

Music and Dance: A boon for socially neglected differently able

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ABSTRACT

Socially neglected class of Indian society is physically and Gender challenged people of this country. Poverty eradication among this class is still a challenge for governments. This paper is highlight how the performing art forms music and dance help to the physically challenged and gender challenged people to come out of their difficulties. A fewto build examples are given only to develop self confidence among the socially neglected class

Key words: Physically challenged, Gender challenged , Performing arts, Awards, Achievements...etc..

Introduction

Music can change the world because it can change people.

- Bono

An art form which is suitable to perform on the stage in group or in solo, capable to stir a kind of emotion in the mind of the audience is called Performing arts. Performing art forms are the mirror of creativity and inheritance of a society. It has no boundaries and reflects the social and chronological enormity of a country. It is one of the most powerful medium capable to reach the mind of people without any discrimination. Performing art form includes dance, music, drama, mime, martial arts etc... is very much successful in manifesting the cultural and traditional strength of a nation it belongs to.

Society and Performing arts are like two hearts with one beat. In the current societal system the physically challenged and visually challenged people are neglected or not given sufficient importance in the pace of advancement. No development is successful when a group of people belong to that societal chain is neglected or their opportunities are denied. It is a conventional fact that most of the visually challenged and physically challenged people are very much talented in playing music instruments, singing and dance. That's why 'differently able' is the correct utterance to reveal this group. The inbuilt (born) talent of the differently able in these art forms should be addressed in the right age and proper training given to them in particular field will make them flourish and help for their development.

Indian performing arts and art forms are the correct pivot to eliminate poverty of the physically and gender challenged groups of the society. But unfortunately most of the differently talented persons are neglected and not given proper training and attention due to ignorance and lacking of special interest. In fact Indian performing art forms can help the differently able people to survive beyond their physical inability. They can also compete at par with others in the pace of cultural development. This paper is mainly highlighting on differently able people who are starring in the Indian performing art's arena at par with other popular artists and the scope of opportunities for them.

Gender challenged Artist

In the field of South Indian dance it is established that the special personalities who are suffering with sexual orientation problem can achieve high rank in this field and perform at par with popular classical dancers. Ms. 'Padma Sri' Narthaki Natarajan is a living example for one of such performer who is now popularly performing in distinct stages through out the world. This is an exclusive example for the people who are suffering from gender problem who can accomplish at par with others. Realization and inclusion of these art forms in the development programs designed for gender challenged may brought out many 'Narthaki Natarajans' to the society.



Narthaki Natarajan

Narthaki Natarajan is the recipient of following awards.

- 2019 – Padma sri Award
 2012 - Arutsakthi Aadalarasi - Karaikudi kamban Kazhagam.
 Woman of the year award - Raj TV,
 Nritya Madhavi - Sri Sumuki Rajashekar Art Trust.
 2011 - Puraskar Award - Sangeet Natak Akadami, Govt.of india.
 2009 - Nritya Choodamani - Sri Krishna Gana Sabha Chennai.
 2008 - Poet Tara Bharathi Memorial Trust Award.
 2007 - Kalaimamani Award - Govt of Tamilnadu.
 Empanelled Artiste - Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India.
 Kala Seva Bharathi Award - Bharat Kalachar.
 Best Dancer Gold Medal - Naradha Gana Sabha Chennai.
 2004 – 2007 - Best Dancer Award - Connecticut Tamil Sangam USA.
 2007- Best Dancer Certificate - Oslo City Council, Norway.
 2007 - "Swathi Thirunal Maharaja Music Compositions research award" - Naradha Gana Sabha Chennai
 2005 - Top Grade Artiste - Prasar Bharati, Govt of india.
 2004 - Natramizh Nadanamani - North Carolina Tamil Sangam USA.
 2003 – 2006 - Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship - Govt of india.
 2003 - Best Dance Program - 6th International Tamil internet Conference.
 2003 - Thirupugazh Natiya Semmani Thirumuruga Kribananda Variyar - Swamigal Memorial Award
 2001 - Nathya Ratna - Pudhiya Parvai Sankarankoil.,
 Natya Perarasi - Vani Vilasa Sabha Kumbakonam.
 Natya Kalaratna - Sri kanchi Mahaswamigal Vedha Sivagama Padasalai, Thiruparankundram.
 2000 - Natramizh Koothar - Thanthai Periyar Tamizh isai Mandram.
 1996 - Kalai Nanmani, Department of Tamil Development and Culture, Govt of Tamilnadu

Ponni the Guru of Bharathanatyam for the poor

Ponni was born in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu and completed her graduation in Bsc Maths, at V.O.Chidambaram college , Thoothukudi. Inspired by the film Salangai oli in Tamil she decided to learn Bharathanatyam. After a long struggle she succeeded in her mission and now she started Abhinaya Nrithalaya a popular dance school in Chennai. Ponni takes up either a mythological story or a social issue. She has touched upon subjects like dowry harassment, female feticide, poverty and women empowerment,etc.. She completed her post graduation in Social service and Bharathanatyam. She received the following awards

1. Best Achiever award - by Salem, Bhaai Trust
2. Best Dancer Award - by Tamil Sangam , Avadi ,Chennai
3. Best Social service – By Pondicherry Tamil Sangam..etc...

