



The Analytical Study of Aharya Abhinaya in the context of Natyashastra

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Abstract:

In this study, an attempt has been made to understand the whole scenario of the Aharya abhinaya. Aharya abhinaya explains the outer representation of the performance. In Natyashastra, Bharatmuni mentioned four kinds of abhinaya Angika, Vacika, Aharya and Sattavika abhinaya. He also shows us significant of Aharya abhinaya, the other three types of abhinaya as much important as aharya abhinaya. Aharya abhinaya helps to reflect the character's emotions state and social background. Costumes, jewelry, make-up, set design and props these components help set the scene, atmosphere and mood, leading the audience's interpretation of the unfolding story. This framework is essential for achieving rasa or emotional experience for audience. In this analytical study it explores the various aspects of Aharya abhinaya and how it contributes significant role in enhancing the rasa experience for the spectator.

Keywords: Natyashastra, Aharya abhinaya, Costumes, Ornaments.

Introduction:

Aharya abhinaya is an important attribute of a performance. It is an integral part of the theatre performance. The scenic design is the visual language of the drama. It gives significant information for the drama, while also creating magnificent visual imagery that supports themes and styles of the play. The two major components of theatre performance are, first Story or literary and the Visual aesthetic. This study elaborately describes the different aspects of the stage design explained in the Natyashastra.

Natyashastra is a manual for the ancient Indian tradition of performing arts for example- dance, drama and music. It also guides for composing Dramatic plays and performance of theatre and Poetic works. Natyashastra written by

Bharatmuni, scholars believes that it has been composed between 200 BCE and 200 CE. The manual consists of nearly 6,000 shlokas (Verses) compiled into 36 chapters (Singh 2021).

Natyashastra has deeply influenced Indian classical and folk art. Natyashastra mainly explained about the concept of Rasa (emotion or aesthetic experience) and Bhava (feelings). There are eight primary rasas, each associated with particular bhava or emotion.

Natyashastra mentioned about Aharya abhinaya for the succession of performance, without Aharya or the physical appearance of the actor, no one can identify who and what character is. Bharatmuni described four kinds of abhinaya in Natyashastra- (1) Angika abhinaya, (2) Vacika abhinaya, (3) Aharya abhinaya, (4) Sattvika abhinaya.

Adya Rangacharya defined abhinaya in his book:

'The word abhinaya is usually translated as 'acting': but that, according to Bharat, is not correct. Abhinaya, from ni 'to carry', with prefix abhi- towards means that which carries (the meaning of the play) towards (the audience). So, words (Vacika) with physical gestures (Angika) to suit the emotion 'Sattva', as well as make up and costumes constitute Abhinaya' (Rangacharya 2019).

These four kinds of abhinaya are interconnected to each other. This study emphasis on the significance of Aharya abhinaya.

'Aharya abhinaya differs from the other varieties of Abhinaya in one particular. Abhinaya through words, emotions and bodily movements is wholly under the control of the actor. However, make-up, costumes and other accessories are external, hence a-harya. From this point of view the presents day lighting, stage designing and setting may be called aharya' (Rangacharya 2019).

In Natyashastra Bharatmuni described four types of Abhinaya:

1. Angika abhinaya is the expression through body (Sharira), face (Mukha) and movements or physical gesture (Cheshta). According to Bharatmuni, Angika abhinaya can be defined in three types, Anga (Major Limbs- head, hands, torso, waist and feet), Upanga (Minor Limbs- eyes, eyebrows and face) and Pratyanga (additional limbs- shoulder, arms and thighs).
2. Vachika abhinaya is the expression through speech and dialogue. According to Bharatmuni, Vacika abhinaya refers to the use of dialogue, poetry and songs as a means of delivering emotions in performance arts. It consists dialogues, lyrics, monologues and other vocal aspects that express the emotions of the characters in the performance.
3. Aharya abhinaya is the expression through costumes, make-up, masks and others essential elements of the play.
4. Sattvik abhinaya refers to communication and manifestation through emotions. According to Bharatmuni, Sattvik abhinaya refers to the portrays of emotions (Bhava) through involuntary physical responses and conveying the inner state of the actor, it is profoundly associates the actor's mind and body to the character's bhavas (emotions)

Here this study explores the various attributes of Aharya abhinaya in the performance.

