

Maestro with a Mission

The 18 year old lad, a dropout from the school, left his house with just two rupees in order to realize a dream. It was the passionate dream he was driven by. He wanted to elevate the status of an art form he had learnt from his great gurus. He decided to dedicate his life for the enrichment of that art form.



The lad left his house for Madras, now called Chennai about 400kms away from his place. The place where he started was a village about 50kms away from Vijayawada in Krishna district. He walked all the way... On his long way, he fed himself on plantains and water. Finding the condition of the lad, a stationmaster at Venkatachalam offered him a full meal.

“Where are you going, dear?” the stationmaster asked.

No reply came.

The lad looked at the endless sky.

The lad was Vempati Chinna Satyam, who later came to be known as Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam; and the place where he started from was Kuchipudi and the art form he was passionate about was – KUCHIPUDI.

All this story about Satyam and Kuchipudi becomes meaningless if we really don't know certain facts about Kuchipudi.

The dance form originated in the village of Kuchipudi. For a long time, the art was performed at temples at the time of annual festivals and in streets on the demand of the people. Initially, it was a male oriented dance form. Even female roles were played by men. What a surprise! Great gurus like Vedantam Lakshminarayana, Chinta Krishna Murthy enriched and transformed it and welcomed women to play different roles. They produced

many dance dramas and choreographed several solo items. Thus the transformation of dance was complete! It was different from the days when men played the female roles. Now, women play even male roles. Yet, it was not much popular and it was not recognized on par with other classical dances till 1958.

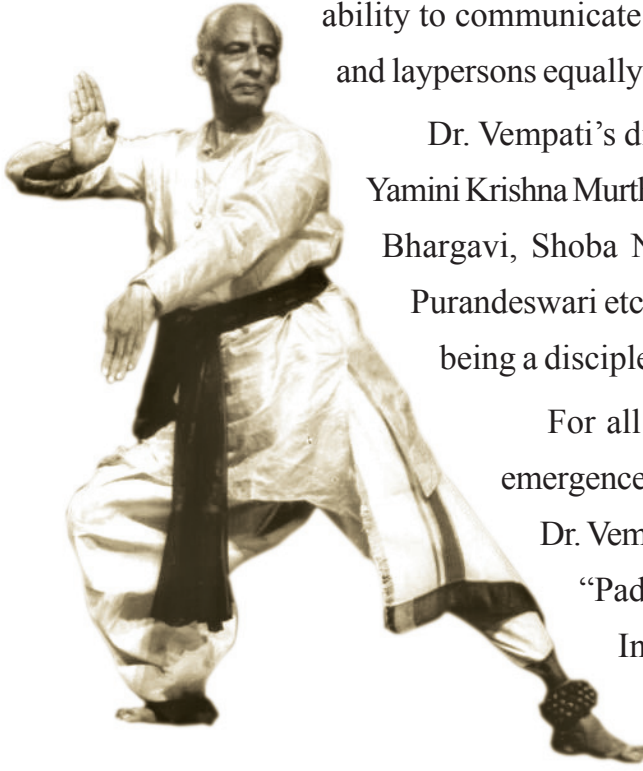
Satyam was too big in his aspiration and too small in his achievements. He faced many hardships in his childhood. He had a strong desire to learn Kuchipudi. In spite of that, he was humiliated by a teacher in his village. The teacher said, “Don’t attempt to learn Kuchipudi again. You are unfit for it”. He made this comment in the presence of his friends! Some ridiculed him. But, some others sympathized with him. And then, his father died. He had to feed four sisters and mother. Beyond this Satyam was interested in nothing but his favourite art form with some rudimentary knowledge of it. That is hardly of any use to a person with a lofty desire!

Tadepalli Peraiah Sastry and Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry taught him the difficult aspects of Kuchipudi style and inspired him. Satyam developed a genuine and ardent interest towards the art form. He sometimes sold his meal tickets to watch dance programmes in Chennai. He only wanted to liberate Kuchipudi from the clutches of insignificance and oblivion.

With encouragement from his cousin Vempati Pedda Satyam, Vempati Chinna Satyam tried his luck in Telugu film world. Can the Telugu film lovers forget the dance sequences in “Narthanasala”, “Devadasu”, and “Pandava Vanavasam”? Even now the film admirers become nostalgic when they recollect those sequences. Thus Dr. Vempati has carved a niche in Telugu films as well, as a dance director.

