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**Kathak and Drama, co-relation and interconnection.**

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### Abstract:

Dance is as natural as humans' breath. It's a gift to mankind. Particularly India and oriental belief is deeply connected with performing arts. Kathak is one of the classical dance forms which emerged and flourished in India. Through gestures, expressions, costumes and makeup- even music is appealing to enthusiastic spectators. The paper will study the correlation Drama and Dance – as performing arts.

The attempt to study the non-verbal elements of dance will lead to foregrounding the evolution of Drama. Drama and its origin are as ancient and rooted as oral traditions to human kind. Dance and drama have always been interrelated. *Natyashashtra* is one of the earliest treatise on drama that discusses in detail all the aspects of drama and dance and to theorise on the performing art a whole and drama in particular. It would be interesting to see the close relation of dance and drama through *angik* and *sattvik bhavas*.

**Key words:** Rasa, Bhava, Mudras

Western theatrical culture evolved around 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. in three major domains- Comedy, Satire and tragedy. When Drama in west was to be experimented initially, in India we already had a treatise solely based on drama and its performance. Though drama is also experimented and is considered a literary form but is meant to perform, while dance is basically performative in nature. So, it would be interesting to trace the history and evolution of both these arts- dance and drama.

For drama, there are different views of different critics regarding the evolution. *Natyashashtra* is one of the earliest treatise on drama by Bharatmuni which is also called *pancham veda* (5<sup>th</sup> veda.) Describes its beginning from Treta Yuga, to avoid and banish lust and ill deeds of humans. To make them aware and to spread morals, drama was originated by the grace of Trinity. And literary history of Drama form suggests, it's beginning form ancient/ classical Greece. The origins remain obscure but by the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., dramas were held as a part of festivity celebrating the god Dionysus. In their non-dramatic performances had three movements; dithyrambic, lyric and epic. For this, J.A. Cuddon notes in *Literary terms and literary theory*, "Originally a Greek choric hymn, with mime describing adventures of Dionysius" (231) Hence, dance in drama and drama in dance is pre presented there since ancient times. Shikha Khare in her *Kathak- esthetical classical dance* notes,

"Origin of Kathak is believed from temples. Majorly it's form as like reading/ narrating any story. Which was to be narrated by aangik (body gestures) and mudras (hands gestures) and expressions( Bhavas) or vachik abhinaya( verbal expressions)." (1)

In *Traditions of Indian Theatre* M.L. Varadpandey writes,



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“The Kathaka is another class of story tellers, which is mentioned in the *Mahabharata*. Norvein Heins maintains that ‘there is continuity of some sort between the modern kathak and Karnataka profession of the distant past’. Kathaka is a story teller. By assembling his art with abhinaya and dance he gave it dramatic a stance. The Kathaka dance-drama of the day has been evolved out of the simple story telling sessions of the Kathakas of epical period. It is worth noticing that the Sutradhar of the Ras theatre of Vrindavan is also called Kathak.” (94)

“We find continuous traditions of presenting plays, prekshanakas in temples right from the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. or even earlier. Ample of epigraphical evidence is available to indicate that the temples were provided with Natyashalas to present dance-drama or prekshanakas before the preceding deities on festive occasions.” (49)

Danca and drama is represented with different elements and they are-Aangikam (gestures of limbs), Aaharyam (representation) , Vachika (verbal display) and Satvik (temperamental or conceptual) are types of Bhavas. Along with Bhavas and Rasas, there are other things also which makes it more effective- Make up, dialogs, music, movements, mudras, expressions. These are common elements which can be used by the artist in general but in different forms. In *Natyashashtra* Bharatmuni describes as:

“Aangika can be presented through bodily gestures (head, hand, hips, chest, sides and foot). Facial gestures (eyes, eyebrows, chin, cheeks, nose and lips) and can be brought by the movements.” (130)

M. Christopher Byrski says in his book *Methodology of the analysis of Sanskrit drama*,

“Now the following remark of the *Natyashashtra* makes it clear what type of gesture is implied and what implies. ‘The demeanour in words and in actions stemming from consciousness is called conscious 42) so we see here certain escalation of the range of actor’s expression. With verbal demeanour it was by speech and it becomes speech accompanied by bodily acting in the form of the Anagika abhinaya.” (13)

As the focus of Dance and drama is on movements and rasa, there are vibhava, anubhava, sthayibhav. In drama, one more element is added and that is Vachikam/ mode or way of speech which dance doesn’t have or have less. Other movements of eye, neck, nose, eyebrows, forehead, lips and cheeks are represented in same manner in both the forms.