Natyashastra's chapter Twenty-one, Aharya Abhinaya, derived from the Sanskrit term for "external representation," includes all external elements that contribute to a performance's visual representation for example- sets, props, lights, music, costume, make-up and masks. In the Natyashastra, it is discussed that the whole production of a natak depends on Aharya Abhinaya and the exterior representation associates with the rules of costume, make-up, set design etc.

Aharya abhinaya is interlinked with the nepathya because all preparation for the performance takes place in backstage. Aharya abhinaya can be classified into four types—

1. *Pusta*
2. *Alankara*
3. *Angaracana*
4. *Sanjiva*

The steps by step explanation to understand how Aharya abhinaya contributed into the creative process of Indian drama.

(1) types of Aharya abhinaya, (2) Importance elements of Aharya abhinaya and (3) Classification of Aharya abhinaya.

Types of Aharya Abhinaya:

- 1) Pusta: '*Pusta*' is the symbolic representation and stage props that create atmosphere with the help of cardboard and wood according to the story and theme(Srinivas 2014). Pusta again differentiated into three types.
 - I. Sandhima: This focuses on creating joined objects using materials like- leaves, bamboo, cloth, mat, leather, wood etc. It is important for establishing the atmosphere or locale and theme of the script.
 - II. Vyajima: This is specifically depicted dynamic approach through mechanical device. Vyajima is essential for scene changes and use for contributing theatricality and surprise elements in performance.
 - III. Cestima: cestima which is conveyed by cesta, for example physical movements and posture or gesture.
- 2) Alankaras: Bharatmuni explained in Natyashastra about Alankaras as an important element that magnify the aesthetic sense and emotional aspects of the dramatic performance. The idea of Alankara refers to the decorative components according to the characters social and economic background. This includes all form of accessories such as costumes, make-up, flowers, garlands, jewelry etc(Srinivas 2014). Collectively, these elements work together to generate a sensational and effective performance which mesmerizes the audience.

Alanakara can be distinguish in three different ways: Garlands, Ornaments and Costume. Manomohan Ghosh in his book *Natyasastra* described five forms of garlands:

- i. Encircling (Vestima)
- ii. Stretched (Vitata)
- iii. Grouped (Sanghatya)

- iv. Tied-round (Granthima)
- v. Hung-down (Pralambita)

Four types of Ornaments:

- i. Avedhya: that to be fixed by piercing the limbs (earring and nose ring, for example Kundala).
- ii. Bandhaniya: the ornaments worn around the arm (armbands or Angada).
- iii. Praksheepya: (anklets or nupur)
- iv. Aropya (necklaces or hemasutra)

Apart from this there are different ornaments for men and women also mentioned in Natyashastra according to their regions (Ghosh 1951).

Ornaments for men:

- i. Head ornaments: Crest- jewel (cudamani) and Crown (mukuta)
- ii. Ear ornaments: Ear ring (kundala), Ear pendant (Mocaka) and ear top (kila)
- iii. Neck ornaments: pearl necklace (Muktamani) and thread (sutra)
- iv. Finger ornament: finger ring (Anguliyamudra)
- v. Forearm ornaments: Hastavi and Valaya
- vi. Wrist ornaments: bracelet (Rucika) and Uccitika
- vii. Ornament above the elbow: Keyura (armlet) and Angada (arm band)
- viii. Breast ornaments: three stringed necklace (trisara) and flower garland.
- ix. Waist ornaments: Tarala and golden thread (Sutra)

Ornaments for women:

- i. Head ornaments: Sikhapasa, Sikhajala, Pindapatra (Khandapatra), the crest jewel (Cudamani), Makarika, pearl net (Mukta-jala), Gavaksa, Tilaka and hair net (Sirsa-jala).
- ii. Ear ornaments: Kundala, Sikhipatra (Khadgapatra), the braid (the hair), the lotus and Mocaka, Karnika, Karnavalaya, Patrakarnika, Karna mudra, Karnotkilaka (ear-top), Dantapatra and Karnapura.
- iii. Cheeks ornaments: Tilaka and Patralekha
- iv. Neck ornaments: Pearl necklace (Muktavali), the Snake group (Harsaka), Manjari, the jewel-string, the jewel-necklace, neck-chain (Sutra).
- v. Breast ornaments: Jewel net.
- vi. Arm ornaments: Arm-band (Angada), Bangles (Valaya), Varjura and Svecchitika.
- vii. Finger ornaments: Kataka, Kalasakha, Hastapatra, Supuraka and the ring (Mudranguliyaka).
- viii. Hip ornaments: Kanci, Kulaka, Mekhala, Rasana, Kalapa.
- ix. Ankles ornaments: Nupur, Kinkini, Jewel net (Ratna-jala), Padapatra.

