

Examining the Challenges of Teaching Traditional Dance in Contemporary India

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Abstract : The role of a traditional dance teacher in India revolves around teaching movements and postures that have been a part of the movement vocabulary of dancers from before the 2nd century BC. These movements inscribe on the mind and body of the dancer a complex web of philosophy, culture history, and religion. However, this repository of tradition sits in a fast globalizing India creating a cultural space which is in a constant flux, where identities and meanings are being constantly challenged. The guru-shishya parampara, the traditional way of learning dance, sits uneasily with a modern education space in India. The traditional dance teacher is caught in the cross-currents of tradition and modernity, of preservation and exploration. This paper explores conflicting views on what dance ought to mean and how it should be taught. The paper explores the tensions of the social, economic and cultural spaces that the traditional dance teacher navigates.

Keywords : pedagogy, dance education, dance curriculum, teacher training

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