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An Esteemed Agency “Natyashala” Encourages Performing Arts for Children with Disabilities

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Abstract:

In 2001 the World Health Organization (WHO) established a new definition of disability based on human rights or social model hence disability started to be viewed from the standpoint of sociology. It is now considered as a social and environmental issue that deals with accessibility, accommodations, and equity. Performance art is about joy, about making something that's so full of kind of a wild joy that you really can't put into words. The psychology of art involves the study of perception, the study of the emotions, and the study of imagination and fantasy. Performance is an artistic act that bestows presence on the artist within society. It is a living art executed by a solo artist or a group of artists in real time. Performing Arts builds self-esteem and confidence which are valuable tools needed to face challenges of life and which is very much needed for the person with disabilities. Performing arts is a vocation that can have positive impact of children with disabilities. Arts encourage socialization, which can be difficult to achieve for young people with a disability. It gives children with disabilities a chance to share their voice, their vision, and their skills through expressions. The present case study aimed at studying the role of Natyashala as an agency for promoting performing arts for children with disabilities with an objective to trace the history, documenting the progress & exploring the activities for stakeholders. Qualitative Research method with Purposeful sampling technique was used for conducting the present study. It was seen that over the years Natyashala has made notable contribution towards the cause of spreading awareness about disabilities and rehabilitating children with disabilities through the medium of performing arts. By training almost thousands of children with disabilities in performing arts, it has proved the notion of 'Where there is a will, There is a way'. Natyashala through its workshops and training programmes in performing arts has indicated that positive approach, affection, equal opportunity, recognition of abilities, perseverance, hard work, sense of oneness and above all, acceptance of the fact to make impossible possible for children with disabilities. The case study of Natyashala will be an epitome for other pioneering institutes in India and will encourage them to appreciate Natyashala's contribution towards individuals with disabilities and undertake similar initiatives at their own individual levels. Thanks to Mrs. Kanchan Sontakke, founder Natyashala charity trust who gave me the privileges to explore it and make this study happened.

Keywords: In Marathi language:- Natyashala, Lokmat, Marathi, Balmohan Vidyamandir, Umang, Shillpgram, Bharateeya Vadya Zankaar, Rang Tarang, Mallkhamb, Gol Gol Rani, Dalit Mitra Puraskar, Apang Mitra Puraskar, Natya Darpan Puraskar, Natyavrati Puraskar, Vasant Soman Puraskar, Akhil Bhartiya Natya Parishad Puraskar, Balrangbhumi Puraskar, Janak Janani Puraskar, Sahyadri Hirani Puraskar

1. Introduction

Disability is a matter of perception. If you can do just one thing well, you're needed by someone. It is part of the human condition and an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions.

For most of the 20th century, disability was defined according to a medical model that defines it as the result of a physical condition within an individual to overcome its inside meaning of the definition i.e. it had the perspective of defectology. In 2001 the World Health Organization (WHO) established a new definition of disability based on human rights or social model hence disability started to be viewed from the standpoint of sociology. It is now considered as a social and environmental issue that deals with accessibility, accommodations, and equity. According to UN (2013) more than 1 billion persons live with some form of disability. 80 per cent are of working age & 80 per cent live in developing countries. Yet far too many people with disabilities live in poverty, too many suffer from social exclusion & too many are denied access to education, employment, health care and social and legal support systems.

Performance art is about joy, about making something that's so full of kind of a wild joy that you really can't put into words. The psychology of art involves the study of perception, the study of the emotions, and the study of imagination and fantasy. Performance is an artistic act that bestows presence on the artist within society. It is a living art executed by a solo artist or a group of artists in real time. The audience sees it either as a stage performance or as an artistic object.

According to NCF (2005) Art is an important component of learning as through music, dance, arts & theatre children can learn with the fun. According to Wheeler (2010), performing art is a form of artistic expressions that employs both conventional and unconventional theatrical and artistic techniques to convey emotions. Andrea V. (2010) said that, performing Arts builds self-esteem and confidence which are valuable tools needed to face challenges of life and which is very much needed for the person with disabilities. Finley (2013) says that, disability in the arts is distinguished from disability art in that it refers to art that includes disabled people, whether in themes, performance, or the creation of the artwork, rather than works focusing on disability as the central theme. To develop the self-esteem and self-confidence in the children with disability performing arts is one of the best arts to express their feelings, emotions, through the dance, drama, and music. It is said to be the springboard to learn new skills which can enhance each child's personal sense of accomplishment. The visual arts hold special importance in the lives of child with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The visual arts provide opportunity for creative self-expression of one's internal state which must be expressed for well-being and growth.