Dr. Vempati was not satisfied with his success in the tinsel world. His desire to popularize Kuchipudi grew stronger. He established Kuchipudi Art Academy for this purpose, in 1963 in Madras. As many as 180 solo items and 15 dance dramas were composed and choreographed by Dr. Vempati. Those have been performed all over the world. He composed his first dance drama ‘Sri Krishna Parijatham’ followed by ‘Ksheera Sagara Madhanam’. Both were received well by the audience all round the world and brought laurels to Vempati.

Some of the masterpieces like ‘Padmavati Srinivasa Kalyanam’ composed by Dr. Vempati are the symbols of depth of his knowledge and mastery over Kuchipudi. He had an



ability to communicate each nuance of the dance to connoisseurs and laypersons equally well.

Dr. Vempati's distinguished disciples include Shanta Rao, Yamini Krishna Murthy, Vyjayanthimala Bali, Hema Malini, Manju Bhargavi, Shoba Naidu, Bala Kondala Rao and Daggubati Purandeswari etc. Every one of these disciples takes pride in being a disciple of Dr. Vempati.

For all that he has done to the development and emergence of Kuchipudi to a full - fledged dance form, Dr. Vempati was rightly conferred the much coveted "Padma Bhushan" title by the Government of India. Andhra University awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1980. Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati,

honoured him with an honorary degree, D.Litt. in 1983. Dr. Satyam was presented with the 'Golden Key' by the mayor of Miami, USA, Stephen P Clark in the year 1981. He was chosen for the Sangeet Natak Academy fellowship and the Raja – Lakshmi Foundation, Madras presented the 'Raja – Lakshmi' award. These are only a few to mention. There are so many feathers in his cap. In the year 1976, the TTD made Satyam the 'Asthana Natyacharya'.

He was born to Venkatachalamaiah and Varalakshmi on 15th Oct 1929. He led an illustrious life of 83 years and he breathed his last on 29th July 2012. He was survived by his wife Swarajya Lakshmi, two sons and three daughters.

All the Telugu speakers identify themselves with "Kuchipudi". The rest of the world looks at Kuchipudi and Dr. Vempati's stupendous work with reverent eyes. Kuchipudi has established itself on par with other classical dance forms of India like Bharathanatyam, Kathak and Kathakali. Countless people worked for Kuchipudi, but Dr. Vempati remains the source of inspiration to such people and he remains at the centre stage of Kuchipudi's surge as a classical dance form in Modern India. Hence, he can rightly be called "Maestro with a Mission".



Glossary

- passion (*n*) : strong feeling
- choreography (*n*) : art of arranging steps for a dance
- ardent (*adj*) : serious
- oblivion (*n*) : state of being unnoticed
- carve a niche (*idm*): build reputation
- reverent (*adj*) : filled with honour
- nuance (*n*) : subtle difference
- connoisseur (*n*) : judge of an art
- coveted (*adj*) : liked by everyone to have
- stupendous (*adj*) : amazingly large



Comprehension

Answer the following questions.

1. Vempati Chinna Satyam left his house on a purpose. Do you think he was successful at the end?
2. When the station master asked Satyam “Where are you going, dear?,” he kept silent. Now choose one of the options that is not the reason for the silence.
 - a. He was determined to achieve something. []
 - b. He was determined and confident about his destiny. []
 - c. He was not determined or confident about his destiny. []
3. If the eighteen year old lad hadn't left his village, Kuchipudi would not have gained this popularity. Do you agree / disagree? Why?
4. Is it appropriate to call him Dr. Vempati? Do you agree? Why (not)?



Writing

Based on the details of the famous singer, S.P. Balasubrahmanyam given below, write a biographical sketch of him.

Full name	: Sripathi Panditaradhyula BalaSubrahmanyam
Date of Birth	: 4th June 1946
Place of Birth	: Konetammapeta, Nellore District
State	: Andhra Pradesh
Educational qualifications	: Engineering
Entry into film field	: 1966
First Film	: Sri Sri Sri Maryada Ramanna
Entry into Bollywood	: In 1980
Total number of songs sung	: About 40,000
Other credits	: Noted dubbing artist
Actor	: Acted in a number of Telugu films
TV programmes	: Leading many TV programmes
Awards:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. National Film Award for best male playback singer – 6 times2. Nandi Awards from Government of Andhra Pradesh – 25 times3. State Award from Tamil Nadu4. State Award from Karnataka5. Padma Shri Award6. Padma Bhushan



Listening

Listen to the news bulletin read by your teacher and answer the following questions.

