
Advantages and Disadvantages in Virtual Training / Performances

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ABSTRACT:

Virtual training and performances became highly popular only during the recent times, starting from 2020. The most popular reason being the Pandemic. Terror rose among the masses due to spread of virus and the whole world came to a still not knowing exactly how to get on with regular routines. Technology is a fast growing domain from the very beginning and is widespread, reliable, cost effective and time saving. By the time of 2020 almost every household was dependant on internet and their routine was intertwined with it. In the field of Arts, virtual dependence was a less popular facet. .Since the pandemic, even the artist's life was dwindling and the struggle to keep them occupied or even look for a job had to be based on the internet. Classes were conducted online through software's and applications. As the creative minds were put into work an idea of virtual performances also came into light, either live or recorded. Although opinions on highs and lows of virtual dependency can be quite sceptical in recent times due to the infectious influence of technology, it always spirals down to individual experience and intrigue on what to choose and what not to.

KEYWORDS:

Virtual dependence, Performance, Software, Guru Shishya Parampara, Pandemic, Advantages and Disadvantages.

1. Introduction.

Virtual interaction is a concept of modern times. Since the development of technology, communication has seen its own share of changes and accessibility. Starting from the communication through posts, telegraphs to faxes, telephonic communication like the trunk calls and landline to having mobile phones per individuals and smart phones the humanity has come a long way. Each mode of communication required a separate set of machinery and modes of communication. What started as wired communication, changed to optical fibers to wireless and satellite communication? And that is where virtual communication became the largely used mode of communication. Since then humanity is largely dependent on wireless/satellite mode of communication.

An ancient Indian study is based completely on Guru Shishya Parampara and the mode of learning was through listening, reciting and memorizing. The Guru would recite the shlokas and the chosen shishya vrinda would listen memorize and recite back the same shlokas. Through various research it is found that this way of learning is the most effective and helped in preserving and passing on the knowledge with utmost originality. However, written texts and scriptures, helped preserve the knowledge for coming generations.

Likewise Indian classical arts forms are an ancient asset. They date back between 200 BCE and 200 CE, but estimates vary between 500 BCE and 500 CE. The time period when the first completed compilation of Natyashastra was given to the world which is attributed to sage Bharata. Unlike the textual knowledge, Indian classical dance forms and Indian classical music is passed on to the disciple directly from the Guru. Earlier when the Guru Shishya parampara was prevalent, the shishya would remain at Guru's house, took care of the household chores and acquired knowledge at the same time. And through practice, the disciple would master the knowledge under the thorough monitoring of Guru.

Times have changed and mode of learning the art form has

also undergone various scrutiny and changes. Recent times have seen the most popular mode of learning where a Guru/teacher have their own dance schools and based on various aspects like the proximity, credibility and accessibility, students choose certain school and start training.

2. Understanding Guru Shishya Parampara

As mentioned earlier, Guru shishya parampara is an ancient practice where the disciple's life is intertwined with the Guru's and learning meant not just the subject but also the discipline in life which comes with it. To become an artist is to have a unique identity. To create art requires utmost dedication and a lot of compromises and sacrifices.

An example for the proper Gurukula system of learning is that the basic realities of life are learnt and not just the lessons related to art from the guru. Every moment spent with the guru is always a learning experience.

The shishya is in constant search for the root of 'Guruparampara'. A Guru is constantly providing education and leading shishya into the ocean of self knowledge or Athmajnana. There is no music without dance and no dance without music and hence in music, musical notes dance too. The compositions of 'Trimurty's of Carnatic Classical Music, Saint Thyagaraja, Shyama Shastri and Muttuswami Dikshitar and 'Karnataka Sangeetha Pitaamaha' Saint Purandaradasa and alike are preserved till today only because they were passed on to their disciples from generation to generation. This signifies, very precisely, the prominence of Guru-Shishya parampara in our country. In today's tradition if the principle of guru is understood properly there is a small hope of keeping this tradition alive. But in Universities the semester schemes applied in learning classical art forms are obstructing the preservation of this age old tradition. Hence instead of finding different and effortless ways of devotion and spirituality one should concentrate on searching the source of

them all and henceforth strengthening the root itself. And for this purpose to be accomplished Guru and Shishya should come as one. And also a Guru should grant his knowledge completely to the disciple only then the age old traditions continue to linger.

