



Do the influences change the aspiration of learning dance with growing age? A critical study

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Abstract

The present article addresses the potential reasons behind dropout rate of interest in learning dance with the growing age of children in school. These reasons flared up during the analysis of data collected by the researcher for the purpose of research study on dance curriculum and its teaching and learning in the schools of Bengaluru. Some findings during the analysis compelled the researcher to assemble the patterns shown in observations & interviews in research article, as this can also be the major study area in the field of dance education in the schools of Bengaluru. The nature of this study is mix of both quantitative and qualitative. The initial data is secondary and popped up during the analysis of primary data collected by the researcher for the different study purpose. These observations pushed researcher to further investigate the phenomenon through a data collection process using primary resource.

For this study, survey method is used to identify the causal relationship and effects between variables. Under this phenomenon, independent variables will be dance learners (level of Interest, their own aspiration, limitations), school management & teachers (inspiration and direction), parents (influences, preferences, career obsession). On the other hand, the dependent variable will be the deviation of child's interest from learning dance with growing age and their interest towards learning dance. This paper is further arranged in order to explain the nature of study, articulation of objectives for the purpose of study to clarify scope & sequence and identify the research questions, extended review of literature, methodology employed for the study, sampling of participants, primary data collection, analytical study, results & discussions and finally to provide the hypothetical statement and conclusion to the paper.

Keywords

Academic pressure, Body Image, Career, Dance, Gender Stereotype, Parent's influences, teachers, School Management, Learning interest in dance.

Introduction

Studies says that dance teaching and learning have already faced challenges in terms of its economic and social status especially in India. There have been many traditional and isolated approaches observed towards transferring the knowledge to generations. In this scenario, it becomes challenging to cultivate a respectful and endured environment of learning with the growing age in this dynamic world of knowledge exposures. Learning of dance faces critical challenges, as there is intervention of parents, arranged programs related to appreciate dance, education policies and the whole system includes social, economical, political and historical influences. In this article, how these interventions are affecting learning of dance, is highlighted.

Learning dance has always been considered as extra-curricular activity or a hobby or a good physical activity or an occasional practice. Researcher's experience and data indicate that, to choose the dance as a career option for the children is a challenge. Though the choice is easy to learn dance as hobby at the time of early childhood, but many researches indicate that the several

external influences are likely to start controlling over a person when he/she eventually chooses to learn dance and is likely to opt as a career.

Problem Statement

The extent review of literature indicates about the interventions like physical, social or psychological factors and in-house or external personnel play a major role to divert children to prolong their learning interest in dance. Children by birth are likely to interact with many people including doctors, parents, relatives, neighbors and their age group children, friends with multicultural backgrounds in school, teachers, academic & non-academic support staff, sometimes child psychologists and a wide range of professionals and experts. Their learning abilities and interest of learning different things including dance or vocational fields get intervened with these external personnel. This setup keeps working on child's development through out their growing age. It is with sure intentions of healthy and progressive development for children's successful and secured future. Most of the time, these very important personnel intrude child's prolongation of learning in particular fields of his or her interest specially the non-academic field including dance. This article is evolving around the understanding about "How and why the children get influenced and seclude themselves from dance classes with the growing age?"

Research Questions: The study about dance education in the schools of Bengaluru, drew an additional question in researcher's mind to reach out the recommendations for further investigation in detail.

"Do influences change the aspiration of learning dance with the growing age?"

Objectives

The major objectives of writing this article are:

- To enquire about the introverted and external influences, like parental intrusion and stereotyped education, which deviates the child's interest of learning dance with growing age
- To identify, if the lack of career awareness, inspiration, mentoring and proper direction may lead to drop the idea of learning dance with growing age

Review of literature

Learning at the growing age when considering the age group of 3 to 15 years, it is very important not to overlook the available accessibility of wide range of arrangements about what learning requires to shapeup a long term transitory of a child. It clearly indicates in previous researches and surveys that the priorities in terms of passion and profession are well defined in Indian education system. Many researches in other countries also indicate that parent's influences are too high upon pre-primary to higher-grade children.