1. What are the highlights of the news bulletin?

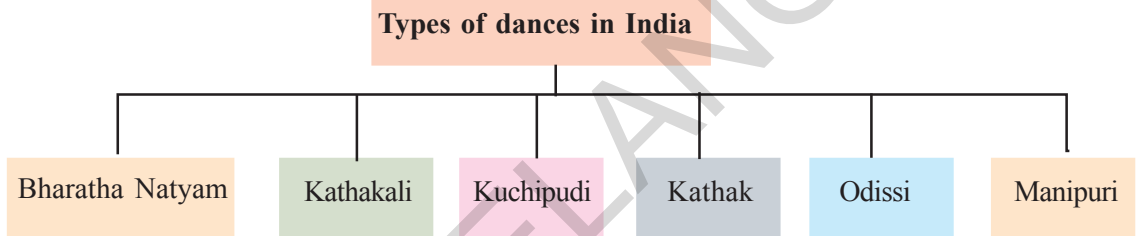
- Where is the art and culture policy programme going to be announced? Who is going to be benefitted from this policy?
- How will the weavers be benefitted from this policy?



Study Skills

India is a land of culture and tradition. One aspect of culture is dance. India has six major types of dances: Bharathanatyam, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, Kathak, Odissi and Manipuri.

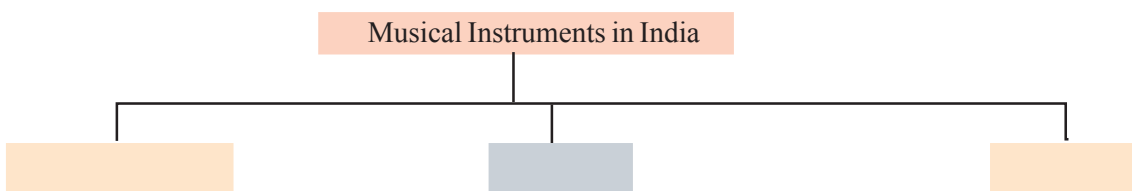
The information can be transformed into a tree diagram.



Here is some information about musical instruments in India.

In India, we have some musical instruments. The shehanai is an Indian wind instrument. This is played during auspicious functions. The harmonium is a wind instrument, having its roots in Europe. The sitar is one of the prime musical instruments of Indian music. It is a stringed instrument. The tampura is another stringed instrument. Among the stringed instruments, the veena is the most ancient stringed instrument. The tabla is a percussion instrument. The flute/ bansuri is a wind instrument. The violin is a stringed instrument played with a bow.

Now, convert the above information into a tree diagram.





Project Work

Identify a performing artist like a singer, a dancer or any other artist in your village or town. He/She might not be a famous person. Go to him/her. Collect the details about him/her.

You can take the help of the following questions for interviewing.

1. Who are your parents?
2. What is your place of birth?
3. Who taught you this art?
4. Are there any specific reasons for taking up this art?
5. Does the community around you support you?
6. Does this art make you financially independent?
7. Would you give any message to the student community?

Fill the following table based on the information you have collected

Name	:
Place of birth	:
Name of the teacher	:
Reasons for choosing the art	:
Community support	:
Financial status	:
Message	:

Prepare a brief profile and exhibit it in your classroom.

Self Assessment

How well have I understood this unit?



Read and tick (✓) in the appropriate box.

Indicators	Yes	Somewhat	No
I read and understood the text:			
A. The Story of Ikat			
B. The Earthen Goblet			
C. Maestro with a Mission			
I was able to identify and use the homonyms and homophones given under 'Vocabulary'.			
I was able to use reported speech given under 'Grammar'.			
I was able to edit the passage using homophones given under 'Vocabulary'.			
I was able to understand and draw a tree diagram given under 'Study Skills'.			
I listened to and understood “The News bulletin” and answered the questions given under 'Listening'.			
I was able to prepare a profile of an artist given under 'Project Work'.			

Writing an e-mail

Electronic mail, commonly referred to as **email** or **e-mail**, is a method of exchanging digital messages from an author to one or more recipients.

In order to send or receive e-mail messages, you need to create an account to access the service. You must need an internet connection for this purpose.

The messages you receive are stored in the mailbox created for your account. You can re-read the message anytime, delete it if you want to or even forward it to others.

- The address of the recipient is to be typed in the **‘to’** text field.
- The subject, if any, of the message is typed in the **‘subject’** field.
- The **‘message’** is to be typed in the message field.
- If you want to attach any files you can attach to the **‘attachment’** field.
- Click on **‘send’** in order to send the message.

Messages sent by e-mail normally reach a recipient’s account within seconds. Through mails you can send pictures, documents in addition to messages.

You can send anything to anywhere in the world.