Physically Challenged artists



Mayuri Sudhachandran

Sudha Chandran is a successful Bharatanatyam dancer and a busy Indian film and television actress. She was born on September 21. She earned her B.A from Mithibai College, Mumbai and an M.A in Economics. She overcame her disability of losing her leg in an accident with the help of a prosthetic 'Jaipur foot', becoming one of the most highly acclaimed dancers of the Indian subcontinent. Her decision to dance again after a gap of two years was met by thunderous applause. She was honored with various awards after she performed as far away from home as Europe, Canada and the Middle East.

Visually challenged Artists

It is also proven that visually challenged personalities can master and perform classical instrumental music at par with the normal artists. Violin Chandrasekhar is a living example for that. Born to a family of traditional musicians, Chandrasekaran was initiated into the violin by his mother, Charubala Mohan. The young boy turned out to be a prodigy and began performing publicly in 1949, at the age of eleven. Chandrasekaran has provided Violin accompaniment to stalwarts like Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, G.N. Balasubramaniam, Madurai Mani Iyer, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, Ramnad Krishnan, T.K. Rangachari, Sathur A.G. Subramaniam, Mayavaram Rajam, Flute T.R.Mahalingam, Musiri Subramania Iyer, Maharajapuram Santhanam, Palghat K.V. Narayanaswamy, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Flute N. Ramani and Dr.M. Balamurali Krishna, among many others.



Violin Chandrasekhar is a recipient of several honors –

- Sangeet Natak Akademi award (1986),
- Mysore Chowdiah National award (1989),
- Astana Vidwan of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam (1993),
- Kalaimamani from the Government of Tamil Nadu,
- Sangeetha Choodamani ,
- Mathurakala Praveena.
- Vadhya Ratnakara - Vasar College, USA 1975,
- Ezhilaisai Vallal - Krishna Shaitanya Matt 1979 ,
- Sangita Choodamani - Krishna Gana Sabha 1981
- Nadhasurarnava - Bala Murali Krishna,
- Sangeetha Mani - Ambattur Mouna Swamigal Thanthri Vilas - Sangeeth Peet
- Vocational Services Award - Rotary Club, Chennai and many more. He was a visiting faculty at the Palghat Music College.



Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu

Naidu was partially blind born on 8 November 1893. But through his talent in music he was appointed Professor of violin in the Maharaja's Music College in Vijayanagaram, at the young age of 26, and became its principal in 1936. He was the recipient of Sangeetha Kalanidhi in 1941. The Indian Fine Arts Society awarded him the Sangeetha Kalasikhamani award in 1941. Andhra University conferred on him Kala Prapoorna in 1950. He received Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in Fine Arts in 1953. Padma Shree Award was conferred on him in 1957. Indian Postal Department has released a commemorative stamp on his birth centenary in 1993. Famous playback singer Ghantasala Venkateswara Rao and Kalaimamani SMT. Radhanarayanan learned Carnatic music under Naidu. He was a classic example for overcoming the physical challenge through performing art.

Visually challenged Music Director

It is established that visually challenged can compose music and they can work as music directors for films. Ravindra Sharma is an Indian music composer, who won the Film fare Best Music Director Award in 1985. He was born blind. He is considered one of the most notable of the Hindi music directors in the 1970s and early 1980s, for hit films such as Chor Machaye Shor (1974), Chitchor (1976) and Ankhiyon Ke Jharokhon Se (1978). Along with composing music, he also wrote the lyrics for many of his famous songs.



Ravindra Sharma has featured as Mahaguru in the Indian music reality show Sa Re Ga Ma Pa challenge 2009 and today devotes his time participating in Kavi Sammelans, Mushairas, and all literary, cultural, social, political, and religious activities.

Visually challenged Orchestra Group at par with International performers

It is established that visually challenged Indian artists can conduct orchestral performance at par with international standards



"The Inner Vision" Indian Orchestra group performing in London

Baluji Shrivastav, an Indian sitar player, recruited 13 fellow blind musicians to the Inner Vision Orchestra.

It is established that visually challenged can perform vocal classical music and musical instrument concerts at par with other artists. Vaikom Vijayalakshmi is a playback singer from Kerala, India. She is an expert in a rare musical instrument called Gayatriveena. She won special jury mention in Kerala State Film Awards for her much appreciated song Kaatte Kaatte in Celluloid Movie. Viji, in the first 10 years, had performed at more than 400 stages in all the major `sabhas' in Chennai, Tanjore, Madurai, Coimbatore and other major cities of India. Meanwhile, another significant achievement was her mastery over a one-stringed instrument. The `gayatri tampuru', presented to her by a connoisseur, was electrified and modified by her father Muraleedharan. The maestro of Carnatic violin Sri Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan was mesmerized by her veena recital and gave it the name `Gayatri Veena'. She has performed several concerts with the instrument. Since 1995, Viji has been playing it at the Chembai Sangeetotsavam at Guruvayoor. She played at the prestigious Soorya Festival in 2001.