The following approach employed for reviewing the existing literature. First the keywords were identified for the literature search (i.e. Physical growth, psychology and learning abilities, teaching and learning [Pedagogy], multiple intelligence and cognitive development, history of Indian dance and the people mind set). Number of digital repositories like, Academia.edu, NDEO, CODE Ontario, Science Direct, NCBI, CID UNESCO, etc. were selected for the search based on their relevance and reported quality. The identified papers represented a broad spectrum of research articles and conference papers, mainly peer-reviewed journals.

The major resource of compiling the analysis of this phenomenon was taken from the research study conducted on teaching and learning in dance in the schools of Bengaluru, this article is based on one of the pattern observed / during the analysis of data collected through the observations and surveys in the schools of Bengaluru in during 2018 to 2020. The learning ability is at its peak at early age, as they learn at rapid pace at this age. Also, the curiosity of learning is very much high at that developing age. As the science of learning like critical neurological and biological systems and the personnel involves around children overall development with a long-term transitory need to be ensured about the best fundamental setup for cultivation for the life ahead. Parents and teaching professionals also play an important role in enhancing child's interest in learning particular subject may it be academic or non-academic.

Children receive the support, relationships and learning environment and that experience produces a profound effect. They are exposed to multitasking and cumulative learning for the cognitive development of their brain. The learning at early age builds a strong foundation and affects their future interest and transit ways achievements in particular direction. As they grow, these directions get affected with the arrangements around them, whether it may be parents, teachers, school, friends, relatives and

other surroundings. At the time of learning at early age builds a foundation, which certainly affects their future learning and high quality of learning experience promote them to the continuous developmental achievements.

The adults (parents and teachers mostly) are the most responsible for the progression of their children's learning in right direction. It seems to be challenging job to support the cognitive development of children, who are growing with world experiences, influenced with multiple distractions by exposure to the world learning making them more curious to find "what's new...?". Parents who are liberal, supportive and believe in giving freedom to the children to develop their budding talents and goals are also limited up to a particular age. They may start indirectly contradicting their stance with the hidden meaning in their behaviors after noticing that this talent may reach to another level and may motivate child to take it as his or her future profession.

Continuous process in children's physical, psychological and social development indicates the impact throughout their life. The major transition periods are from early childhood stage (3-8 years) to the middle age (9 to 15 years). Studies show that set of characteristics may be seen during this age group. 3-8 year of age group shows the best motor abilities, agility and curiosity to copy movements, they like to experience adventurous activities and new things. Near to the age of five, they shall come out of their fantasy world and start to try something real like, dancing like ballerina or sing like their favorite song. Children between the age group of 6 to 8 year, start understanding the difference between reality and fantasy, enjoy stories about real heroes. They start to impress people around them like their parents, teachers, doctors, relatives, neighbors etc., by flaunting their talent.

During 9 to 15 years of age, physical and mental development is noticeable and visible. These developments bring lots of movement hesitation and discomfort in some kids. Psychological impact also seems to be significant at this age group. They mostly enjoy the company of their friends and they get influenced with each other. This is a very vulnerable age for the strangers to influence them. Also, the short-term enthusiasm doesn't let them focus on one sort of activity so they do not continue learning what they were indulging since early childhood like dancing or singing. They are capable of designing their own objectives about the further development for life and begin to consider their decisions as the long-term plan in future.

School management impacts the interest of learning dance with the growing age of children. According to the PYP curriculum the major concepts are: Who we are? Where we are? How we express ourselves? How the world works? How we organize ourselves? Hence, they learn all through this model of teaching and learning. Dance supports this concept well through "Units of Inquiry", integration and collaboration. This concept is suggested by international curriculum, and is followed in many other foreign countries including some schools in India. Studies shows that in school education system the curriculum is designed in a way, which looks more emphasizing on academic subjects in compare to the art education.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted on the basis of some flared-up outcomes showing on the data during the analysis of a survey conducted by the researcher to investigate the current condition of dance education in schools of Bengaluru for the educational purpose of a research study. These results motivated the researcher to write a research paper on this unavoidable outcome. Parents, children and other adults (employed or home-makers) were examined on the basis of their thoughts, mindset and advice during an interview conducted.

Sampling: To understand the percentage of influential reasons of secluding the people from learning dance with growing age in schools or outside institutions, this research required information by interviewing existing dancers, students or working adults of different age group. For this process, random snowball sampling was used and an exclusive questionnaire was prepared and circulated. Non-systematic & randomly selected audiences were approached for their responses. Among 495 participants responded during 2 weeks of time. Among 495 respondents, 109 responses were not relevant as they were not interested in dance ever by choice. 386 responses showed the relevance to their personal experience with the identified intervenes.