There are three types of Gurus, Adiguru who are parents, Shiksha Guru is one who imparts knowledge and Deekshaguru is one who provides salvation. Referring to this, the primary Guru is within one's self which we are supposed to discover. And the one helping us in this discovery is the ultimate Guru. The institutionalized system of learning Indian art forms where the quest of study is already furnished and hence reducing the possibilities of facing challenges in the process of learning and in life as well. An impressive and distinctive point of view about the Guru and Shishya is that when the senior students of a certain Guru teach their younger ones, who are also being trained under the same Guru, they will have self realization. And to monitor this there is the ultimate Guru. A Guru's surrounding also influences the learning process of the students. The type of teaching from the past where transmission of subjects used to happen orally and how strongly it would build one's memory power, enough to last a lifetime but on the contrast the problems in the Universities while imparting training in classical art forms, both of which can be compared to the famous 'Markata-Marjala Nyaya' where the mother monkey – Markata moves around carefree and it is the duty of the baby monkey to hold itself tightly to the mother and where a cat - Marjala holds on to the kitten firmly enough not to drop it and gently enough not to hurt it.

One can indicate that nowhere else in the world is the relationship between a student and a teacher is as prominent as it is in India. For example in the Universities of China a teacher's job is only to teach. He is not supposed to be questioned nor will he answer anybody who questions him. The students should search for answers on their own. The magnitude of teaching and learning with respect to each other can be seen as an example in shadow puppet play from Indonesia. A puppeteer is started with the training at the

age as early as six. He is trained rigorously to have a muscle memory. Singing, education of music, mask making etc. are taught for as long as 18 years only to stand behind a curtain and perform. Such is the intensity of training and such is the dedication of learning.

The significance of Guru and Shishya can be seen in Dwaitha, Advaita and VishishtAdvaita philosophies. A Sanskrit Subhashitha which says “Guruseve yathA khaNa khaNitEna narO vAryabhiGachchathi, Evam gurugatham vidyAm shushrUshAryabhiGachchathi” which means that the treasure of knowledge in a Guru is gained only through pure Guruseva and hence a student should keep digging treasure of knowledge from the Guru through Guruseva, just like the process of digging deep inside the earth to acquire pure Gold. The process of attaining eminence is divided into four quarters wherein in first quarter is contributed by teachings of Guru, second quarter is from study mates, third is through self study and the fourth is through experience.

The purpose of this chapter is to understand the mode of communication and its effectiveness of the ancient practice in imbibing knowledge and it is also important to understand the bond between Guru and Shishya hence creating a platform to further understanding the involvement of modernization and its effectiveness in learning the ancient art forms.

3. Advantages and disadvantages

This chapter is formed based purely on the varied interpretations and perceptions of a number of students, teachers and performers and their experiences while using virtual communication.

3.1. Advantages

3.1.1. Advantages of online classes

- i. Distant student can easily avail.

- ii. It saves time for the learner.
- iii. There is no age limit for the learner.
- iv. Working students can attend classes with a fixed schedule.
- v. It helps in saving time spent in travelling and thus helps in keeping up with the attendance count.
- vi. It provides a comfortable experience to learn at home.
- vii. Helps in time management.
- viii. It prompts the parents to encourage their kids in learning and involving themselves more often.
- ix. Once the class is concluded, contents of the class can be stored as video/audio files for future utilities.
- x. Some students have found the online classes to be attractive and hence they conclude that it draws more students into learning.
- xi. It gives an advantage towards space consumption. Since the students learn with their own spaces, more possibility of hassle free space can be experienced.
- xii. More number of students can be joined in single screen space thus providing opportunity to involve further more students than seen in an actual class.
- xiii. Audibility is clear.
- xiv. Optimizes focus.
- xv. A student who is sick enough to not attend class physically can take advantage of this particular mode.
- xvi. Provides opportunity to build strong social interactions
- xvii. Helpful in physical fitness.
- xviii. Access to best teachers. The details of each and every artist who have a social media handle can be accessed easily.
- xix. For the students residing abroad, virtual training is a boon. Overcoming all the difficulties, the students do not miss a chance in improving themselves. And since it is cost effective and time saving they concentrate more and respect the availability of Guru and access to knowledge.