Three kinds of Costumes:

- i. Clean or Pure or White: for auspicious occasion, marriage or any religious duty, male and female should wear clean or white costumes.

- ii. Mixed colours or middling clean: characters like, deva, danava, yaksa, Gandharva and raksasa should wear mixed colour costumes.
- iii. Soiled: Intoxicated peoples, lunatics and travellers should wear soiled clothes.

Costumes for men and women depends on their region, custom and other social status and conditions.

- 3) Angaracana: Angaracana is a significant component of Aharya Abhinaya, which attributes to the external representation of classical Indian dance-drama. It enhances character's personality through various body painting and ornament. Angaracana helps to create a visual storytelling without saying single word by the character. The physical appearance of the performer connects with the character's emotions and identity.

In Natyashastra it is mentioned that one should paint the body (Sharira) according to the area or region, cultural background and age of the character(Srinivas 2014). For that Bharatmuni describes four primary colours, White, Blue, Yellow and Red. While using these four colours, one can make secondary colour.

The Secondary colours are:

White + Blue = Pandu (yellowish white)

White + Red = Padma (lotus colour)

Yellow + Blue = Harita (green)

Blue + Red = Kasaya (deep red)

Red + Yellow = Gaura (pale red)

Adya Rangacharya mentioned elaborately uses of colour for different characters:

Colour	Divine Character
Gaura (pale red)	Gods, Yaksa, Apsara, Rudra, Brahma, Skanda and Sun
White	Moon, Brhaspati, Venus, Varuna, the stars, Ocean, Himalaya and Ganga
Red	Mars
Yellow	Mercury and Fire
Dark blue (syama)	Narayana, Nara and Vasuki
Dark blue	Daitya, Danava, sky and Yama
Various Colours	Bhuta, Pitrs (ancestors), Monkeys, Vidyadhara and Pannaga.

Now, characters from earth:

Colour or Complexion	Normal Character
Pale red or dark blue	Kings or Emperors
Pale red	Happy persons, Brahmin and Ksatriya
Plum (Badara)	Sages (varied in accordance with region, custom and age)
Dark blue	Vaisya and Sudra

4) Sanjiva: Sanjiva is a vital component of Aharya abhinaya that intensify performance through realistic and symbolic portrayal of living creatures or animal. Adya Rangacharya commented in his book, '*the entrance of a (living) animal on the stage is called Sanjiva*' (Ghosh 1951). Sanjiva focuses on the representation of fauna, their movement and gesture depicted on stage, it also uses for creating the natural ambience for the animal. By applying particular costume, props and movement, actors can develop a captivating and emotional experience for the audience. To representation of realistic and symbolic animal or creature on stage, Bharatmuni describes three types of Sanjiva in the context of Aharya abhinaya.

- I. Chatushpada: this type refers to four-legged animals, for example wild and domestic animals like- cow, horses etc. To shows this kind of creature performers can apply special costumes and specific body movements.
- II. Dwipada: this type includes two-legged animals, for example- human and birds. To show particular kind of creature performers can embraces specific behavior of the creature.
- III. Apada: this kind includes without legs, such as snakes or crawling creatures. Special body movements can indicate this kind of creature behavior.

Conclusion:

In the conclusion it is appears that no matter how much the performer uses the angika abhinaya, vachika abhinaya and sattvika abhinaya, the performance will remain incomplete without aharya abhinaya. Aharya abhinaya enhance the quality and aesthetic sense of the performance, it also contributed in narrating the story and emphasising the characters physicality and inner thought. It highlights the use of costume, jewelry, ornaments, garlands, make-up and stage props, which collectively produce a visual representation that communicates character's emotion and inner thought even before the actor performs any activity or dialogue.

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