Data Collection: To pursue this study, a survey was conducted among non-systematic & randomly selected audience of different age group, gender and professions. Survey question was asked to multiple social groups of parents and schools on social media such as Mompreneur Circle, Whitefield Moms & Tots, Bangalore Schools etc. Also, many people were sent the survey question through personal contacts. Anonymous responses were considered under qualitative data and discussed further in this article. A survey through social media, a basic question was asked and further discussed with some respondents

to identify the vagueness of results and for qualitative responses. The survey was conducted on the basis of identified indicators mentioned below:

What influences changed your aspiration & interest to continue learning dance?	Answers
Friends or society influence with growing age	
Gender stereotypes	
Academic Pressure	
Movement Hesitation	
Perfect Body Image	
Health Issues	
Lack of Parental support	
Never got any inspiration or proper direction in school time	
Considering dance as "Not" a very good earning career	
Any other	

Table 1 : Survey

Quantitative Data

Sample Size: Total Responses – 578

109 non-relevant responses

Female respondents: 386 relevant responses were considered for this study

Male respondents: 83 relevant responses were considered for this study

Time Limit: 2 Weeks, the survey was conducted between the period of 11th May 2020 to 26th May 2020

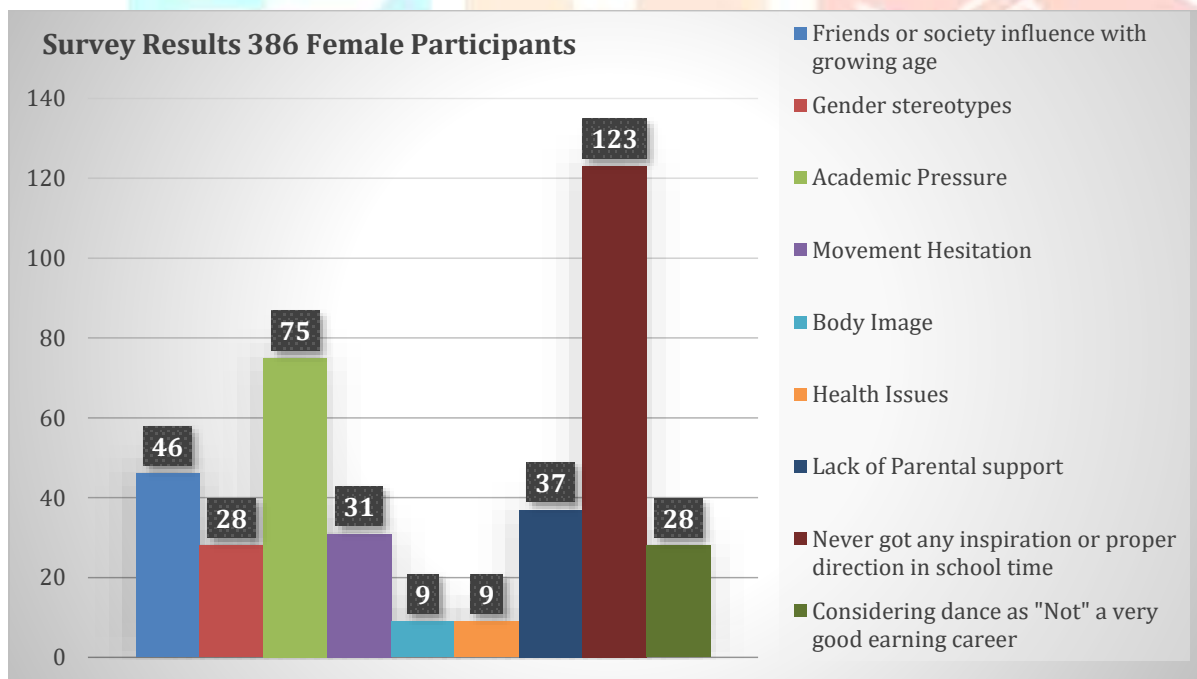


Figure 1: Survey results (Number of response)