In any classical dance form, hand gestures or Mudras have special emphasise upon. With the mudras artist



can express, without taking any help of expressions, language and movements and can convey to the audience. According to *Natyashashtra* and *Sangit Ratnakara* there are two types of division is given, Hasta mudra and Nrut hasta. From which majority of the Mudras are also used in Drama as well. In *Dance Gestures- the mirror of expressions*, it is said by Dr. P. Ramachandrasedkhar... "The characteristics of hand postures are to be enumerable by me. It is defined to be of two varieties- none combined i.e. single and combined."(79)

According to *Natyashashtra*, there are combined hands are 13 and non-combined are 24. Here, majorly used gestured shall be emphasised upon.

Pataka hasta- (straight palm and fingers) is used to lift mountain, show burden, uplift anything, to give blessings, to give signal to stop, to deny, to slap, to show gust of wind or wave of water. It is basically same for male and female for the application.

Tripataka hasta-(ring figure bent and rest straight) is to show tilak, to show the moon crescent, for the representation of marriage ceremony and to show gambol of monkeys.

Arala- (index finger is bent like a bow and the thumb is kept curved) shows happy and joyous emotions. This gesture contains beauty, surage, divine objects, majesty, blessings and other pleasant Bhavas.

Shikhar- (all the fingers are clutched as first and thumb is upwards, arched) shows ego, status, power, peak, completion of anything. It is used in both the ways.

Suchi mukkh- (only index finger pointed out) shows indication, to threat someone. This mudra has ants (circular movements suggest possessions, long study, and long day, tiresome). When anger is represented, majorly this is used.

Alapadma- (all he fingers are spread out and little finger and thumb is raised) is used to ask question, to think something absurd or irrelevant, or to ask majorly 'who are you?'. It is used in suspicion and frequently used in both the forms.

Hansasya- (index finger and thumbs are joined and rest three opened) is for positive emotions. It is to suggest fine, and can show softness, even used sometimes to indicate beauty.

Hamsapaksha- (three fingers are stretched and kept resembling wings.) shows flight, high ambition,



gentle touch, and when it touches to eye or chin, it indicates sorrow and pain.

Anjali- (two patak hasta are joined placed on breast) to seek blessing, or to show peace.

Though these gestures are in place of communication, but cannot communicate everything solely. There are situations which can't be understood without body gestures and expressions like, you can't show sad through hand gesture only, about to faint, terrified, disgusted, weak, pale, inert, sick, feverish, imprisoned, swiftly running or speaking in dream. In such circumstances, Actor or dancer must be able to create change of voice, and various Bhavas according to the situation. i.e. if anger is to be shown then curved eyebrows, perspiration, clinching of first, change in walk, heavy breath and louder voice would be there.

Dr. Puru Dadhich in his book "*Kathak Nritya Shiksha*" concludes the chapter,

"It is needed to be understood that there are several critics who say in different things as per their view. Nandikeshwar has shown faith in Bharatmuni's theory. Bharat has given 24 non-combined and 13 combined hands gestures, and Nandikeshwar believes only few from nrit hasta relevant. Just like this, *Abhinayadarpana* includes more 10 hand gestures and add few neck moments also. Same is the condition with other aspects"(37)

As there are gestures of hands discussed briefly, gestures of limbs, neck, eye, lips and bodily gestures also are important in Aangik and Satvik. Vachika is majorily based on through of voice, modulations and tone of delivery of dialogues which is more meant for Drama rather than Dance. And Aaharyam is also different. The basic things which are common is, prayer, greenroom, makeup and pre preparations of the performance, practice and very important is lighting and stage technicalities. These all the things are inevitable for the sake of good performance. And even Bharatmuni also counts as the most needed part of art are, spectator and critics.

Hence, we can see how these two different seeming forms are interwoven and linked. Story itself is conveyed but in different way. There are inter-connections even from ancient times.



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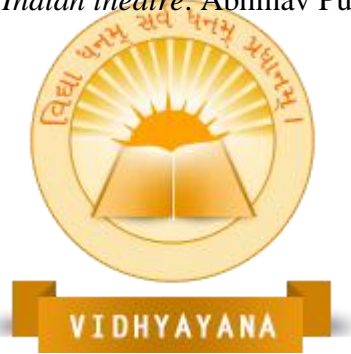
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