Skoning (2008) argues that the use of creative arts such as dance and movement enables students to experience increased understanding of content and serves to modify their classroom behaviour for the better. Music has the ability to help individuals realize their strengths and enables them to connect with different groups of people (Henderson & Gladding, 1998).

As an art music and dance are strongly connected to learning. Researcher (Staum, 2013; Sze & Yu, 2004; Barry & King, 1999) has shown that music and dance are able to stimulate learning. Sooful, (2010) posit that dance and music encourage personal effort, provide the opportunity to overcome the limitations imposed by their disabilities and facilitate a greater sense of achievement. Hallam (2002) asserts that music has been used with success to facilitate interaction and communication amongst children with severe intellectual disabilities. Stambough (1996) found music to be beneficial for students with mental retardation and learning disabilities. Music has the ability to help individuals realize their strengths and enables them to connect with different groups of people (Henderson & Gladding, 1998). While dance assists in developing fine motor skills (Krapp & Wison, 2005).

Sze and Yu (2006) posit that the use of music in the classroom can help improve the quality of life of individuals with intellectual disabilities as well as facilitate speech and improve cognitive ability. Music enables children with intellectual disabilities to develop socially and emotionally, and promote cognitive development, which involves recognizing, processing, organizing and using information appropriately (Allen & Marotz, 2003).

Barry and King (1999) allude to the fact that classroom lessons can be greatly enhanced through the introduction of calming background music. Music has also been found to be effective in improving and capturing the attention of a learner so that he/she acquires a sense of control and is able to create a routine, which is essential for academic success (Brunk, 2004).

2. Need and Rational of the Study

Performing arts is a vocation that can have positive impact of children with disabilities. Arts encourage socialization, which can be difficult to achieve for young people with a disability. It gives children with disabilities a chance to share their voice, their vision, and their skills through expressions. Children with hearing impairment have difficulties in supra-segmental aspects of pitch, intonation, rhythm and phrasing. And it is seen that rhythmic & dance movements not only help them to develop these difficulties but also help to develop vocalization, speech and their language skills.

Recreation generally refers to all those activities performed during leisure time. Recreational activities are helpful not only for hearing people but also for deaf people. These activities help to channelize energies on specific tasks in hand without boredom. It helps to break the monotonous routine. These kinds of activities are necessary for all to concentrate on particular work. Performing Art programming has been used for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities during their leisure-time activity (Finley, 2013).

For some children with disabilities, a career in the visual arts is an opportunity for meaningful employment. Art provide and better opportunity to the people having disabilities.

According to Ament (2010), there is a notion that music is only heard and can only be appreciated by hearing. But, deaf people have a unique and challenging perspective to music that has seldom been explored outside the deaf communities.

Miming is the art or technique which is also used to express emotions, feeling by body movement. And an agency 'Natyashala' trained the students in miming and it has immensely helped the children with hearing impairment to develop their communication skills. Natyashala is one such institute which is funded by Ministry of Culture to promote arts in the field of disability. Natyashala has been training & organizing workshops for individuals with disabilities and their teachers. A proper documentation about its activities from inception to the present day status will help to greater insights into its work. There are very few organizations who are exclusively working towards promotion of arts amongst individuals with disabilities. In order to encourage others and for others to appreciate the work done by such pioneering institutes in India it is felt that a detailed case study of Natyashala is essential.

3. Aim of the Study

The present case study aimed at studying the role of Natyashala as an agency for promoting performing arts for children with disabilities. The main objectives of the present study were:

4. Objectives of the Study

- To trace the history of Natyashala
- To documenting the progress of Natyashala
- To explore the activities of Natyashala for stakeholders.
- To document the major achievements of Natyashala highlighting barriers & facilitators

5. Methodology

5.1. Research Method

Qualitative Research method was used for conducting the present study. This study design suitably answers the research questions and fulfils the researcher's objectives of collecting information in detail.

5.2. Rationale for Qualitative Research

According to Creswell (2013), a qualitative research consists of a set of series of representations, including field notes, interview, conversations, photographs, recordings to study a social phenomenon. It involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach & attempts to make sense of, or interpret, phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to it.

5.3. Research Design

Case study research involves the study of a case within a real-life, contemporary context or setting (Yin, 2009). According to Thomas (2011) a case study is a research method that relies on a single case rather than a population or sample. Hence the case study design selected to conduct an in-depth exploration of a single case, i.e., single institution, named 'Natyashala'.

