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## Elements to Consider while Choreographing Natya Production for Individuals with Intellectual Challenges

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### Abstract

*Natya, an essential skill for all, is particularly beneficial for individuals with intellectual challenges. These individuals often struggle to express themselves appropriately, and Natya helps them channel their emotions constructively. Theatre arts, being interactive, facilitate learning in an engaging manner. Natya combines literature, music, and drama to create a holistic art form that aids in communication and emotional expression. This approach is more effective than theoretical methods for individuals with special needs.*

**Keywords:** Natya Dance, Drama, Music, Special needs, Emotions

### Introduction

Bharata's Natya Shastra is a significant text that combines elements from the four Vedas to form Nritta (pure dance), Nritya (expressive movements), and Natya (drama). It emphasizes the harmony between facial expressions (Satvika abhinaya), vocal expressions (Vacika), bodily movements (Angika), and decorative aspects (Aharya). Natya connects the human body to the community, environment, and cosmos, celebrating the body's capacity to generate energy and convey emotions.

### Special Needs – Types and typical characteristic

#### 1. Intellectual Challenges

These include difficulties in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Challenges in logical reasoning, problem-solving, communication, and social skills are common. Symptoms can include delayed milestones, communication problems, and behavioral issues.

#### 2. Down Syndrome

Individuals with Down Syndrome have an extra copy of the 21st chromosome, leading to physical and intellectual challenges. Symptoms include distinct facial features, delayed development, and associated health issues.

#### 3. Cerebral Palsy

A neurological disorder affecting movement and muscle tone, caused by abnormal brain development. Symptoms include impaired movement, muscle rigidity, and coordination issues.

#### 4. Autism Spectrum Disorder

Characterized by a lack of social interaction, repetitive behaviors, and sensitivity to sensory stimuli. Individuals may have normal intelligence but struggle with communication and behavior.

### Choreographing a Natya Production

Key Elements:

**1. Cognition:** Understanding and recalling information is crucial. Frequent practice helps improve memory and comprehension.

**2. Imitation:** Learning through observing and mimicking the teacher.

**3. Role Play:** Experiencing and understanding characters through one-on-one or group activities.

**4. Directional Instructions:** Following spatial directions and distinguishing left from right.

**Practical Considerations:**

**Costume and Makeup:** Choosing appropriate attire and makeup for different characters.

**Stage Dimensions:** Selecting a manageable stage space.

**Stage Lighting:** Using appropriate lighting to avoid distractions.

**Specific Task: Teaching Emotions and Environment**

Individuals with special needs may struggle to express emotions like sadness, joy, anger, and fear. Practical activities can help them understand and express these emotions. Additionally, understanding their environment and appropriate behavior within it is crucial. Setting up different scenarios (e.g., home environment) can help them adapt and respond correctly.

**A Practical Activity:**

A simple drama scenario involving family members and strangers can teach individuals how to interact appropriately and understand their roles. This helps them distinguish between known and unknown people and act accordingly.

As a director of a production, one needs to know the purpose of the act. What needs to be taught to the individual with Special Needs, what he or she is not able to understand, and why it is important for him or her are the things considered and planned.

It is often seen that a Special-Needs person is not able to understand or differentiate between family members, friends, and strangers, so an atmosphere is created in such a way that the individual is exposed to all these characters at once and the Natya is created only to make him understand the roles and to differentiate his actions accordingly.

**The Drama Script:**

**Characters - Mother, Father, Brothers - Ajay and Vijay, Strangers**

**Properties -** Sofa set, Door with a doorbell and a window.

**Scene 1**

Father – is reading a newspaper and sitting on the sofa in the hall Mother is in the kitchen

Ajay and Vijay playing a board game

Father: Ajay Vijay what day is it today? And what is the date? Ajay: Appa today is Thursday

Vijay: and it is first February

(the day and date can be changed accordingly)

Mother: Ajay. Please come in and help me with coffee. Ajay: okay maa

Mother: Vijay can you also come in and pick some biscuits? Vijay: certainly, Mom

(meanwhile, the doorbell rings)

Father: Ajay, Vijay One of you go and check who is at the door. (Vijay runs to open the door)

(peeps through the window. Reports)

Appa, they are my friends at the door. Shall I open the door?

Father: open the door Vijay let them come in

(Vijay opens the door after seeking permission and friends also join him in playing the board game)

Meanwhile, Mother and Ajay are busy making coffee. Mother brings coffee and gives it to his father and Ajay gives biscuits to Vijay's friends.

(again, the doorbell rings, and there is a man standing at the door)

Ajay runs to the door and opens the door to the stranger without looking into the window without reporting to his father and without taking permission, the stranger drags Ajay out of the house and starts walking out. Meanwhile, the father rushes out and stops the stranger. The stranger escapes pushing Ajay on the floor.

Ajay is in complete shock and then after some time he understands his mistake a

**Scene 2**

Next day

Father goes into Ajay's room and says good morning Ajay. How are you feeling today?

Mother follows Father. Hugs Ajay and gives him milk. Shall we go out for some vegetable shopping?

Vijay: (comes running) Amma, Can I also come along?

Ajay: Yes Appa I am fine, Amma let us go and buy some vegetables.

The doorbell rings,

Father: Ajay, can you go and check who is at the door?

Ajay: (goes to the door peeps through the window and sees the milkman at the door) Appa, it is the milkman at the door.

Mother: Wait, I am coming Ajay

(brings an empty Can and takes the milk from the milkman)

(Again, the doorbell rings)

Ajay (runs to the door peeps through the window and asks the person) Who are you?

Stranger: I am your father's friend

Ajay: What is your name sir?

Stranger: (confused) open the door and let me in, I will explain

Ajay: (immediately) Somebody is at the door saying that he is your friend. Do you want me to open the door?

Father: No Ajay. Wait, Son, let me come and check.

Father comes and sees no one there. Ajay sees the stranger running away.

Ajay: Appa, as soon as I reported to you, he ran away.

Father: Good Son, Now, do you understand you should never open the door to people whom you don't know and have never spoken to?

Ajay: Yes Appa, I know. It is very clear to me that I should not be talking to anybody whom I do not know and also should always check before opening the door.

Mother: Ajay Vijay, now that you both have learned a valuable lesson, Are you both ready? Shall we go out for shopping?

### **Conclusion**

Through the above activity, individuals with special needs can better understand how to differentiate between family members, friends, and strangers, and learn the importance of seeking permission and verifying identities before interacting with unknown people. This helps them express their needs safely and confidently, reducing anxieties and confusion in daily life.

Thus, after considering all these essential elements, we can help individuals lead a comfortable daily routine, expressing their needs and wants without having any difficulty. This will help them to show the appropriate expression in their best-experienced way and so will reduce unwanted anxieties and confusions.

Teaching Natya to individuals with special needs involves incorporating various emotions and situations. It is an effective method to help them express themselves and reduce anxieties. By following the principles of Natya Shastra, we can provide a structured approach to enhance their communication and emotional expression.

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