic (like math, science, computers etc.) or the visual and performing art subjects (like Dance, Vocals, Musical instruments, Painting, etc.), it has to be the blend of diverse areas of educational field. Indian Education System is unknowingly supporting mindsets to create academic experts. Even a set of people shows interest towards learning dance they are forced to attain afterschool classes and required to spend money for acquiring knowledge in art form.

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Teaching content includes the elements and features of art forms (content, vocabulary, & technical aspects); Social cultural and religious traditions and values; Various art forms including Classical, regional or cinematic/social; historical data including evolution of dance. Introduction to the major classical performing art forms of India, tribal & regional folk forms, Modern & experimental (fusion & contemporary); Global forms (Opera, Mozart, jazz, renaissance, street, funk). This document also emphasizes upon the usage of technology to show pictures, videos, slide shows etc. to enhance the training. Also, the course suggests integrating dance with other subjects. Assignments should be given to the students to encourage inquiry-based learning. Students should be engaged in own creativity in terms of creative movements and also should be encouraged to appreciate other's artwork. They should be able to work individually, in small groups and in large groups.

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