



e-ISSN: 2319-8753 | p-ISSN: 2347-6710

IJRSET

International Journal of Innovative Research in
SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

IN SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY

Volume 13, Issue 10, October 2024

ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

Impact Factor: 8.524

9940 572 462

6381 907 438

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Role of Men and Women in Samanya Abhinaya: An Analytical Study

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ABSTRACT: In the Natyashastra, Bharatamuni described a complex and essential perspective of men and women's character in theatre. This study deals with the role of men and women emphasizing beauty, physical strength, aggression, love, sorrow and fear etc. This study also deals with how the categorization of men and women role described in the Natyashastra. The different elements of women's role such as grace, love and emotional depth in the performance are differ from energetic and vigorous role of men. In the Natyashastra, it is mentioned how these tactics helped to achieve the rasa.

KEYWORDS: Natyashastra, Samanya abhinaya, Love, Sorrow, Rasa

I. INTRODUCTION

Natyashastra is the ancient text written by Bharatamuni between 200 BC to 200 CE. It has 6000 slokas and 36 chapters. It elaborately explained the all the art forms such as dance, music and drama. This is the only Indian text which consists all the art forms. This study deals with the performance styles of men and women in the Natyashastra. It also discusses how men and women express their different emotions in different ways. In chapter twenty-four of Natyashastra, Bharatamuni elaborately mentioned about Samanya Abhinaya[1].

Samanya abhinaya depends on words (and their tone), physical gestures and sattva(emotions). When words, the tone and the gestures are suited to the emotion conveyed, it is Samanya (where all three are samana i.e. equal or suited to one another) abhinaya [2].

Samanya Abhinaya is an important aspect of Indian classical drama. It also an integral part of the music and dance through which performers express their feeling and inner emotions to the audience. This type of abhinaya focuses the balanced expression of actions and emotions (rasas), specifically in the context of sringara (love) and kama (lust) between men and women.

Samanya abhinaya is defined as a union of speech (vachika abhinaya) and bodily movements (Angika Abhinaya) that emerge from the inner or mental state of the performer. In the Natyashastra, Bharatamuni mentioned that this type of Abhinaya should begin from the combination of dialogue, body movements and emotional states to engage and entertain the audience[3].

There are ten types of natural and involuntary graces for women mentioned in the Natyashastra- Lila (when in a sportive mood), Vilasa (when in an amorous mood), Vicchiti (careless dress), Vibhrama (when affecting confusion), Kilakincita (babbling in a hysterical mood), Mottayita (when affecting indifference), Kuttamita (during an affected repulse), Bibboka (when affecting coldness), Lalita (leisurely lolling) and Viharta (when not responding) [2].

1. Lila: This grace inspired by love, when woman imitating her lover through words, gestures and costumes is called Lila.
2. Vilasa: this grace refers to change in gesture, posture, movement such as standing, sitting and walking. Some gestures are made by using hands, eye and eyebrows.
3. Vicchitti: when woman uses her careless arrangement of ornaments, garlands, clothing and unguents etc, this grace is known as Vicchitti.
4. Vibhrama: when various movements are made due to intoxication, jealousy, extreme love or joy etc, this grace is known as Vibhrama.

5. Kila-Kincita: this grace refers to mixed of various emotions such as smiles, laughter, tears, sorrow, fear, fatigue, vanity, desire, etc.
6. Mottayita: this grace refers to when a woman expresses her love through mimicking him (lover). Through silent looks she expresses her feeling that her lover has been returned.
7. Kuttamita: this grace refers to when lover touches woman's hair, breasts, lips etc. She feels cheerful from inside, but expresses displeasure and discomfort.
8. Bibboka: this grace refers to when a woman expresses indifference and disinterest through pride and self-esteem at having her desire fulfilled.
9. Lalita: this grace refers to when a woman uses various graceful gestures with her eyes, eyebrow, hands and feet, etc.
10. Vihrta: this grace refers to when a woman does not speak due to her nature or behavior and some pretext is known as Vihrta.

Graces when woman expresses without any effort are Sobha, Kanti, Dipti, Madhurya, Dhairya, Pragalbhya and Audarya [2].

1. Sobha (beauty): the grace which come to woman after the enjoyment of love.
2. Kanti: the grace which come to woman before the enjoyment of love.
3. Dipti: Intensify Kanti grace is known as Dipti.
4. Madhurya: when a woman shows self-control in all conditions including Dipti and Lalita.
5. Dhairya: when a woman shows peace and a state of mind that is free from rashness and pride.
6. Pragalbhya: when a woman shows fearless and maturity while doing and speaking anything.
7. Audarya: when a woman shows sense of respect and politeness whatever the situations come.

In the Natyashastra, Bharatamuni explained eight kinds of Heroines- Vasakasajjaka, Virahotkanthita, Svadhina-bhartrka, Kalahantarita, Khandita, Vipralabdha, Prosita-bhartika, and Abhisarika.