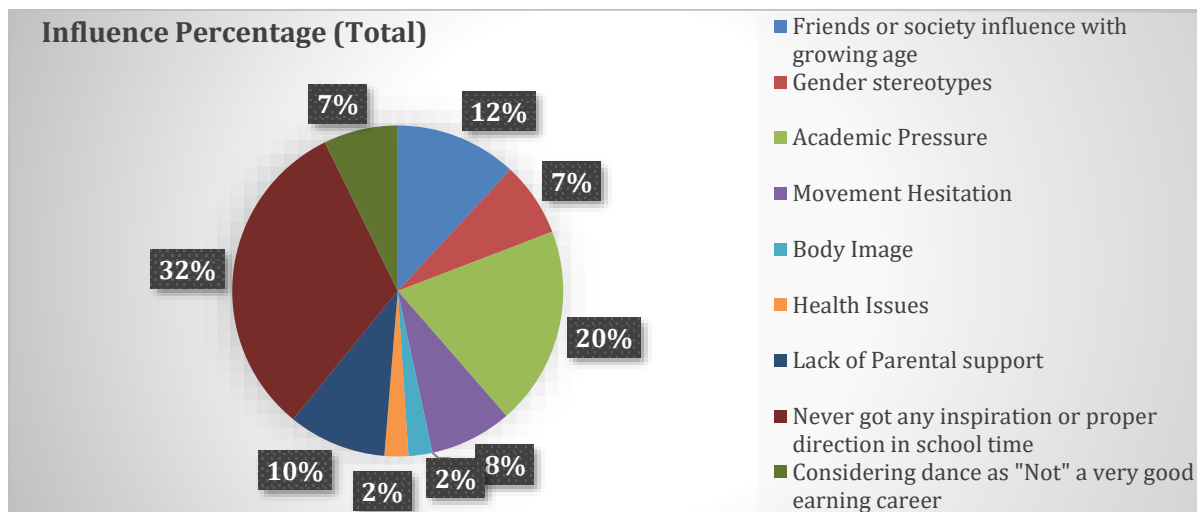


Figure 2: Percentage of influence

This graph shows that 32% of female participants accepted that they never got proper direction and inspiration to continue learning dance and academic pressure deviates 20% of people's aspiration towards learning dance. Other interventions also show major influences upon people to opt out dance as career option. There is lack of parental support and stereotyped society, which is influencing approximately 10% & 12% of people respectively who wanted to learn dance.

