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"ENHANCEMENT OF MENTAL FACULTIES THROUGH REGULAR PRACTICE IN BHARATHANATYAM"

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ABSTRACT

India is a very rich country in terms of arts and culture. It has large number of dance forms from different region with its style. All these art forms expression, had a capacity in fine tuning the senses and sense perception. Thus art is purely communication at the deepest and most lasting level. Many ancient texts on dance and drama, like Natyashastra, Abhinayadarpana and many more literature deals this art through chaturvidhaabhinaya and detail description on Angikaabhinaya. Among these dance forms Bharatanatyam is a classical form which has body movement reflecting inner emotional states which leads to changes in the psychology and physiology of the person thus promoting holistic health, regular practice of this art helps to enhances the primal qualities of mental faculties, which are most essential fundamentals to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, emote, interact with other, handling stress and make healthy choices.

Key words –Indian Classical Dance, Bharatanatyam, Angikaabhinaya holistic health, mental faculties.

Indian classical dance –is the term for various performance arts rooted in Hindu musical theatre style, whose theory and practice can be traced to the Sanskrit text Natyashastra and Abhinayadarpana. These dances are traditionally regional.

Bharatanatyam–is major form of classical dance that originated in Tamilnadu which has the meaning Bha-Bhava (means expression), Ra –Ragam(means music), Ta-Talam (means beat or rhythm) Angikaabhinaya– is an expression through gestures, postures, movements of each part of the body and gait, using major and minor limbs and also facial movements.

Holistic Health–it is a term used in medical system to focus toward physical, mental and spiritual aspects of human body .it is the balanced approach to prevent diseases.

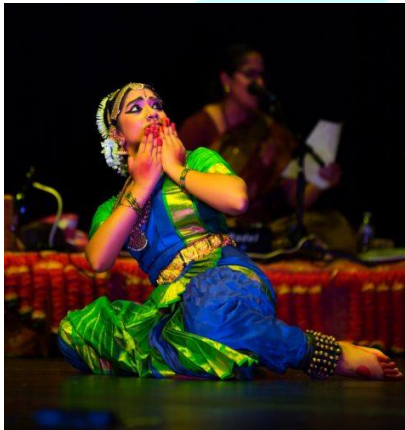
Mental faculties - is the term used in human psychology as ability to think clearly, reason, judgment, soundness of mind. Clear mind, healthy mind.



Introduction - Health is not merely the absence of disease, but the well being, not only on physical level but also on mental, emotional, social and spiritual levels also.

Many of the modern day health problems are psycho-somatic, where the mind plays an important role, the holistic approach adopted by Angikaabhinaya can be a wonderful tool to maintain good health and lead healthy life. The body movement in the dance reflects inner emotional states and that changes in movement can lead to changes in the psychology and physiology of the person thus promoting health and growth. It uses psychomotor expression as its mode of intervention.

The physical and the emotional activity in dance results in several changes at the internal psychological and biological level. These include the production of group of mood elevating bio-chemicals (neuro transmitters like endorphins, serotonin, encephalon's) secreted by the limbic system in the brain, increased blood flow to the limbs and brain, relaxation of muscles, release of emotions resulting in state of bliss and rejuvenation, and stress releaser enhancing immunity. When dancing is having these qualities, if it is practiced regularly it will help in enhancing the quality of mental faculties. Exploring and strengthening these faculties greatly improves the choices of creating and enjoying the life if the mental health is poor it affects in thinking, feelings, handling stress, relationships with others, which is important in every stage of life, from childhood, adolescence and old age. Which causes bad impact on family and society.



Mental Faculties - Merriam-Webster, an oldest dictionary publisher of America defined mental faculties as ability to think clearly.

They are- Imagination, will power, perception, intuition, reason, and memory. Ability to do something is the meaning of faculties. When above said aspects are in good condition, that person will have good mental health. If it is not balanced properly that person becomes prey for mental illness.

AFFECT OF REGULAR PRACTICING DANCE (ANGIKAABHINAYA) TOWARDS STRENGTHEN THE MENTAL FACULTIES

Many research says that dance stimulates the motor cortex and cortical regions of the brain increasing our ability to learn and interpret sensory information properly effecting in more advanced body consciousness. (Dr. Reinhold Keuler 2016).

The Cerebellum and Hippocampus of the brain are activated when newly pattern of movements are involved during practicing dance. An experiment was conducted on Parkinson's patients and founded that there was 1 to 2% growth of hippocampus of the brain (Lovat 2012), suggesting improve in memory. This shows that dancing improves ones ability to memorise and recall information, a trait which is helpful for learning. Long, complicated dance routines or lengthy amounts of theory, process of memorizing dance sequence, also improves the functioning ability of the Hippocampus due to regular practice.

A consequence of improving the responsiveness of brain, improves concentration and perseverance, and also regions of the brain responsible for associative learning and imaginations faculties are stimulated which enhances the sensory awareness with in a dancer, and also Spatial orientation and cognitive capacity is increased due to changes and developments made in the brain.

Learning dance at a younger age and practicing regularly stimulates more neurotransmitter connections within the brain, implying that learning a form of dance alters the structure of the brain compared to non dancers.

