

Importance of Bharatanatyam Curriculum in School Education for Women Empowerment and Rural Economic Growth.

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Abstract: Classical BharataNatyam compositions has followed the Guru-Shishya Parampara, and every movement can be traced to it's roots. The deep roots of this Classical Art form has enabled it to grow to great heights during good times under the patronage of the Kings. It is the most revered classical dance forms of India today. In India, Classical Music and Classical Dance are two important offerings to the Gods, as it is said that a soulful rendition of music, vocals, or a dance filled with devotion, alongwith the mechanics of the tala, the sound frequencies, modulations have the power to invoke the Gods, just like the power of a penance, or a Yagna. The Rhythmic movement of the hands, legs, shoulders, eyes, the facial expressions, the Hastas & Mudras create geometries in the space, that is believed to be in congruence with the creations of God. Much of the Mudras are also a part of spiritual oneness with God through Meditation and Yoga. Bharatanatyam has always been a well-researched, and most accurate way of expressing one's respect towards the Creator, that goes a step ahead by encompassing the classical musical notes and create an entire gamut of possibilities of human expressiveness. But this great Art is still only confined to a very few seekers, and is not available to the common Society due to limited opportunities to learn this Art. The immense advantages of learning this Art form towards personality development, that can eventually lead to National growth, still is an untapped potential, and needs a conscious and systematic program to diffuse Art and Education as an enhanced form of Learning.

Keywords: Bharatanatyam, Education, Guru Shishya parampara, Nation development, Art appreciation and learning, Rural economy, Women empowerment, Culture and Tradition, Primary Education.

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I. INTRODUCTION

धर्म्यम् अर्थ्यम् यशस्यम् सोपदेसम् ससंग्रहम् ।
भविष्यस्य लोकस्य सर्वकर्मानुदर्सकम् ॥
सर्वशास्त्रार्थ सम्पन्नम् सर्वशिल्प प्रवर्धकम् ।
नाट्याख्यं पञ्चमवेदं सेथिहासम् करोम्यहम् ॥

Lord Brahma took some part of all four Vedas and created the fifth one, the NatyaVeda, which contains all the essences of the life that portray Success, Education, Business, Knowledge through Music, Dance and Drama. Brahma Created this Natyaveda in such a way that it can emphasize the beauty of this world in a simple manner. Bharata Muni Restructured this NatyaVeda into the Beautiful Natyashastra, a treatise on dance, drama and Aesthetics. Sage Bharata taught Natyashastra to his 100sons and they presented Drama 'AmruthaMathana' in front of the Gods. After many changes and improvisations, Natyashastra was perfected. The influence of geographical area, cultural atmosphere, social life, costumes shaped this art into different adaptations.

In India we see many dance forms some are folk origin, and some are classical origin, called Lokadharmi and Natyadharmi respectively. All these dance forms are shaped by the rules and regulations of Natyashastra. Bharatanatyam strictly follows the rules and regulations of Natyashastra. Bharatanatyam propagated through Guru-Shishya Parampara. Aspirant students learnt this art in Gurukula. Students at the age of six went to the guru's place to learn and perfect this Art, much similar to the way martial arts are learnt. After rigorous training for many years, when guru is satisfied with his student training, he invites all the dignitaries of the society for her/his debut recital called Arangetram.

Kings and queens were great patrons of these art forms and queen Shantala was an expert in Bharatanatyam. Their interest in dance form was depicted through the architectures of the exemplary temples like Badami, Aihole, Ellora, Belur, Halebidu etc. In the time of Chalukyas, Cholas, Nayakas, Gangas these arts flourished to its peak. Muslim and British invasions over centuries forced fine arts into hibernation. After India's independence, music and dance forms slowly regained its glory. Today learning, performing, teaching, researching Bharatanatyam is highly sought for.

One of the famous Bharatanatyam artist of colonial era, Smt. Rukmini Devi Arundale learnt Bharatanatyam at age of 28 under the great veteran guru Minakshi Sundaram Pillai and gave her solo debut at the age of 32. Due to the impoverished state that Bharatanatyam was experiencing, she went ahead and established Kalakshetra at Chennai, a place that was purely dedicated to learning and teaching Bharatanatyam. Also, Valathol Narayana Menon established Kalamandalam at Kerala. These centers provide training in Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Carnatic music etc. The stalwarts of these fields were gathered in these centers to transfer their skill into aspirant students through Gurukula system. Guru shishya parampara thus was kept alive. These gurus were the real torch bearers of Bharatanatyam.

