



CHAPTER 13

BREAKING BARRIERS WITH DANCE

In dance, characters are sometimes performed by a single dancer irrespective of their gender. In many traditional performances of dance, men often play the women characters.

***Bhakti* movement**

Bhakti movement, starting around sixth or seventh century AD influenced the development of regional classical dance forms which expand the roots of our present day classical dances.

In the *bhakti* period, dancers became part of the *pooja* rituals inside the temple. The *Devadasis* and *Tevadichhis* of Southern India and the *Maharis* of Odisha directly served the deity inside the temple.

The 64 rituals are performed through ritualistic dance in the *Sattaras* of Assam and the *Bhagavatars* in the South. The *Kathakars* of the North sang and



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enacted the stories in praise of the Lord Shiva's *tandava* to enhance moral values of the people.

The concept of *bhakti* movements was easy for the common people to understand.



The Gotipua dance

Students learning Gotipua dance





The Ardhanareeshwara

Examples

The *Gotipua* Dance

Watch a video (Youtube) of the *Gotipua* dance which originated in Odisha.

The *Maharis* performed this inside the temple in praise of Lord *Jagannatha* and the *Gotipuas* where the young boys danced for the public.

Here, the young boys dress up as girls and perform dances combined with acrobatic movements.

The *Ardhanareeshwara* Dance

In the painting, you can see Lord *Shiva* and Goddess *Parvathi* on a single face with dance make-up.

ACTIVITY 1: WATCH VIDEOS OF UNIQUE *LOKA NRITYA*

Watch the videos of different *loka nrityas* which are performed with unique postures, gestures, ways of walking, steps, costumes and music.



Lavani (predominantly female form) from Maharashtra



Purulia Chhau from West Bengal originally performed only by males

Yakshagana from Karnataka



Now, you can try the steps of both *Lavni* and *Chhau*.

The dances like *Mohiniyattam* (earlier performed only by women), *Kathakali* and *Yakshagana* (earlier performed by only men) have undergone a drastic transformation

by removing the gender constraints in modern times.

It's important to note that in dance, these stances and gaits are not strictly limited by gender. Dancers often blend elements from various styles to create their own unique expression, breaking traditional gender norms.

Now, you have come to a stage where you have to learn steps of the dance forms in your region.

ACTIVITY 2: STEPPING FOR *LOKA NRITYA*

Let us practice the tried out steps with the required bents, in vigorous or gentle movements.

Lavni and *bhangra*, both dance forms can be practiced by girls and boys.

Explore the arm and hand gestures used in these dances.

ACTIVITY 3: PROJECT WORK

Jogati Manjamma is a path breaking personality who has influenced the development of the *Jogati* Dance in Karnataka by breaking the barriers of gender identity. Find out more about her and present a project work with her pictures.

Frame of the project — inspiring story from childhood (if any), learning experiences, achievements and associations.



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Rectangular shape



Triangular shape

Dance, Shapes and Tala

Mathematics and dance complement each other.

We can demonstrate geometrical shapes through dance. Dancing involves geometrical postures and movements in mathematical rhythm. We can use different geometrical patterns for formations in a choreography. Rhythm and beat are simply arithmetical patterns.

Try these out in the next activity.

ACTIVITY 4: DANCE AND GEOMETRICAL SHAPES

How many different geometrical shapes can be performed in a dance?



Dancers showing different shapes

Triangle, circle, square, rectangle, etc., can be formed by using your hands, arms and legs.

Discuss in the class and try out some geometrical movements.





ACTIVITY 5: RHYTHMIC GEOMETRY

Now, combine all the elements of the previous activity (arms, hands, legs) and examine the different geometrical shapes while adding another element of rhythm.

Talas are different permutations and combinations of rhythmic units.

Make groups and try different arithmetic rhythm combinations to create various geometrical patterns or formations.

Examples

2 beats + 2 beats = 4 beats

2 beats + 3 beats = 5 beats

2 beats + 4 beats = 6 beats

3 beats + 3 beats = 6 beats

3 beats + 4 beats = 7 beats

Go through such movements and discuss in the class, how such movements relate to the said action.

