

1. My journey with the famous bhajan Vaishnav Jana through Odissi Dance

I never danced be it an occasion in the family or the expression of joy. My hesitation gradually came to an end when I joined the AUM ARTS DANCE ACADEMY. My dance guru Smt. Suprava Mishra gave me the first opportunity within first few days of joining the dance academy. It was a dance drama based on Shri. Narsimh Mehta's well known famous bhajan "Vaishnav Jan". The very first time when we performed this dance drama, we were given the characters to portray. At that time even that was a difficult task for me. But after that programme there was a feeling of joy of performing on stage. That moment I realized that how small the role may be it is very important to portray it nicely on stage and get connected with the audience.

The second time when I got the opportunity to perform on "Vaishnav Jan", was at Kankaria Carnival. It was also a unique experience as I was performing at the carnival for the first time in front of huge audience.

Third time it was for Doordarshan. This was indeed a great opportunity. This time I got the chance to do some more dance steps. To perform for Doordarshan was a difficult task because we could not afford to do even a small mistake. Coordination was very important. But as it is said that practice makes a man perfect, daily practice for hours and maintaining the discipline, we could perform well. This time I got the opportunity to understand the portrayal of the bhajan with so many characters from history which could describe the essence of the bhajan.

Fourth time I was a part of this dance drama for a performance in "Vishwakosh___trust___". Even though it was the fourth time I was participating, every time I got the opportunity to learn and understand the nuances of the bhajan not only from my dance guru but also from my seniors and colleagues. We got a lot of appreciation after the programme from the very learned audience.

Dance is an art in totality as it a medium through which we can connect with the audience through feelings and expressions. So, the biggest challenge for me will be the connection with the audience and the journey of dance will continue with a dream of performing like our guru.

Dr Shikha Jain

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