Smt. Vaikom Vijayalakshmi

Dr. 'Padma Shri' Gayatri Sankaran

Dr. 'Padma Shri' Gayatri Sankaran, is a distinguished 'A' Grade Carnatic Music vocalist of the All India Radio (AIR) and the first visually-challenged musician to receive the prestigious Padma Shri, from the President of India. Gayatri has had a unique and a multi-dimensional musical career. Firstly, she is an artist who has performed in over 500 concerts all over India and abroad. Gayatri has been formally employed by the All India Radio since 1988 where she joined as an instrumentalist. Here she does administrative work, gives concerts and also special musical features such as Saivism in India, explaining the Divyadesam through music, etc.

A few of her notable concerts are

- Rashtrapathi Bhavan Concert in front of former President APJ Abdul Kalam in 2007.
- 100th Nadaniranjnam program in 2009, the festival in Tirupati in front of Perumal Sannidhi. Program in front of Perumal Sannidhi
- Chembai Festival, Guruvayur in 2010.
- Cleveland Music Festival.
- Concert on Manodharma Sangeetam at the London Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

- In addition she has had overseas performances in London, Canada, USA and in several other countries.

Her role as a teacher and friend to over 70 students of Carnatic music in India and abroad is another dimension in her career. She conducts classes at home and long-distance classes over internet and phone. As a teacher, she is known for the patient and compassionate manner in which she helps her students find their passion.



Dr. 'Padma Shri' Gayatri Sankaran

Dr. Mohana Krishna

Mohana Krishna is an accomplished carnatic classical vocalist. A disciple of Shri Bala Murali Krishna, Mohana Krishna has been showcasing his talent on stage for the past 20 years. Mohana Krishna is a regular face in concerts. Despite losing his eye sight at his prime age, he didn't lose hope. Instead took his blindness as a positive influence on his music. He started concentrating on music by paying undivided attention. Since then he never looked at blindness as a drawback. Music helped him in winning his goals.



Members of the St. Louis Orchestra at Pallavaram Chennai



Raaga Priya music orchestra played music and performed in the Tamil film "Autograph"

Music orchestra groups formed in Chennai by the visually challenged artists are become very popular in a very short period and now performing various orchestral programs through out India. These groups are now performing playback music in cine industry also. These orchestral groups are conducting fund raising programs also at the time of national calamities.

Some of the private television channels also organizing special programs in the context of popularizing the talented in Indian performing art forms among the excluded from development. This popularity helps those people to get various chances to explore and for their future development.



A private T.V. channel providing opportunity to the differently able through a program 'CHAMPIONS'

Channels like SVBC, Bhakthi, Sankara, Raj TV Sun TV, Gemini TV, Maa TV and Jaya TV are appointed good number persons skilled in Indian performing art forms as full time and part time basis.

Conclusion

The Indian performing arts are having the capacity to conceal the inability of a person in front of the audience and help him to earn appreciations from the society. It is an established reality that most of the physically challenged and gender challenged are rapidly developing their skills in Indian Performing art forms than any other fields. There is a wide scope of development in various levels are obtainable in the cultural arena. Because of the lacking in motivation and moral support, most of the talented born different and physically challenged are remaining in the excluded space. Indian performing arts is a field which is always prepared to lend space, wealth, name and fame for the development of the differently able. But unfortunately most of the physically and gender orientation challenged students / persons were discouraged by their advisors or adaptors to opt Indian performing art forms like music and dance as their career because of ignorance and lack of resource personals. But these art forms are having lot of opportunities to develop themselves both psychologically and economically. A very few personals are taking interest of these people. Popular actor

cum dance master Sri Lawrence Ragavendra, identified their talents and giving intensive coaching and also providing opportunities in his films. **Pandit Puttaraj Gawai, Seer Of Veereshwara Punyashrama and Padma Bhushan Awardee** who is doing a great service and lighting up lives through music. Students of the Punyashrama are found serving all over the country.

To achieve the Millennium Development Goals in India, Indian Performing art forms are one of the correct pivots and it will be a permanent solution for the problem. This will help in reducing the difficulty of the people who are differently talented and suffering in poverty. Unfortunately Only 3 % of reservation for the differently able in Govt. jobs is till in practice and this should be enhanced according to the increasing population of the group. If these art forms are seriously taken for the process of reducing poverty of the differently able people it will become as a milestone in the history of mankind.

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About the Author



Disciple of Dr. Cherthala K.N. Ranganatha Sharma , a postgraduate in Music from Sri Sathguru Sangeeta Vidyalayam,(University Rank holder-1998), Madurai, cleared NET & SLET in Music and completed Doctorate at Sri Venkateswara University Tirupati. Also worked as Lecturer in music in Tamilnadu Govt. Evening Music College, Madurai, & Kalai Kaviri College of fine arts, Trichy, a music teacher in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya under Ministry of HRD in Car Nicobar Islands & Tumkur. 2007 onwards serving as Assistant Professor in the Department of Performing Arts, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati till date.

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