5.4. Sampling Technique

Purposeful sampling technique was used in the present study. Patton (1990) defines it as "selecting information-rich case for study in-depth". Purposive samples are expected to be conversant and informative about the phenomenon under investigation. In the present case study, the founder- trustee of Natyashala was the research participant.

Researcher employed the 'typical case' sampling strategy to select the trustee of Natyashala. A typical case is which the researcher looks for the case that best exemplifies the data. In typical case sampling, the researcher is already aware about the typical characteristics of the sample and hence selected that case to collect the required information.

5.5. Inclusion Criteria of the Sample

To conduct a study, inclusion criterion is must to obtain significant results. For the present study, the researcher decided to include one single participant, the founder trustee because she was:

- Willing to provide consent for participating in the present study.
- Associated with 'Natyashala' for more than 10 years.
- Contributed to Natyashala's growth in a significant way.
- Funded Natyashala and thereby had a stake in its activities.
- Had substantial experience of working with students with disabilities.
- Alert and conscious & not suffering from any mental disorders and was not under any kind of medication. This eligibility condition was included to prevent the adverse effects of such transient mental states on participant's performance which in turn would tarnish the study results.

5.6. Sample Size

The data pertaining to various performing arts and allied activities in Natyashala was collected from the founder-trustee of Natyashala. The trustee herself was the founder & had trained the teachers and the students with disabilities in dance, drama and music by organizing short term workshops. Till date, she had imparted training to almost 3500 teachers and 7000 children with different disabilities. The trustee believed that the art proves to be an effective tool of communication especially for children with disabilities like hearing impairment and intellectual disabilities for whom learning language and using it for communication was a great issue. Hence the founder trustee was chosen as the sample for collecting data for the present study.

5.7. Tools

In the present research Semi-structured interviews was used for data collection. According to Bernard (1988) semi-structured interviews consist of a list of open-ended questions based on the topic areas the researcher intends to study.

5.8. Data Collection

In the present study, data pertaining to performing arts-activities undertaken by Natyashala was collected through three types of sources, interviews, Documents and Audio visual materials

5.8.1. Interviews

Researcher collected in-depth information about 'Natyashala' by conducting interview of its trustees. Interview was the first primary source of gathering information. Interview protocol consisting of finalized research questions mentioned above covering the major objective of the study was used. The interview was conducted on a one to one basis and the response was recorded by the researcher.

5.8.2. Documents

A valuable source of information in qualitative research is the documents. They are a rich source of information about a site or institution in a study. They represent a good source for text (word) data. In the present study, researcher collected several articles and reports providing valuable information about Natyashala. It was used as second source of information for validating the information.

5.8.3. Audio-visual Materials

Audio-visual materials consist of images or sounds that researchers collect to help them understand the central phenomenon under study. In the present study, researcher collected photographs and videos depicting several activities of Natyashala.

5.9. Validity of Data

Data needs to be validated in order to give it quality, credibility, and trustworthiness. In the present study the process of 'triangulation' was used to determine the accuracy or credibility of the findings. Triangulation was used to judge the credibility of data collected through different methods of data collection (interviews, documents & photographs).

5.10. Data Analysis

Data analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. The valuable information obtained from interview and documents was first transcribed into text later coded and categorized and themes were assigned to them. In present study the original transcript was in Marathi which was translated into English. Then it was analyzed and coded as per the objectives of the study.

- Theme 1: Vision and mission of Natyashala.
- Theme 2: Scope and dimension.
- Theme 3: Activities for stakeholders.
- Theme 4: Benefits for teacher, students and society.
- Theme 5: Challenges faced by Natyashala.
- Theme 6: Achievements of Natyashala.

5.11. Access and Permissions

In qualitative research, a gatekeeper is an individual who has an official or unofficial role at the site, provides entrance to a site, helps researchers locate people, and assists in the identification of places to study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

In the present study, the researcher obtained formal permission for conducting interview with the trustee in writing. The participant was oriented about the main objectives of the present study. This was followed by obtaining her informed consent in writing for participation in the present study.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1. Theme 1: Vision and Mission of Natyashala

The interview with the founder trustee revealed that, the main mission of Natyashala was to spread awareness in the society about persons with disabilities using medium of performing arts to reach the masses. Dance, drama and creative arts usually have a lasting impact on the minds of audience. They are able to stimulate multiple senses of the audience. The impact that they create about the central theme is enormous. Hence, the trustee said "we used the instrument of performing arts to reach maximum number of people. It was our way of working towards spreading awareness about different disabilities in society. By doing so, we wanted to bring about a change in societal approach and attitudes towards persons with disabilities. By doing so we aspired to create an inclusive society in the near future."