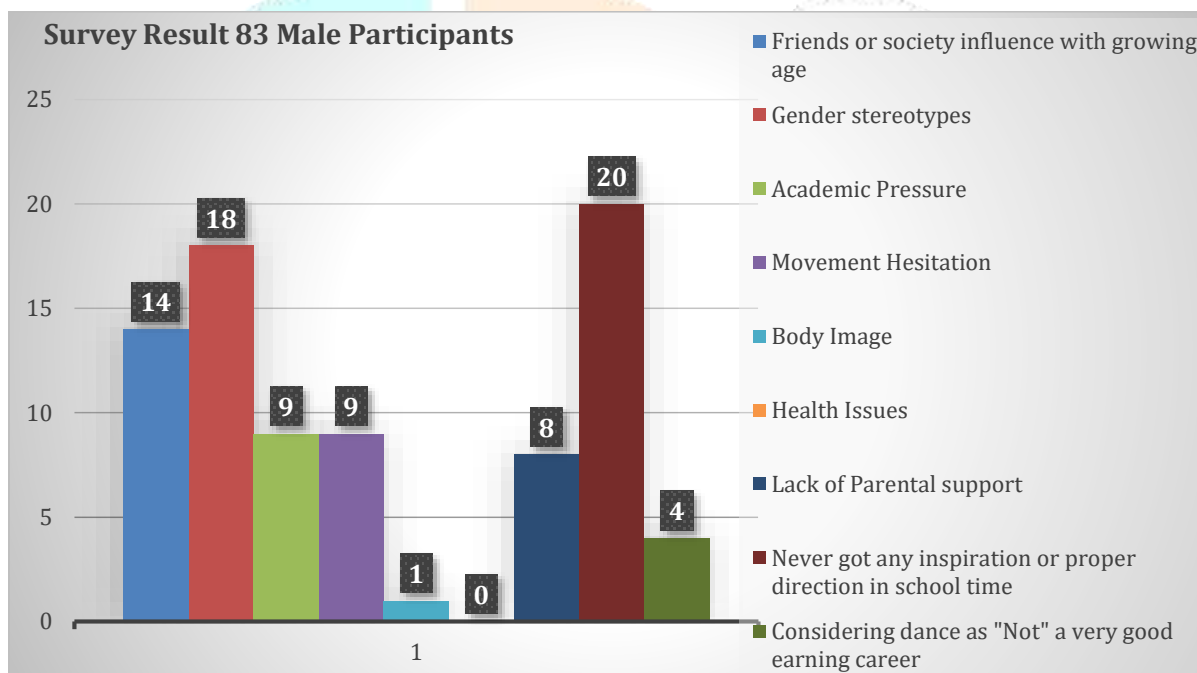


Figure 3 : Intervention factors in mail participants

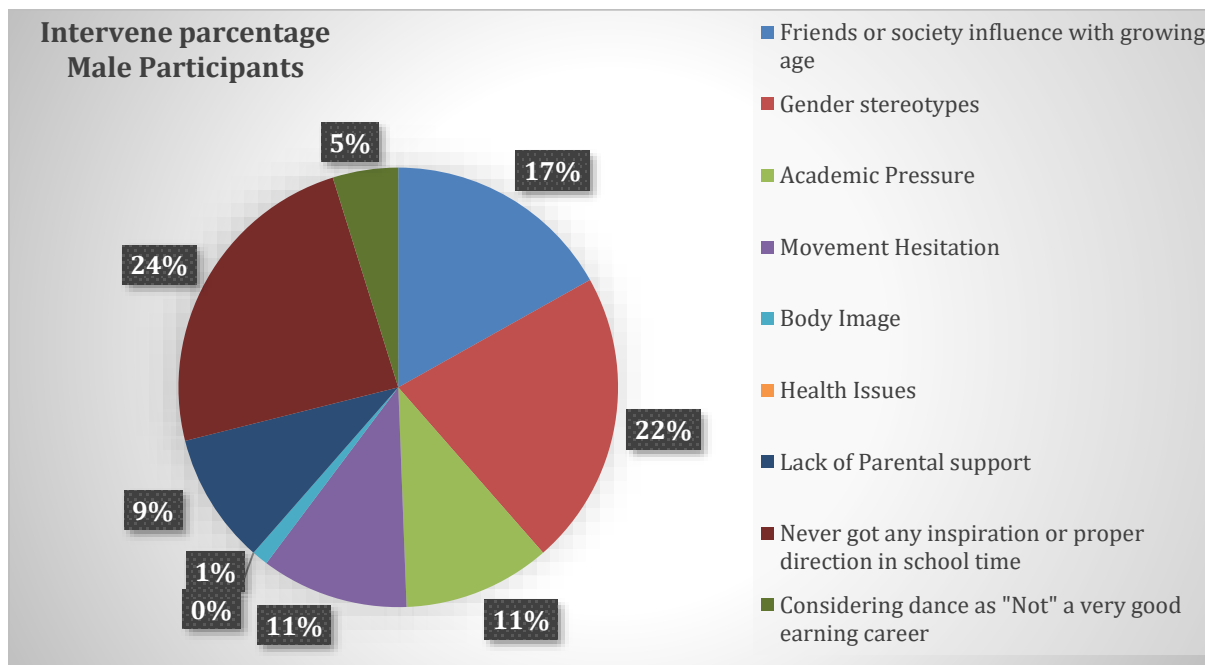


Figure 4: Intervention percentage in male participants

Lack of inspiration and proper direction 24%, gender stereotype 22%, society influence 17%, another perception of learning dance among male participants. Male participants majorly expressed their views about the gender discrimination. According to them dance can not be the main source of income, hence academic pressure (~11%) was more obvious intervene to deviate their aspiration of continuing dance. Movement hesitation (~9%) is more in compare to female participants.

Qualitative Data

After the quantitative data collection, the participants who were more responsive and interested towards the survey were further discussed about the phenomenon. During this process the participants shared multiple thoughts and experiences. Some of the major and noticeable responses are quoted below:

Arindama Banerjee, (a multi-national company employee and a mother): According to Ms Arindama, despite having a very supportive family and getting a good training in vocals, she chose to continue her career in academics and continued her passion for arts. She also mentioned that many of her colleagues consider art as hobby and not a career option. She never would like to force her child to follow the stereotype. Also, she says that dance need to be envisioned as mainstream career option.