1. Vasakasajjaka: when the heroine of the play joyfully decorates herself and is adorned for the arrival of her lover. She is eagerly expecting her lover to union.
2. Virahotkanthita: when the heroine of the play suffering separation, her lover doesn't show-up due to some external affairs. She is all dressed up and expresses her sorrow and deep heartbreak.
3. Svadhina-bhartrka: this type of heroine refers to when her husband and lover are under her control.
4. Kalahantarita: this kind of heroine refers to when she is separated from her lover due to some reasons and she alienated herself from all the joyful activities.
5. Khandita: this kind of heroine refers to when she is betrayed by her lover and angry with her lover.
6. Vipralabdha: this kind of heroine deceived by her lover after making a tryst.
7. Prosita-bhartrka: this kind of heroine sits with undressed waiting for her lover.
8. Abhisarika: this kind of heroine shamelessly meets her lover without thinking about anybody[4].

According to Bharatamuni, there is ten kinds of stages of love, which vary from initial point to higher dimensions- Abhilasa, Cintana, Anusmrti, Gunakirtana, Udvega, Vilapa, Unmada, Vyadhi, Jadata and Marana.

1. Abhilasa: this the initial stage of love where woman yearning for the beloved and wants to feel deep connection and relationship.
2. Cintana: this is the obsession stage of love, where she tries to manifests her love by touching her bangles and girdle, showing her navel.
3. Anusmrti: this is the third stage of love, where woman thinks about her lover, cherishes old memories and dreams about her. She is in the uncomfortable situation and out of mind.
4. Gunakirtana: in this stage, woman expresses her love by wiping off tears. She retrospects happy-unhappy memories of her lover.
5. Udvega: this stage of love shows woman's different conditions such as restlessness, anxiety, sighs, heart-burning and lassitude. She expresses her love through these emotions.
6. Vilapa: this stage of love, woman showing by regretting and expecting him, she expresses her love by talking about her love.
7. Unmada: this stage of love, woman expresses through mentioning about her love all the time and hating others.
8. Vyadhi: this emotion manifest through physical sickness of woman such as by fainting, by headache and other painful conditions. Her condition is so bad that no remedies and desirable element works to make her healthy.

9. Jadata: This emotion manifests through fast breathing, relaxing the body, and reacting to wrong moments. In this stage of love, woman acts as an insensitive being, and she stops listening, speaking, and seeing anything.
10. Marana: this is the last stage of love where the woman expresses her unfulfilled love through death or marana [2].

In the case of men, they can also manifest their love through different ways such as by physical movements, walking around the park or garden, talking to their friends or mitra, and in the worst possibility they avoid meeting to anyone.

In the Natyashastra, Bharatamuni mentioned eight types of acting emotions for men: Sobha (brilliance), Vilasa (grace bearing), Madhurya (self-possession), Sthairya (steadiness), Gambhiryra (serenity), Lalita (sportiveness), Audarya (nobility) and Tejas (spirit) [2].

1. Sobha (brilliance): this personifies the emotions of men such as skill, bravery, energy, disdain for bad things and emulates the best character.
2. Vilasa (grace bearing): this reflects the heroism of the character which include brave look in his eyes and speaking with smile.
3. Madhurya (self-possession): this emotion refers to understanding and sturdiness of men in various circumstances.
4. Sthairya (steadiness): this emotion refers to steadiness of men under any situations and his duty such as Dharma, Artha and Kama.
5. Gambhiryra (serenity): this emotion refers to lack of change in expression under any situations such as anger, sorrow and fear.
6. Lalita (sportiveness): this emotion refers to sense of romantic (sringara) expression through love, tender and charming.
7. Audarya (nobility): this emotion refers to charitable behaviour and large heartedness of men towards his friends and enemies.
8. Tejas (spirit): this emotion refers to not tolerating behavior of the men.

These acting emotions are essential for men, through these emotions actor can enhance their performance and connect to audience. Now in the Natyashastra, six kinds acting mentioned through body- Vakya, Suca, Ankura, Sakha, Natyayita and Nivrttyankura[4].

1. Vakya: when actor (women/men) expresses their emotions through reciting and speaking dialogue in Sanskrit or Prakrit language is known as Vakya.
2. Suca: when emotions and gestures express the essence of the dialogue without saying any words or sentences.
3. Ankura: when the actor first expresses their inner feeling cleverly like Suca is known as Ankura.
4. Sakha: when the actors use their heads, faces, hands and feet to expresses their emotions.
5. Natyayita: when actor uses different gestures and body movements in the entry of the character to entertain the audience, through this actor evokes different rasa in the audience.
6. Nivrttyankura: when another actor dialogue is performed by Suca.

In the Natyashastra there is a special reference of celestial women also described. The celestial woman should be well dressed and more beautiful than normal woman. Their hearts always be in good place, they celebrated joyful life and spends more time with good companies. But once they come to contact with human, their circumstances will change and they start experience all the emotions such as love, anger, jealousy, fear, and sorrow.

II. CONCLUSION

The Natyashastra gives an elaborative framework for understanding gender roles in classical Indian drama. It gives the detailed characterizations of male and female, their performance styles and other features. This study is an attempt to understand the societal norms regarding men and women while portraying how these characters were performed on stage. Through this study we came to this point that, these descriptive method of classification of character in the Natyashastra emphasis not only artistic perspective but also cultural and social values during its time. These different ways of expressing emotions also helps to evoking rasas in the audience.

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