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## BODY POSTURES AND FACIAL ENACTMENT

Body postures and facial enactment have been discussed in depth in Indian theatre. In the Natyashastra written by Acharya Bharata, a detailed discussion of Mudrabhinaya and Mukhabhinaya is found under Angika enactment. The enactment done by organs, appendages and organs is called Angika enactment. In Natyashastra, its three types have been described- Physical i.e. the enactment performed through the movements and postures of the major parts of the body- head, hands, waist, sides, legs etc. Mukhaja i.e. the facial appendages- eyes, eyebrows, ears, lips, cheeks and enactment displayed through various movements and postures of the chin etc. and Chestakrita means acting done by the whole body through internal expressions or external gestures. Acharya Bharata, while describing the three types of Angika Abhinaya in minute detail, has mentioned the specific postures of the major body parts. Besides, emphasis has also been given on when and how these postures should be used. In this lesson, we will discuss this very thing way.



### LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, you-

- know the body posture (Mudrabhinaya);
- understand the application of mudrabhinaya in theatrical presentation;
- know the importance of mudrabhinaya in theatrical presentation;
- know about facial enactment; and
- know the importance of facial enactment in drama performance.

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## 17.1 PHYSICAL ACTIONS AND POSTURES DESCRIBED IN NATYASHASTRA

Body postures refer to those specific postures of the body through which a fix feelings or meaning is communicated to the observer. Today, actors are often given dance training for the purpose of developing understanding of body language. Acharya Bharata has also thought systematically in this context.

As mentioned earlier, Acharya Bharata has discussed in detail the actions and postures of the main body parts under Angika enactment in his text Natyashastra. He has mentioned six parts of the body- head, hands, chest, waist area of body, pelvis and legs. Apart from these six organs, according to some Acharyas, the cervix has also been counted among the organs.

### Enactment through Head (Shiravinaya)

In Angika enactment, thirteen head postures have been discussed first- Akampita, Kampita, Dhutz, Vidhuta, Parivahita, Aadhoota, Avadhuta, Achita, Nihachita, Paravruta, Utkshipta, Adhogata and Lolita. Here, while describing these thirteen types, he also explains the movements of the head and the method of its use in enactment. Along with this, he has mentioned two situations of Shirabhinaya (Body postures)- Riju and Svabhava. He has also called Riju as institution and nature as Prakrita. Both these positions of the head are used in performing tasks and expressions like darshan of auspicious objects, study, meditation, self-study and victory etc. Besides, Acharya Bharat has given instructions to accept the folk popular postures of Shirabhinaya in addition to the above mentioned thirteen types.

### Grivabhinaya (Enactment through Cervical)

Acharya Bharat has mentioned nine characteristics of grivabhinaya (Enactment through Cervical) following the movements of the head and their use- Sama (smooth state), Nata (position of the cervix when the face is tilted), Unnata (position of the cervix when the face is turned upwards), Tryasta (cervix bent sideways), Rechita (strong shaking or rotation of the neck), Kuchita (position of the cervix when bending the head), Anchita (turning the head backwards), Valita (turning the face sideways) and Vivarta (position of the cervix when facing forward). Apart from these, Acharya Bharat has also talked about accepting the cervical postures which are expressive of the sentiments of the people.

### Hastanudrasa (Postures through Hands)

Acharya Bharata has specifically mentioned Hastabhinaya (enactment through hands) in the ninth chapter of Natyashastra. The way in which the detailed and minute

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description of hand enactment is given, it seems that it must have been the main medium of Angika enactment. Acharya Bharata has described two types of Hastabhinyā- joined and non-joined. The number of non-joined hand gestures is 24 and the number of joint hand gestures is 13. These non-joined hand postures are- Pataka, Tripataka, Kartarimukha, Ardhashandra, Shurutunda, Mushti, Shikhara, Kapittha, Khatkamukha, Suchimukha, Padyakosha, Sarpshira, Mrigashirshaka, Kangula, Allapalva, Chaturmudra, Bhramaramudra, Hasvaktā, Hanspaksha, Sandash, Mukula, Urjanabha and Tamarchuda. After non-joined hand postures, he explains 13 types of joined hand postures- Anjali, Kapot, Karkat, Swastika, Katkavardhamanaka, Utsang, Nishadha, Dola, Pushpaput, Makara, Gajdanta, Avahitdha and Vardhamanaka.