Nidhi Prabhakar (A home maker and a mother): She loved dancing and learnt classical for a couple of years, but stereotyped education system never allowed her to pursue dance seriously and academic pressure pulled her back from learning in dance.

Dr. Ashutosh Gupta (ENT Surgeon): Dr. Gupta always wanted to learn dance but study pressure, lack of proper direction and motivation never allowed him to learn dance. Also, he had a lot of hesitation and low confidence with body movements in a limelight in front of audience, demotivated him to participate in any dance performances in school time, college time and till date. According to him, gender stereotype was in trend and presumed without any thought and deliberation.

Divya Keshavan: She had passion of becoming a classical dancer and learnt for 3 years in school but her father's transferrable job was the reason for her discontinuation in learning dance. According to her, society was rude at times as academic subjects were only considerable and reputed. Body shaming was another concern as she had a perfect body image of dancers in her mind, which demotivated her at most and never gave courage to perform.

Sowmya Konjerla (Software Engineer): Academic pressure never allowed her to continue her passion of learning dance. But after her engineering and a secured job she started learning dance (Kathak). Though again she had to take a break due to her transfers, she would again start practicing in dance. By making art a mandatory subject will be effectively shaping future perspectives of society.

Jesni Abdulkader: Conservative family and religious thoughts were the main obstacle of her dance obsession. Parental support is very important if someone wants to pursue career in his/her passionate field, especially when it is dance.

Jaya Bansal: According to Ms. Jaya, dance was her first love, but it was restricted to annual functions/ events in school. She never thought of taking dance to the extended level as she was never inspired or directed properly.

Roopa Tantri: According to her, most of the above-mentioned options (identified influences) relate to her experience of not choosing dance as her career, which makes her feel sad. Her parents were very much concern about the society.

[Anonymous Responses]

1. Parent supported me to learn dance as a hobby only but they never allowed me to choose dance as a career option and was pushed in academics. But dance is all about passion and a happy soul. People are very lucky who follow their passion and make it as a profession.
2. I did not consider dance as even an option for future as it is good as a hobby only. Academic pressure never allowed us to learn any art from.
3. It is tough to take your passion as your mainstream career; I was unable to take it up due to family issues and now I do not see a lot of value in it for my child.
4. Moreover, there was no context created, which I know now, thanks to the internet open source knowledge sharing. So, role of Guru who was more commercial then and not actually holding the sacredness and essence of classical dance, I quit learning then.
5. IT Employee & Jazz Dancer: Dance can surely be a good career option but it depends on how much efforts you have put in to achieve goals. It is absolutely a high-risk career in order to continue as your only profession. Also, you need to learn a traditional style for years, which is certainly time and money consuming. I am in to IT sector and a dancer too. I teach dance as I have a desire to stay connected to this field.
6. IT Employee & Belly Dancer: I have a great passion in dance since childhood. Many factors came as obstacles in to pursuing this career. Gradually, I was also convinced at a certain point of time to have engineering degree and grab a job first. Later I pursued learning Belly dance. I am now teaching and performing along with job.
7. I was a Plus size. Although I tried to dance and did well too, but nobody encouraged, rather made fun so I killed my passion by myself. Whenever I see some dancers on social media, they are all slim and fit, which create a body image in my mind and I do not find myself fit in to that frame.

Analytical Study

This article indicates the influential dropout of children from learning dance with the growing age. There is an arrangement of personnel that seamlessly work for the entire learning development of all the children throughout their childhood. These personnel include parents, teachers, educational experts (considering nursery trained teachers, high school professors, child psychologists), school management, doctors etc. This set of personnel looked stimulus behind the children's diverted interest from learning dance. Influences looked very strong as the intervening of the factors like parents, teachers, friends, social & economical forces, academic pressure and gender stereotype & body image making a big difference in children's choice of continuing or discontinuing of learning dance. It was also considered that the children physical growth becomes a barrier at a particular age for the boys and girls to pursue dance in senior grades.