3.1.2. Advantages of online performance

- i. The audience are not compelled to travel to the venue. In fact they can

- view the whole performance at the space of their homes.
- ii. Performers or organisers need not depend on time and availability of halls/auditoriums to organise the event.
 - iii. Performers in particular can perform as many times as they wish to in their comfort space and increase their identity. Also, by performing various times, the performer can increase their muscle memory and refine each and every single aspect of the composition.
 - iv. Monetary benefits can be experienced by saving instead of spending on the venue, publicity etc.

3.2. Disadvantages

3.2.1. Disadvantages of online classes

- i. The first and foremost disadvantage is the issue with network/connectivity.
- ii. It is hard to follow the movements due to lack of clarity in screening
- iii. Looking at the screen for too long can harm the vision.
- iv. Learning becomes uncomfortable due to lack of connectivity
- v. Not enough time to clear the doubts of students due to time constraint in streaming.
- vi. Hinders the social connectivity and interactions and hence disturbing the mental health of young generations.
- vii. It is difficult for the teacher to focus on every single student since the experience is new.
- viii. It brings a lot of distraction since there are options available to mute and cut the video streaming and just remain present for the sake of attendance and hence compromising the respect shown towards the teacher and in turn the art itself.
- ix. Lack of trust between teacher and students apparently increases.
- x. Lack of accessibility for smart phones or any other such devices. Some people still depend on basic phone rather than smart phones and it is reality which snatches their rights on easy accessibility of knowledge.
- xi. Social interaction and learning and bonding between the students is minimized.

- xii. Imparts loneliness and reduced enthusiasm in learning.
- xiii. While learning dance, few movements require the Guru to correct certain movements physically and show the students by placing their hands in a correct position. This cannot be done since it is virtual.
- xiv. The visual of whole body is minimized due to the constraint in screens pace. If the student is unable to understand the difference between good and bad postures then the student will learn only what can be seen on screen.
- xv. Bond between student and teacher is compromised.
- xvi. Due to delay in streaming, students are unable to grab the coordination between music and movements. This is one of the major disadvantages.
- xvii. Difficulty in staying motivated.
- xviii. Continued exposure to harmful energy waves.
- xix. Cyber bullying.
- xx. For someone who is not tech-savvy, it takes an eternity to learn the basics. And hence continued dependence on someone else. While the classes are happening if something goes wrong it extremely difficult to get back to normalcy and stay motivated.
- xxi. Wrong perception of a teacher's training can result in injuries.
- xxii. Copyrights infringement. Since the videos of compositions with the original choreographies are easily available anybody can access it, learn it, perform it and then claim that it is their own. This is the most prevalent and heinous act one practices. This is not only unethical but also an utmost disrespect shown from one artist to another. Without getting permission and giving credits to the owner is no less than an act of stealth and an act of crime.

3.2.2. Disadvantages of online performance

- i. The audience can never experience the wholeness of a performance.
- ii. Setting up the equipments like camera, lights and other devices can be challenging.
- iii. The offstage contributors receive minimal credibility.
- iv. Due to constraints of space, the accompanying artists are left behind resulting in disrespect.

- v. Lack of coordination between audio and video streaming can result in hindering the overall output of the performance.
- vi. If the network connectivity is poor the output is also compromised giving a blurred streaming. And hence the whole purpose of online performance is lost.

4. Conclusion

Based on the acquired perception of both sides, advantages and disadvantages, one can easily claim that offline interactions are more effective than virtual interactions. Indian classical dance forms and also other art forms have come a long way with a certain way of imbibing knowledge. Although compromises are made the authenticity is somehow still intact. Hence, to bring on an entirely new mode of communication, imbibing it into our conventional way, learning is indeed challenging. Furthermore, in case of online frauds, it is safe to say that practising conventional learning is the best option. It is a personal opinion that if one dedicated student is eager to learn, no matter the cost or distance, out of respect to the art form and the Guru, the student will certainly imbibe the conventional way of learning rather than compromising the accessibility to their own convenience. Likewise, an equally dedicated student with minimal options, definitely opts the virtual mode of training, keeping in mind the respect of the art form and the Guru. Having said that, it amounts to personal choice. Respecting the age old tradition, upholding the ethics and showing the same amount of dedication can never be blemished with the inclusion of modernization.

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The Authors have no conflict of interest to declare that they are relevant to the content of this article.

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