

TEACHER'S GUIDE

FOUNDATION PROGRAMME FOR LITERACY
NUMERACY AND SKILLS

DANCE



GRADE 9

**TITLE OF CARD : Exploring rhythm through
classical dance and musical instruments.**



**MOE
MAHATMA GANDHI INSTITUTE
2026**

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GRADE 9

GUIDE TO EDUCATORS

Card 7

Title of Card:

**EXPLORING RHYTHM THROUGH
CLASSICAL DANCE AND MUSICAL
INSTRUMENTS.**

Competency:

Creativity

Students should demonstrate the ability to improvise within a given musical context.

Element 1.1

Improvise within a given musical context.

Performance Criteria

- **Level 1:** Create simple patterns in rhythm.
- **Level 2:** Develop short original dance sequences and improvise confidently in rhythm.

Purpose of the Activity

The purpose of this activity is to help students understand how rhythm and musical instruments guide movement in Indian classical dances. Through listening to instruments such as the Mridangam, Tabla, and Nattuvangam, students will explore rhythmic patterns and improvise simple dance movements inspired by the styles of Bharata Natyam, Kathak and Kuchipudi.

This activity encourages creativity, coordination, and musical awareness while helping learners connect rhythm with body movement.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify rhythmic patterns used in Bharata Natyam, Kathak and Kuchipudi.

- Recognise musical instruments such as the Mridangam, Tabla and Nattuvangam used to produce rhythm in Indian classical dance.
- Demonstrate simple rhythmic movements and footwork following the beat of the music.
- Create simple rhythmic patterns and short dance sequences within a given musical context.
- Improvise basic dance movements using rhythm in group activities.
- Participate confidently in rhythmic dance exercises and group performance.

Resources & Materials

- Audio recordings of rhythmic patterns from Bharata Natyam, Kathak and Kuchipudi
- Musical instruments such as the Mridangam, Tabla and Nattuvangam (or recorded sounds if instruments are not available)
- Speakers or sound system to play music
- Laptop, tablet or mobile device to play audio or video clips
- Short video clips demonstrating rhythmic sequences in the three dance forms
- Open classroom or dance space for movement
- Whiteboard and markers for explaining rhythm patterns (e.g., Ta Ka Dhi Mi, Dha Dhin Na)
- Optional: ankle bells (Ghungroo) to help students feel the rhythm during footwork practice.

Teaching Trajectories/Implementation guidelines.



Introduction

Rhythm plays a very important role in Indian classical dance. In dance forms such as Bharata Natyam, Kathak and Kuchipudi, dancers follow rhythmic cycles called tala, which are produced by musical instruments and vocal syllables.

Different instruments guide the dancer's steps:

- Mridangam – commonly used in Bharata Natyam and Kuchipudi
- Tabla – widely used in Kathak
- Nattuvangam – cymbals used to recite rhythmic syllables in Bharata Natyam

By listening carefully to these rhythms, dancers can create movements, improvise patterns and perform expressive sequences.



Activity 1

Listening and identifying rhythm

- Teacher plays short audio clips of rhythm from Bharata Natyam, Kathak and Kuchipudi.
- Students listen and try to identify the rhythm and instrument.
- Students clap or tap the rhythm following the beats.

Students practice basic rhythmic syllables such as:

- Ta Ka Dhi Mi
- Dha Dhin Dhin Na



Activity 2

Creating simple rhythmic movement.

- Teacher demonstrates simple rhythmic steps inspired by each dance form.

Examples:

- Bharata Natyam – simple adavus
- Kathak – basic tatkar footwork
- Kuchipudi – simple rhythmic steps
- Students repeat the movements while counting the rhythm.
- Students perform movements with the rhythm played on instruments.



Activity 3

Improvisation in small groups

- Students work in small groups.
- Students create a short dance sequence (4–8 counts) inspired by the rhythm.
- Groups perform their sequence for the class.



Assessment Criteria

Students will be assessed on their ability to:

- Identify and follow rhythmic patterns.
- Coordinate body movements with rhythm.
- Create simple rhythmic dance patterns.
- Show creativity when improvising movements.
- Perform confidently within a musical context.



Assessment Rubric

Criteria	Basic	Intermediate	Proficient
Posture & Body Alignment	Maintains basic posture with frequent corrections.	Maintains correct posture most of the time.	Maintains correct posture consistently and confidently..
Footwork Accuracy	Performs simple steps with partial accuracy.	Performs adavus / tatkar with correct foot placement.	Executes footwork clearly with precision and strength.
Rhythm & Timing	Follows basic rhythm with support.	Maintains steady rhythm with counts or music.	Demonstrates strong rhythmic control and timing independently.
Coordination	Coordinates movements with difficulty.	Coordinates hands, feet, and torso effectively.	Shows smooth and well-synchronised coordination throughout.
Balance & Control	Maintains balance inconsistently.	Maintains balance during most movements.	Demonstrates excellent balance and body control.
Clarity of Movement	Movements lack clarity and definition.	Movements are mostly clear and defined.	Movements are sharp, clean, and well-defined (anga shuddham).



Extension Activity

Activity 1

Creating rhythm with body percussion

- Students explore rhythm by using body percussion such as clapping, tapping their thighs, snapping fingers, or stamping feet.
- The teacher first demonstrates a simple rhythm pattern inspired by Indian classical dance syllables such as Ta Ka Dhi Mi.
- Students then work in small groups to create their own rhythmic pattern using body percussion.
- After practicing, they add simple dance steps inspired by Bharata Natyam, Kathak, or Kuchipudi.
- Each group performs their rhythm and movement sequence for the class.

Activity 2

Digital rhythm exploration

- Students watch a short video of rhythmic performances in Bharata Natyam, Kathak, or Kuchipudi.
- After watching, students identify:
 - The musical instrument used (for example Tabla or Mridangam)
 - The rhythm pattern
 - The type of dance movement performed
- Students then try to reproduce a short rhythmic movement sequence inspired by the video.



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