Parents play a major role unknowingly by using all the ways to change the child's decision to take dance as a career option by putting the barriers including financial security safety success, family values, gender discrimination. A LinkedIn study says

that nearly 82% parents in India prominently decide their child's career. The parents who portray themselves liberal, supportive and believed in giving full freedom to their children to encourage the budding talents, many a times indirectly contradict their own stand.

Parents seem to be very much clear about their children's future as they would certainly like their child to achieve higher academic goals and learning dance should remain as hobby and they looked uncomfortable to accept dance for their children's life career.

Firstly, their fixed mindset about academic career and their child to become a doctor, engineer, space scientist, marketing expert, a government official or any such highly paid profession. They consider dance or any such after school activity as child's budding talent or appreciate it as a purpose for cognitive support to the academics, but they are not convinced or captivated with art subject as a successful career option or profession for their child.

Secondly, the reputation of dance field in India has been questionable since ancient period, where it was considered under "Devdasi" culture. Though after a long struggle of many dance exponents and legends acquired a great place for this art form, still many people believe in same stereotyped mindset. They still connect dance with social defame.

Lastly, the financial and economical status is also a big barrier in way of continuing in learning dance. This specific condition forces many people to pull their children out from such activities and convince them in many ways to drop off learning dance. As children grow and reach to higher classes, parents feel to spend money for their academic growth like robotics, extra tuitions for math, science or any other academic subject.

The results are prominently indicating that the academic pressure is one of the major factors for the children to dropout the dance as they hardly get time to practice and attend extra classes to get proficiency in dance field. The distinctive mindset of society to create doctors, engineers or scientist forces parents to pull their children from extra-curricular activities after primary school. It looks significantly important for the parents to maintain societal status by showcasing their children at the successful career endeavor. Where they absolutely boycott dance from their child's one of the career options, as their strong mindset believes that dance may fail to provide the financial security in future. They strongly interfere and try to deviate the child to focus more on academics rather than any extra-curricular activity. They apply multiple ideas to encourage academic importance in front of their children, by giving example of academic success of the children of all possible relatives or neighbors. Sometimes parents may emotionally change child's mind with their financial status, which may be genuine.

The school management and stereotyped education system also indicate a significant intervening by providing limited resources for dance education because of their fixed mentality of creating doctors, engineers, scientists, CEO's etc. to showcase their success in academic business. The data reveals that the proper arrangement of learning environment can bring positive changes to overcome the interventions in child's ability and interest of learning in dance with the growing age. K-12 setup in Indian education system is meant to promote academics from the early childhood. In schools the teachers are occupied in creating dance rather than teaching in dance for the school success report to showcase the cultural encouragement to the society.

If conceptual and content-based curriculum in dance is followed in schools, may bring a difference. But if the school management will not have proficient staff for teaching dance, this phenomenon will not work efficiently. At the middle school, children do not find facility of specialization in dance, then children drop- out from learning dance and have only academic subjects to choose for their further studies. In today's era children are always one step ahead because of internet. They are aware of the world and multiple dance forms and quality. It is quite difficult to arrange multiple dance teachers with expertise in versatile form. In India itself there are 8 forms of classical dance. These limitations are also important to be considered.

The dance teacher's proficiency on subject and passion for teaching plays a very important role in holding students for the continuous and prolonged learning. Children of today's era are too fast due to the quick and easy exposure to the world knowledge and can be very much demanding in terms of the variety of dance forms and rich information. If the teachers are not upgraded & well equipped with comprehensive knowledge over the subject, children tend to lose interest in attending classes.

Dance is still considered as a low paid profession; the school management may be compromising with the qualification & experience of the dance teacher is also a reasonable concern about the quality of teaching dance in many schools. School and dance teachers majorly focus on creating dance instead of teaching dance, which at higher-grade children start observing very

well and they start to lose interest in learning further. Teachers with the levels of their competency in teaching in dance, can demotivate or distract children year by year by providing obsolete / legacy style instructions at school level.

Physical and mental growth has a major impact in children's decision of learning dance or advance study. Studies indicate that every child learns in a unique way and at individual pace. With the growing age children experience adaptable changes in their body and also in surroundings to stimulate their physical, emotional and psychological behaviors. Children's physical and mental growth influences learning dance with growing age.