The researcher heavily relied on the secondary source of data, i.e., articles and documents collected from Natyashala. In-depth review of these articles indicated that all round personality development of children with disabilities through medium of performing arts was the major mission of Natyashala. The vision of Natyashala is to empower persons with disabilities with skills in acting, direction, play-writing, stage-craft, music, dance and puppetry. The performing arts are often looked upon as 'impossible' for persons with disabilities. The mission of Natyashala is to make impossible, possible for persons with disabilities. Through the training received at Natyashala, many children with disabilities are working independently with their so called 'normal' peers. It has opened up new employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Thus promoting vocational training is one of the other missions that Natyashala envisages to achieve.

6.2. Theme 2: Scope and Dimensions

The founder trustee of Natyashala reported that, the scope of Natyashala has presently increased many-fold. Earlier its scope was limited to Maharashtra only. However, gradually its scope expanded and at present Natyashala is a movement that has spread all over India.

The activities of Natyashala have also expanded over the years. At first, the founder trustee trained a small group of girls with hearing impairment in dance, drama and music. Later a small inclusive group of physically challenged children was also trained using similar performing arts. The children in both the groups showed enormous improvement in their speech, coordination, interaction, confidence which in turn resulted in their overall personality development. This instance motivated the founder trustee to take up rigorous training activities for children with disabilities. Thus Natyashala that started with few children has till date trained almost 3800 children and 3000 teachers.

At present, Natyashala has been successful in involving individuals and groups from different strata of society in contributing towards rehabilitation of children with disabilities. Over the years Natyashala has evolved into a mighty social movement working towards the cause of disability-awareness and empowering children with special needs in various performing arts.

6.3. Theme 3: Activities for Stakeholders

As reported by the founder trustee, researcher observed that Natyashala had organized several activities especially for teachers and students. Several workshops were organized for training teachers in various forms of performing arts like, drama, play writing and skit. Some workshops were organized for a long duration (One & half month) while some short workshops lasted only for 2 days. According to her, the trained teachers can train students appropriately according to the needs of the child. The teachers got an opportunity to learn new skills by attending such training workshops. These workshops gave them a kind of mental vacation from their monotonous routines. They were encouraged to use these art techniques during teaching sessions. Children with special needs spend most of their time in schools. As such, the teachers are better aware of the needs of their children. As we all know, different students have different learning styles. Some students might be auditory learners, while some might be visual learners while some others might be kinesthetic learners. Performing arts activities have the capacity to meet the varying needs of these diverse learners. Hence, these workshops received overwhelming teacher-community from time to time. Articles reviewed from two newspapers such as Times of India (1990), Lokmat Times (1993) support these findings.

Times of India (1990) reported that workshop held at Balmohan Vidyamandir in co-operation with the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, New-Delhi.

Lokmat Times (1993) reported Natyashala with the co-operation of the centre Cultural Research and Training at Delhi has conducted drama workshops for teachers of the handicapped in Maharashtra. This workshop is divided into three stages spanning periods varying from 15-20 days. Natyashala conducted a play writing workshop for the teachers. These teachers wrote educational skits of 20 minutes. Five selected skits were produced by Natyashala and were presented for school children in Bombay and Thane in October 1992.

The interview with founder trustee revealed that several activities were organized for training children with special needs with the aim of their all-round personality development. It includes a wide range of activities includes plays, street plays, miming shows, dance and drama programs, state and national level competitions, sports competitions, music workshops, cultural festivals, drama in education, theater games, voice and speech training, stylized acting, mask and puppet making. With the aim of strengthening the employment opportunities and developing the job related competence in students, Natyashala organized several vocational training workshops for children with special needs. The data collected from newspapers like Independent Journal of Politics and Business (1991), Indian Express Bombay (1995), Free Press Journal (1991) and articles also support these findings.

In the Independent Journal of Politics and business (1991), stated that Natyashala organize the plays, workshops, painting etc.

Indian Express Bombay (1995) commented that Umang-95, the five days cultural for disabled children which was organized by the West Zone Cultural Centre at Shillpgram, Udaipur from September 16 to 20. In this cultural meet with a difference as 150 disabled children from the states Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa and the Union Territory of Daman and Dadra Nagar Haveli participated and experienced the joy of understanding and confidence.