II. THE RELEVANCE OF BHARATANATYA IN TODAY'S EDUCATION

Education in Enlightening. Education is empowerment. Bharatanatyam can play a major role in the integral development of an individual. It adds another dimension to the character that transforms an otherwise mediocre presence into a highly Charismatic Persona. The starry awe can be felt from the confidence that exuberates through the exponent of Bharatanatyam, reflecting the semblance of the divine art in their souls. When such a deep art is embedded into the framework of education, it has the powers to revolutionize the entire society into a vibrant abode for experiencing the highest forms of human consciousness.

III. THE APPROACH TO INCLUDE BHARATANATYA INTO THE CURRICULUM :

Premier Educational Institutes have already started exploring ways to include Classical art forms into their curriculum. The real challenge is to reach the rural areas of the country, where facilities are minimal, and quality education is a challenge. A group of established Bharatanatyam gurus & artists ready to work their part-time for a social cause of upliftment of rural children, as well as propagation of the art into the entire delta of the country can be a worthy achievement. During the pre-independence times, when India was struggling under the British rule, dance had taken a backseat. It were the efforts of many legendary gurus like Vedantam Laxminarayana Shastri, Bharatan Natesa Iyer, Muthukumara Pillai, Kandhappa Pillai, Minakshisundaram Pillai,



Figure 1: Guru K. Muthukumara Pillai teaching Bharatanatyam to T K Narayan

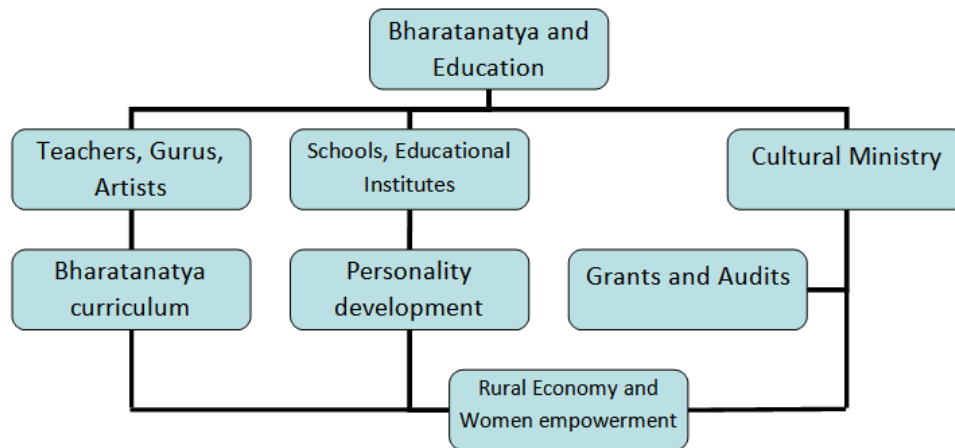
who went from village to village teaching aspiring students the art of Bharatanatyam. Such was the impetus, that Bharatanatyam blossomed into a mainstream art form after independence, and also the pride part of India's cultural heritage.

A team of teachers can unite to create an organised syllabus of theory and practicals, based on class-wise groups similar to the already existing pattern of exams conducted by some private boards. A systematic approach can bring about a renewed interest also into academics, as both physical and mental abilities are tested. Bharatanatyam can aid in the physical growth of the student, and make them more stronger and independent.

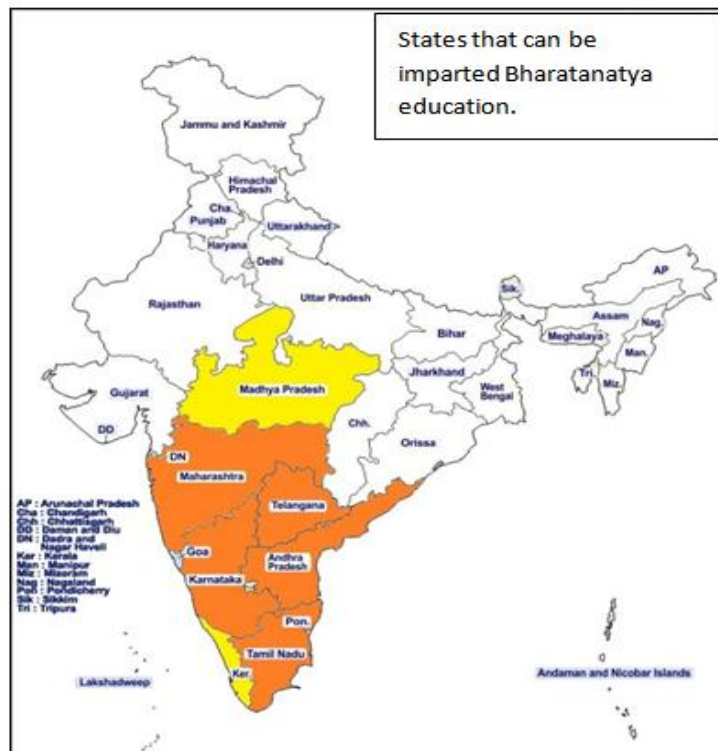
Government and small private schools existing in gram panchayats can impart the curriculum of Bharatanatyam through the team of willing gurus, who should be ready to sacrifice a couple of days in a week to

the rural work. A stipend can be worked out through the involvement of the Cultural ministry, to reimburse the min. expenses incurred.

