

Dance for Health and Wellbeing

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ABSTRACT

From time immemorial, the humans are expressed their emotions in the form of gesture, sound and words. The Indian classical dance evolved over time. It is the oldest dancing traditions in the world. Dance is performed in temple as sacred rituals, festivals, family functions as entertainment and cultural unifications. Dance is a multidimensional activity which includes motor (body movements), perception of music, emotional involvement, memorising steps, synchronisation of the body movement with the rhythm of music. It comprises the physical, mental as well as spiritual elements. Medical professionals, spiritual leaders and scientists have emphasized the positive impact of dance on the wellbeing. The present paper focuses on the dance as therapy for the human being for their wellbeing.

Keywords: *Dance, Physical, Mental, Health, Therapy*

In the early days of human evolution, the emotions of the human beings has been expressed through gesture as well as unstructured movement. The emotions of the people, which are aesthetically pleasing and structured movement is called dance (Anderson, 1974). Dance is a performing art which is not only visual but also kinaesthetic. It is a combination of yoga and mudras. Music, which is an external cue, is an inherent component of dance. It is required for synchronisation. During dance, music triggers the emotions of the dance performer which facilitate the dopamine and enhance wellbeing. The dance performer immerses and engages herself or himself in dance too (Brancatisano, Baird & Thompson, 2020). Dance may be performed partnered or non-partnered. Some studies revealed that participants those who are engaged in partnered dance, experience enjoyment compared to non-partnered participants (Hackney and Larhart, 2010). But research findings state a very little research has been done with regard to partnered and non-partnered dance for the wellbeing.

According to Sangita Ratnakar, “Gitam, Vadyam tatha Nrityam Trayam Sangita Muchyate”. He describes the relationship between music and dance. Sangitam comprises of Gitam (Song), Vadyam (Instrument), and Nrityam (Dance). Dance and Music are the cultural staples which brings cohesiveness within the diverse culture. According to Jaspersen (1983), a philologist, dance and music are the natural and prelinguistic activities of human mind. The Indian spiritual and political diaspora has been changed through dance.

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The dance is meant for external audience. But it involves inner discipline to integrate both inner and outer elements in order to give comprehensive meaning. Social interaction has been encouraged in dance. Two elements of dance such as, social interaction and coordination are the common features of various dance (Saunders & Clifford, 2015). Latin America dance such as Salsa and Rumba and the ballroom dance (Tango, Foxtrot, and Waltz) are partnered dance. The partnered dance involves coordination among partners for the body movements which improve mobility function.

Indian Dance: Classical Dance and Folk Dance

The Indian Classical dance follow Natya Sastra. Natya sastra is the textment for physical and body movements. It comprises of three types of dances such as: a) Nritya b) Nritya and c) Natya

- a) **Nritya** (Pure dance): Nritya is a physical form focusing on body movements as well as gesture.
- b) **Nritya**: Nritya is an emotional in nature and it comprises two elements such as physical movement and expression.
- c) **Natya**: Natya refers to dramatic dance where performers exhibit abhinaya or expression and is considered as the means of achieving spiritual.

The combination of three components of Nritya of dance such as Nritya and Natya practiced daily life for the holistic wellbeing of human and unifying body, mind and spirit. Dance forms are divided into two parts such as folk dance and classical dance. The classical dance of India is Bharatnatyam, Bihu, Odissi, Ghoomar, Kuchipudi, Kathakali, Chau, Bhangra, Rouf. Shastri (1931) - According to Indian philosophy sangeet comprises song, dance and music. Both physical, and mental; health of the human beings benefitted by sangeet

Dance and Mental Health:

Research studies reveal that, the dance intervention for people suffering with Parkinson Disease (PD) is found to be effective (Hasimoto et al., 2015). But other studies contradict the same.

- **Levy (2005)** – Dance is considered as therapeutic which is used as tool for healing. The relation between mind and body are inseparable.
- **Parkee (2006), Lopez (2007), Rea (2004)** – Dance has a positive therapeutic effect upon body, mind and sprit of human being. The body movements are based on emotional condition and its changes are based upon moods of the performer. Uniting body and mind resulted healing process.
- **Verghese (2003)** - A study on Albert Einstein College of Medicine found that dance enhance mental health which reduces the risk of dementia, in comparison with other physical activities such as golf, tennis and cycling etc.
- According to Physician **Jane Thompson** - The physical activity influence nearly 30% of the chronic disease. Dancing has positive impact on body , mind and mental health.
- **Kieft (2014)** – Studies on effect of movement medicine upon the wellbeing of humans by using two methods such as hermeneutic and ethnographic methods . He found people use it for two purposes such as self actualisation and spiritual realisation.
- **Bajaj (2016)** – Dance when performed in barefoot resulted acupressure to certain areas of body which enhances both physical and mental health.

Vibrational medicine is a holistic therapy concept which is used in various performing arts such as acupressure, yoga, mediation and art. Neurologists of Columbia University **John Krakauer** states that various parts of brain cells such as motor context, basal ganglia, cerebellum and somatosensory cortex contribute to dance learning.

CONCLUSION

Dance has positive impact on physical, mental and spiritual health of human beings. As the dance performer focus on the body movement, recall the various steps involved and focus on the synchronisation of the movements with rhyme and aligned with music for effectiveness. As the performer is immersed on the outcome of her performances and completely ignoring the pains, sufferings, and anguish they have encountered in their life, But the age, pregnancy, and mental disorder act as a hindrance for their performance. Dance therapy can enable a person to cope with adversity. The effectiveness of the dance on wellbeing requires further research as well as seminar, workshop, and invited talk / experience sharing by the dancers and medical professionals.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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