Free Press Journal (1991), said to describe the Hindi dance-drama enacted by the students of The Hellen Keller Institute for the deaf, Happy Home and School for the blind and S.E.C. Day School for the crippled, at the Tata Theatre on Monday in one word it would "excellent".

In the articles given by trustee stated that rehabilitation of the disabled by providing vocational training as trainers in theatre activities, stage artist, assistants and technicians for stagecraft such as lighting, setting music, makeup, costumes, musician and playback singers. Natyashala experimented with the children perform live on stage before an audience on the concluding day of the training program. These group performances and it is believed that the results are linked mainly for coordination and motivation that comes from the atmosphere.

Researcher conducted interview that time trustee said different projects were taken into account for kids with all kind of physical problems. It mainly includes Creative dramatics, dance, music, play presentation, art and stage craft, rhythmic moments, voice modulation, dramatics sports. As per trustee said over 33 years is organizing projects in urban as well as rural areas such as, Bharateeya Vadya Zankaar, State level music, Dance, Drama competition, festivals, Rang Tarang. During workshops trustee trained

various subjects, dramatics writing, direction, and acting. As per articles given by trustee, she has developed a novel theatre idiom for using 'Theatre Arts' as a therapy by amalgamating the essence of Indian traditional theatre and modern theatre techniques into the process of creative dramatics. They also provide exposure to all the art-forms under one roof rope and pole mallkhamb etc. The work of Natyashala has been highly acclaimed and supported by many renowned social, cultural and educational institutions. During the interview trustee said in 1988 Natyashala trustee arranged first workshop only for children with hearing disability.

6.4. Theme 4: Challenges faced by Natyashala

When the founder trustee was asked about the challenges faced by Natyashala, it was revealed that, the institute had two major challenges. The first major challenge was regarding raising financial aid for running the activities of Natyashala. Generally, fund raising is a major issue for majority of the NGOs. The second major challenge was to communicate with the children having special needs. The trustee reported that it was very difficult to train children with hearing impairment because of the communication mismatch between the trainers and the trainees. The newspaper articles from Bombay Times (1998), Times of India (1990), The Independent Journal of Politics and Business (1991) given below, highlight the above theme.

Challenges for the organization:

For the organization the biggest challenge was place to conduct the any kind of workshops, activities. Trustee and supporters helped them to arrange the proper place in any area of Maharashtra and conduct the workshops for teachers and students.

In Bombay Times (1998), trustee consistent work in a Theatre Arts, with the physically handicapped and slow learning at "Natyashala" for the past 17 years.

Communicating effectively with the handicapped is very difficult but all the more necessary if they have to be educated to express their hidden talents.

Trustee stated the more touching moments, she recollects, have been watching those who cannot hear, trying to guide the ones who cannot see, during their rehearsal of 'Gol Gol Rani' a highly acclaimed production in Marathi.

During interview trustee said that she has not taken any formal training to teach special kids, but this was never a problem for her. Natyashala get the sourced by government, co-operate sector for funds. Through these funds trustee able to give the salary to the people.

Challenges for the teachers:

In the article of Times of India (1990), teaching deaf and mute children for that teachers require patience. For children who are disabled they need more attention as compared to non-disabled.

Article stated in mid-day, while explaining any concept the teacher has to demonstrate the children and then explain it.

In Lokmat Times (1993), stated that teacher knows how of drama, dance and music, puppetry helped the children and according to that they have to do stage performance. Teacher also gets experience of staging performances with handicapped children.

Researcher conducted interview that time trustee said teacher faced challenges to teach children with the language of touch.

Challenges for the students:

In the paper named as The Independent Journal of Politics and Business (1991), physically disabled children were heard admiring the grasping abilities and deafness with which the blind adjusted to changes in the dialogue. During rehearsal, these children were fully involved in every sequence of the production, learning new activities, and new words and music, but it wasn't easy.

6.5 Theme 5: Benefits for Teachers, Students and Society

6.5.1. Benefits for Teachers

The interview with the founder trustee and the in-depth exploration of the newspaper articles indicated that not only the students, but also the teachers and the society as a whole benefitted from the activities of Natyashala. The documents and newspaper articles collected from Natyashala indicated that the teachers gained practical knowledge of the multi-dimensional art forms. This helped them to formulate their own creative methodologies and to convey concepts of education. They are able to create meaningful theatre with children and also offer skills and techniques to work in classroom situation to make teaching-learning process more effective and enjoyable. The teachers learned to prepare educational play-scripts based on school curriculum.