Enhancing the each mental faculties processes with angikaabhinaya

Let us see the effect of angikaabhinaya taking a nrutya piece through which we can understand in a better way. When we are learning or practicing devarnama, astapadi, padam or varnam which contains nritya and nrutya ,dancer should have more imagination, perception in proper way to understand it, will power to perform and good memory to dance.

Let us see each faculty and the effect of nrutya piece on that Imagination it is an incredibly powerful, an idea where something non-physical becomes physical. While learning or practicing a devarnama of lord Krishna, according to the lyrics we will cultivate to imagine his place, beauty, graceful gopikas, cow herds, flow of flute sound so on making our mind to wander for some time . this cultivation of imagination becomes habit and makes the mind calm and tries to do possibilities to real.

Intuition—this is a small voice inside that speaks your truths, by which life becomes fuller and we feel more connected to others. we should make time to listen this to open to our higher self, Which helps to take proper decision during confusing state.

While learning dancer she/ he will be trained to speak inside the mind some call it as vachikaabhinaya also here the imagination of the lyrics will be followed through the conversation of Radha with Krishna with in the inner sense of the dancer. This practice helps to develop intuition.

Memory- this refers to the psychological processes of acquiring, storing, retaining and later retrieving information. It involves encoding, storage and retrieval. In the storage level depending on the duration of retention there are 2 levels of memory – short memory and long memory.

Memory is essential to learning and creates the basis for linking new knowledge by association. It is a symbiotic relationship which continues to evolve throughout our lives. When learning a long nrutya piece in bharatanatyam like varnam or krutis, which contains long jatis and lyrics emphasizing different events on the same topic (sanjaribhavas) needs good memory . dancers are trained to use three basic types of cues to remember movements of jatis, movements for words, visual images and movement based cues.

Words include like jump leap 2nd nattadavu, 1st jaradavuetc, counts like 3, 4 tattumettu in 4th tisra, 4th chatuarashra and one muktya etc., and non words like sollukattus such as dheetham etc.,

Movements for lyrics will be remembered through hand gestures with its uses already told in the ancient literatures and positions of foot, Visual clues include an imagination of the dancers own body the teacher demonstrating the movement and every day images such as class room, time, situation etc.,

Movement bases cues include rhythm and the feeling of the movement called kinesthetic. So there are the different memory tools a dance practitioner have with them .cultivating this methodology we can sharpen the memory. Some research says when we involve more senses it make easy to remember so that it stays in long term memory and also enhancing muscle memory. so while doing angikaabhinaya more senses



such as eye ear, hands, foot and the inner sense mind are involved at a time to analyze the subject before conveying.



The Natyakrama shloka of Abhinayadarpana “**yathohastha thathodristi, yethodristi thathomana, yethomana thathobhava, yethobhava thathorasa**” explains this in better way.

Reason – is a mental faculty which analyses, compare and evaluate ideas. In this process old information can become brand new ideas.

Dance cultivates this, while doing a movement its space should be analyzed and meaning of gesture should evaluated and according to situation the composition of dance should be done with new ideas.

Perception—It has both conscious and sub-conscious mind function. It makes us to how we choose to see a subject in the conscious mind and it gives a choice of what to focus on. In the sub conscious mind, perception determines what we become aware of .billions of information for a second will be in our conscious mind and tiny fractions of them are processed. We can explain through dance in better way. Because each artists perception is different, even one artist can perceive that art piece at a time in different ways.

Will—is the attention or focusing, is also sustained concentration. Yoga a disciplined system says through visual, auditory and kinesthetic medium brain get trained in improving concentration, faculty of recalls and memory. Like yoga while dancing one can develop the concentration, when we start to dance first and foremost is uttering the angikambhuvanam shloka standing in samapada, erecting the spinal cord and holding anjali mudra, this interrupts our disturbed thinking process and leads us from sound to an inner silence, bringing sense of peace within. Which enhances the concentration.

Summery:

Body is an object that we can perceive from the inside as well outside . It has our self and world understanding. We can see body as a living, moving organism and cognition, emotion, perception and action with respect to expressive and impressive functions. The body is the mediator between cognitive- affective system and movement.

Learning and practicing angikaabhinaya regularly benefits in providing oxygen to the body and brain by which neuro-chemical endorphin is produced which causes a feeling of energy and makes the brain and enhance the qualities of mental faculties and makes the brain more conducive to learning.

According to study report published in Times of India on July, 2019, almost 2/3 (64%)of Indians say that they don't do any kind of physical exercise. Which will have bad effect on physical and mental health .

Illness to the above said mental faculties can cause psychotic disorders such as Hallucinations (false perception), Delusions (false beliefs), disorganized thinking impaired reasoning, memory disorders , Dementia,, Alzheimer's , Mild cognitive impairment etc.

Regular practicing dance can be an alternative therapy to prevent mental illness and also to be a supportive factor with other medicine system.

Objectives:

Including bharatanatyam in the regular physical activity. It is an inexpensive and best medicine in mental disorders Including as a learning tool in school children Motivating the people to learn to fight with the everyday mental conflicts Promoting to include bharatanatyam as the ancient art form in the guide line of National Health Portal of India.

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