

## **Dance Therapy**

Beena Singh

Reader, Kathak Dance

Bhatkhande Music Institute (Deemed University)

Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

Email: [veensinghg.kathak@gmail.com](mailto:veensinghg.kathak@gmail.com)

Dance is the most fundamental of the arts and the most complete of all the arts. It has rhythm it has movement, it has expression, it converts song and music in visual form. It lives in time and space at one time. It is a complex combination of mind and body co-ordination. Mental aspect utilizes intelligence, spirituality, spontaneity while body is directly involved in creating movements in co-ordination with mental work. This movement of body with rhythm and improvisation during dance performance is the root cause of Dance and Movement therapy “DMT”.

### **Alignment of Mother Nature with brain and body**

Life is dynamic and constantly moving, every individual has music and rhythm in his body which is his very own. If we let our body dance in sync with Mother Nature, life can be a beauty with grace. When alignment of our body and mind makes our heart receptive to the cosmic vibration it start releasing of healing Bio photons from vital energy centers and then the fitness of body increase and strengthens the system to fight with various disease. The basic principle of DMT is that each person moves according to his or her own personality. Thought in mind gets expression through gestures, body movement. Rhythmical patterns of movement the plastic sense of space the vivid expression of world imagined all these things dancer creates through his or her own body. The technique of movement involves use of our body which in dance is divided into three parts (1) *Anga*<sup>1</sup> (2) *Pratyang*<sup>2</sup> (3) *Upang*.<sup>3</sup>

In this manner even smallest parts of body like eyebrows are used and thus get the due importance on their part. Head, eyes, cheeks, neck, shoulders, sides, waist, legs, hands every part is put on alert and deeply involved in dancing. *Angas* are the main parts of the body like- Head, hand etc. *Pratyangs* are shoulders, back, stomach, etc. i.e. parts which joins two *anga* are *pratyang*. *Upangs* are small parts of any *anga* for example; eyes, eyelids, nose, etc. together form one *anga* “head”.

### **Effect on brain cells**

The physical body of human being and the internal system of body align together this makes you ready to receive the cosmic vibrations. This union of inner and outer vibration makes body work to release healing Bio photons from vital energy center. This as a result increases physical and mental fitness. Dance therapy assist in process of developing the mind and body

through kinetic exercise to improve motor system. Associated dance provides coordinated exercises to improve motor system. The rhythm in dance helps to improve attention span and create harmony in an otherwise fragmented mind.

### **Effect on muscles**

Starting from standing position to use of various *anga pratyang* and *upanga* with various rhythmic pattern improves blood circulation, tone muscles, gives cardio work out and also improve concentration and alertness. *Araimadis* in *Bharatnatyam* is a standing position half bent (a squat in which knees are turned sideways) and torso is steady while the hand and lower limbs are moving helps with balance. Similarly *Kathak* with its intricately woven rhythmic foot work and spectacular spins increases balance alertness, and spontaneity. When dancers rolls eyes from one side to other, up and down or circular movement it's a good work out for eyes. Neck movement sideways or gliding movement helps child born with *toricollisin* which head is tilted to one side. It is now a standard maneuvers in physiotherapy. This treatment I myself have experimented with one of my student and now her problem is completely cured.

### **Effect on stress and anxiety**

Dance has impact on mental and emotional wellbeing. *Kathak* dancer starts her/his dance with "*That*"<sup>4</sup> the first step of performance. Here eye are in *Sama*<sup>5</sup> position means watching straight concentrating on rhythm the dancer synchronizes breathing with rhythm. This focus takes away the dancer in meditating state. This practice improves concentrations and relieves from stress and anxiety. This controlled breathing co-ordinated with the movement of wrist, eyes, neck all focus the mind at one place and mind gets relaxed. Spins in *Kathak* dance needs lots of balance and swiftness, this practice give physical strength to legs, toes, arms.

### **Role of *Hast Mudras* in Dance Therapy**

Hand gestures or *hast mudras* are the most important part of dance in fact apart of the dance vocabulary. These *hast mudras* play significant role in dance as well as "Dance therapy". *Mudra* therapy is an ancient therapy which is non-medical mode of treatment. *Mudras* are in fact combination of various placements of fingers and thumb including palm and positioning finger on different pressure points while creating certain *hast mudras* influences the nervous system. This also affects *chakras*<sup>6</sup> or various glands of body thus affect the physical fitness. While creating the *Natya Ved*, *Brahma* took *Abhinaya* from *Yajurveda*. *Yajurveda* focuses mainly on *Karmakand* in which *Tantra mudras* are used. Perhaps these *tantric mudras* have been inspiration for *Nritta hast mudras*. *Bharat Muni*<sup>7</sup> divided these *Hast Mudras* in three main categories, these are: *Sanyukta Hast Mudra*<sup>8</sup>, *Asanyukta Hast Mudra*<sup>9</sup> and *Nritta Hast Mudras*<sup>10</sup> and all these fall under the category of *Hastabhinaya*<sup>11</sup>. The *Asanyukta Hast*, *Sanyukta Hast* and *Nritta Hast* as described by sage *Bharat Muni* are also mentioned in different treatise like

*Sangeet Ratnakar, Sangeetopnishad and Nrityasutram (Vishnudharmottar Puran)* etc. Many *Tantra Mudras* are used in *Nritya Hast* with same name and sometime with different names.

Different diseases are treated by holding and retaining the fingers and thumb in different ways. During *Yagya Vedic mantra* are recited with various *hast mudras* and their movement which enhances the power of *mantrachhar*. This simple act restores the state of balance (homeostasis) with in body and environment and emits positive energy. Similarly *Nritya hast mudras* also give the same effect and raise the performer's state of balance and strengthen the immunity. It also strengthens the system to fight with various diseases.

Starting from the standing position to movement of neck, eyes, *haste mudras* foot work movement with rhythm all this improves blood circulation, tones muscles gives cardio work out, improves concentration and alertness. This *mudra* therapy is very simple among various non-medical therapies for dancer and also for layman.

*Mudras* are extremely gentle form of treatment and easy to perform. It is entirely safe since no chemical medicines are used. This therapy is also in-expensive and is a form of self-treatment. Any person who has once practiced with expert of this art can treat on his own. This therapy has a preventive aspect too.

Our body is made up of five basic element Earth, water, fire, sky and air. Each finger represents one element. In *mudras* therapy fingers of both the hands are pressed which regulates the magnetic waves or neuro system various pressure points of blood circulation and balance five element in our body. The use of this technique in our daily life controls disease and increase the wellbeing.

Great Greek philosophers like Pythagoras and Protemy believed harmony exists in nature. The whole universe is in harmony is a natural state. It is not something to be created but in fact creation happens out of harmony. The whole universe is balanced and working in harmony that's why there is day and night various seasons, water, vegetation, life in different form existing. Music and Dance therapy affects our neurological, physiological and motor response and help us to align with universal harmony. This lead to a healthy and dignified life.

#### **Endnotes:**

1. Anga – Main parts of body Asanyukta Hast Mudra – Single hand gesture
2. Bharat Muni – Author of 'Natyashastra' treatise on dramaturgy
3. Chakras – Seven energy centres in human body
4. Hastabhinay – Communication through hand gesture
5. Nritya Hast Mudra – Combination of Single & double hand gesture
6. Pratyanga – Parts of body joining two angas
7. Sama – Kind of Eye glance

8. Sanyukta Hast Mudra - Double hand gesture
9. That – Standing position in different pose
10. Upang – Small parts of body which together form one anga
11. Hastabhinay – Communication through hand gesture

### **Bibliography**

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