Due to physical changes, some children start to walk with a little bent position or they start to hunch their shoulders. This makes children less interested in participating in physical activities, particularly in dance as they connect dance with aesthetic moves. Children are very sensitive at this age and may get diverted with a minute negative experience. Their thought process, acceptance of any new information or learning new things, level of adaptability shows sudden changes time to time and unpredictably. For instance, a real example of researcher's experience: A very much self-motivated girl stopped coming in dance class for couple of days because of a negative comment given by a co dancer in a group choreography. And only could resume her classes after a long counseling session.

Body image plays a major role in deviating individual's choice of taking dance sincerely despite of having a huge love and aspirations towards dance. A majority of participants showed their discomfort in dancing because of body image. They were forced to kill their passion of dancing because of a dancer's body image stereotype. It is a significant point to understand that, whether the social media indirectly creating this consciousness about this image of a perfect dancer body by showcasing performances of most of the well figured dancers, or lack of proper directions given by the teachers about how to achieve that body and how fitness is very important for achieving such a perfect body shape to become a dancer, is creating this mindset. Responses by participants indicate that, a passionate and responsible teacher can bring a noticeable change in overall perception of a new learner about a proper body shape or having a fit body to dance with proper direction and mentoring.

Gender stereotype in society is also one reason for the withdrawal percentage of children from learning dance with growing age. "Dance is for Girls and Boys are for sports", this statement gets very clear with the detailed study and field research explicated in this article. Until primary grades (up to the age of 10 years) boys and girls show equal interest in learning dance but dependency on limited resources of learning dance and teaching experts in schools, start deviating them specially the boys who need extra motivation, inspiration and proper direction.

The results through the analysis indicate a very clear thought process of gender stereotype parents. Many parents accepted that they enrolled the boy in some sports, Piano or Guitar classes, and girls are enrolled in dance activities may it be an Indian classical or overseas form like Ballet. Many female participants accepted that there was a gender discrimination as boys were allowed to learn whatever they want but being a girl, it was difficult to convince parents or society to send girls to learn dance.

Lack of career awareness in dance shows a major impact on people who take dance just as a hobby but never consider dance as their professional career. During the survey, many participants accepted that they feel dance cannot be a very good career option as there are limitations of getting secured jobs. Earning is not consistent, as at times you may be earning a lot and unexpectedly struggling for your survival in life. They firmly admit that they are not sure about dance can be a satisfactory and reliable source of income. They also feel that competition and evaluation in art field is totally based on individual feedbacks and open reviews and it is very difficult to cop up in the field and get recognition.

Conclusion

Many unidentified reasons came to the notice during the survey. Many of the respondents mentioned about their interest level and dedication was not up to the mark. Many more subject along with dance were there in education platter, those attracted them later in future. Dance needed lot of physical and mental exercise. Lack of persistence and commitment level for daily practice was one of the reasons, which made learners to quit from dancing. Traveling job of parents was also an obvious reason by respondents. Distance and unmatched schedules of dance classes forced them to discontinue from learning dance. Current trends of integrating gymnastic moves with dance also demotivating children to learn dance and the fear of failure at the beginning itself holds them to try further. A few of very important reasons were marked: 1. "Lack of confidence and negative self-esteem always set me back stage". 2. A thought that, "I am not an extraordinary dancer" pulled me out of dance classes. These statements of respondents can bring the attention of teachers and spectators about assessment and feedback process.

Many adults as parents during interview also mentioned about their will to resume their passion of learning dance, which they had to discontinue at the age of 12 to 15 years due to any of the identified interventions by researcher like academic pressure or other plans or expectations from their own life. There were many adults who just discontinued dance for several reasons, contrariwise there are many corporate professionals who left their jobs and followed their aspiration and continued their passion in dance as their profession. They also mentioned that it was not that easy as family, finance and social hurdles were always remained as a part of their struggle to pursue this career. But they consider each obstacle as inspiration and motivation towards the love and passion about their aspiration.

Further scope of study

- Is there a way to eliminate the negative influences on growing age children and make them motivated to continue learning dance with proper career awareness?
- Will a proper consultancy for children about the discomfort during the physical and mental growth with the age bring their prolonged interest in learning dance?
- May teacher, dance facility in academic school and dance academies bring a difference in dropout rate of dance students in higher grades by providing a healthy and more than informative dance teaching and learning facility?

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