Women empowerment and rural upliftment can be witnessed simultaneously, as it is not the lack of opportunities, but the lack of confidence that is responsible for rural women to remain under the cloud of neglect. India is still unable to organize the huge bank of latent potential that these rural women carry. Rural economy can beat the Urban economy without doubt, with enterprising women venturing into small establishments, self-help groups, home industries, food processing, nursery, fabric design, handicrafts, textiles, fashion and much more. Bharatanatyam can be a common driving force to instill the much need determination generated from the completeness this art form gives to any individual.

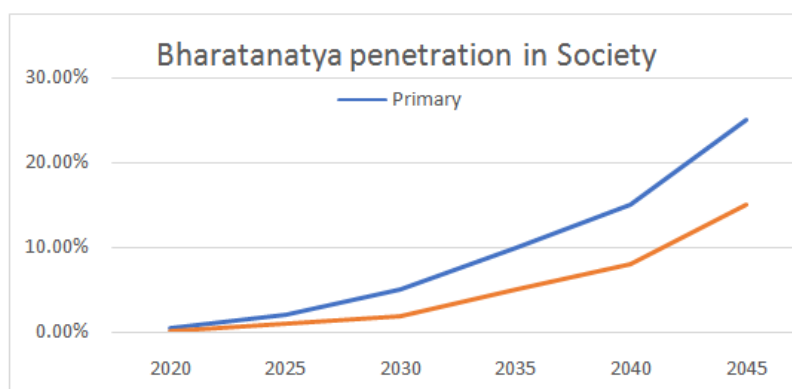


Though Bharatanatyam has prevalence more in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, it's influence is also in other states like Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh & Kerala. Also, there is a good presence of teachers in many districts of these neighboring states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. A respectable occupation, blended with a National cause can motivate teachers to take up teaching jobs for rural aspirants. Though the spread of education will take time due to limited teaching professionals, yet, in a span of 10 to 15 years, Bharatanatyam can be greatly absorbed into the Education system.



IV. USING TECHNOLOGY FOR IMPROVING REACH

As the mission is to impart education to each and every corner of the country, enormous resources could be consumed in travelling, accommodation in terms of time and money. Also, reach could get limited only to the physically present group, whereas those who are unable to even make it to the rural centres may remain unaddressed. Here, latest technologies of Internet can be utilized to have a speedy progress. Distant Skype classes can be undertaken by teachers with as many as 20 students learning remotely via internet connectivity. Training videos, Online courses of very famous Bharatanaty gurus can reach every desired corner of the society. With Technology, almost 80% education can be imparted, assessed and awarded. As Mobile internet has successfully penetrated in remote areas too, 4G and 5G technologies can create enormous impact on future education. Yet, Bharatanaty being a perfected art, it needs personal attention and correction. It also needs a cultural connect with the Gurus, wherein the shishya gets the real feel of the Guru's presence, that can have a lasting impression on him. Strategic mix of Classroom and distant education can create great value.



V. CULTURAL REVOLUTION THROUGH BHARATANATYA EDUCATION :

Bharatanaty not only has the advantage of having a healthy body, but it also helps in a healthy and productive mind and overall improvement in living standards. India is a country of rich cultural heritage, but due to many cultural invasions pre-independence, most of the sections of the society are still devoid of this cultural nurture, that has left them disillusioned and disconnected with the direction that India wants to take as a country. This 'Cultural poverty' also is one of the main reasons for creating insecurity and inferiority within the society. A poor person with strong cultural roots can bounce back with determination and self-belief, and gets to know life from a larger perspective. This change can be seen in every person who learns and absorbs Bharatanaty. When this change is seen in every person, our society will witness a cultural revolution. Though there is a diversity of religion and caste, there will be Cultural unity, that is the basis of all of us being a part of this big nation.

VI. CONCLUSION

Bharatanaty, being the most refined and perfected classical art form, that resembles the geometries of nature, can have an enormous impact on the intellectual, emotional and psychological well being of the citizens of this country. Alongwith regular education, including Bharatanaty as a part of the curriculum will enhance the Educational outcome, and create better individuals in the Society to propel Nation's development.

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