6.5.2. Benefit for Students

The article about Natyashala published in the times of India (1990) mentioned that the theatre provided a great release for the children, helped their vocal cords, increased confidence and made them take more interest in studies. Help the children to express. Theatre arts helped them to communicate in a better way. Handicapped students did remarkably well in studies. Many children had psychological problems and these activities helped them as a theatre therapy. They would mix well with other children and break the sense being the eternal non-participation. Students developed their talents and worthy of applause.

The documents collected from Natyashala discussed about the benefits of performing arts for children with disabilities. It led to channelization of innate creativity, hidden talents in children and youth and development of self-awareness, self-esteem and positive perspective towards life.

6.5.3. Benefits for Society

Natyashala as a social movement, contributed heavily towards establishing a miniature of an inclusive society. The documents collected indicated that the trained theatre workers had built-up a core staff to conduct several training programs in rural and tribal areas of India. The trustee provided an instance of her interaction with parents of child with special need after a workshop on performing arts. Natyashala had brought about many favorable developments in social sphere and created a favorable attitude towards children with disabilities in society.

6.6. Theme 6: Achievements of Natyashala

Natyashala has won many accolades and awards for its remarkable contribution towards the cause of disability awareness and rehabilitation of children with disabilities. The founder trustee gives all the credit of its achievements to its hardworking staff and sincere students. The newspaper articles given below support these findings. (The Times of India (1990), Lokmat Times (1993), Bombay Times, The Times of India (1998).

As the Times of India (1990) stated encouraging development is that Dalit theatres in Satara have started a school for the deaf. Lokmat Times (1993) stated that the education department of Central Government has honoured Natyashala by giving it the responsibility of training teachers for normal children also among with those for handicapped children.

As Bombay Times, The Times of India (1998) mentioned that trustee has directed outstanding professional plays with hundreds of youngsters, who cannot see, hear, speak or walk. Natyashala got Dalit Mitra Puraskar from chief minister Sudhakar Roa Naik of Maharashtra. Teachers have received official recognition from the ministry of education, New Delhi. The project sanctioned for one year with four workshops, two for training special teachers for the handicapped and two for training teachers in regular school.

As an article stated as an extension of activities trustee started a rural centre at Kanhe, District Pune for training, integration and rehabilitation of the disabled.

Till now trustee is honored with several awards as Apang Mitra Puraskar, Natya Darpan Puraskar, Natyavrati Puraskar, Vasant Soman Puraskar, Akhil Bhartiya natya Parishad Puraskar, Balrangbhumii Puraskar, Janak Janani Puraskar, Sahyadri Hirvani Puraskar etc.

During the interview trustee said that she awarded by three awards in State Drama Competition.

7. Summary and Conclusion

The present research study titled 'The role of Natyashala as an agency for promoting performing arts for children with disabilities-A case study' re-iterates the above quote highlighting that the only disability in life is the bad attitude. The in-depth interview with the founder trustee, the newspaper articles and the reports collected as well as the photographs pertaining to Natyashala, helped to construct a vivid picture of its vision and mission, scope and dimensions, variety of performing art activities, their benefits for the stakeholders, challenges they had to face in this great endeavour and their achievements.

Over the years, the scope of Natyashala has grown enormously. It is not confined to Maharashtra alone, but has turned into a mighty social movement that has been followed by and appreciated by many, throughout India.

Over the years Natyashala has made notable contribution towards the cause of spreading awareness about disabilities and rehabilitating children with disabilities through the medium of performing arts. By training almost thousands of children with disabilities in performing arts, it has proved the notion of 'Where there is a will, there is a way'. Natyashala through its workshops and training programmes in performing arts has indicated that positive approach, affection, equal opportunity, recognition of abilities, perseverance, hard work, sense of oneness and above all, acceptance of facts helps to make impossible possible for children with disabilities.

The case study of Natyashala will be an epitome for other pioneering institutes in India and will encourage them to appreciate Natyashala contribution towards individuals with disabilities and undertake similar initiatives at their own individual levels.

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Appendix-I:-Photo Gallery



Training in Creative Dramatics



Mime play 'Bharari(भरारी)



Manku Makade play(नाटक: मंकू माकडे)



Educational Play 'Goshta Tumchi Aamchi'
(गोष्टतुमचीआमची)