Further, while explaining the general methods of hand gestures, Acharya Bharat has said- The actor should use hand gestures after observing their shape, movement, symbol and caste from his own experience. There is no such work of hands in the world which does not convey some meaning, but the form (or work) of the hand which has been seen many times, has been described here. Apart from these, the common people's hands associated with other meanings should also be used as per their wish along with gestures indicative of rasa and emotions. These hand gestures were used by men and especially women considering the region, time, usage and ability.

Acharya Bharat has also mentioned in detail 20 hand movements in the context of rasa and emotions on the occasion of drama performance. These movements are- Utkarshana (pulling up), Vikarshana (pulling hard), Vyakarshana (pulling out), Parigraha (taking an object), Nigraha (destroying), Aavahana (calling, indicating), Todana (chastising), Sanshaleshana (meeting, mixing), Viyoga (separating), Rakshana (saving), Mokshana (liberating), Vikshepa (throwing), Dhunan (trembling), Visarga (leaving), Tarjana (refusing), Chhedana (cutting), Bhedana (to penetrate), Sphotan (to open), Motana (to hesitate) and Tadana (to beat).

Underlining the function of hand gestures, he says- 'The users should use these hand gestures as per the public behavior and at the same time decide their use after seeing their reason, action, place, propagation, technic and action. In the context of hand circulation, it is also mentioned that the hand movements of good people should usually be on the forehead (near the forehead area), the hand movements of middle class people should be near the chest area and the hand movements of low level people should be in the lower part of the body. In Jyeshtha Abhinay, the promotion of these hand gestures should be limited, in the middle, there should be moderate promotion and in Adham Abhinaya, the promotion of hand gestures should be done in abundance. Uttam and Madhyam characters should use these hand gestures to express the meaning

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according to the classical signs but by adhama characters, folk activities should be followed in hand acting through the characters. But when there is an unusual use or time, the wise person may or may not combine the use of these Hastmudras (Postures through hands) in a form different from the described characters. Further, Acharya Bharat explains that hand-pracharas should not be used in such situations. When a character is sad, embarrassed, tormented by hatred and grief, dirty, asleep, dejected, unconscious, changed, sick, stricken with old age, overcome with fear, shivering or troubled with cold, intoxicated, mad, worried. In such a situation, planning of hands should not be done. In drama and dance, three types of body movements have been described- Uttana, Parshvaga and Adhomukha. Further, Acharya Bharat has given instructions regarding hand movements to the dancers and actors while discussing thirty hand movements of dance and four types of hastakarana.

### **Chest Area, Side Part of Body, and Abdominal Movements**

While discussing the Ura (Chest Area) movements and their use in acting, Acharya Bharat has described five types of Chest Area movements- Abhugna, Nirbhugna, Prakampita, Udvahit, Sama. Along with this, five types of side part of body (parshva) movements are mentioned- Nata, unnat, prasrita, vivartita, apasrita. Under Abdominal movements types, characteristics and their application, three types have been described- Sama, Khalva and Purna.

### **Waist Movements**

Five types of movements of the waist: After Chhinna, Nivritta, Rechita, Kampita and Udvahita, he has described five types of movements of the Uru (shins). These are the movements of the Uru (shins)- kampana, valana, stambhana, udvartana, vivartana. Bharata has said that other Uru (shins) movements should be adopted by the dramatist as per the worldly behavior.

### **Thigh and Feet Movements**

Similarly, five movements of the thigh have been accepted- Aavartita, Nata, Kshipta, Udvahita and Parivrita. After this, Bharat has discussed Padabhinaya (Enactment by feet). He has mentioned the five movements of the feet and explained their characteristics and their applications- Uddhattita, Sama Pada, Agartala Manchara, Aanchata and Kuchita. Thus, in the tenth chapter, Acharya Bharat has described the movements of the chest area, side part of body, abdominal movements, waist movements, thigh and feet movements.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.1**

1. What is Mukhaja Abhinaya (Enactment by face)?
2. According to Acharya Bharat, the human body is divided into how many parts?
3. How many functions of the head have been discussed by Acharya Bharat?
4. How many actions of the neck have been described in Natyashastra?
5. What is the number of combined and non-joined hand gestures?
6. How many hand movements have Acharya Bharat described in the performance of the drama?
7. What kind of efforts should be made by the noble and middle characters?

**17.2 MUKHABHINAYA (ENACTMENT THROUGH FACIAL ORGANS)**

The process of mukhabhinaya is accomplished through various movements and postures of the facial organs- eyes, eyebrows, ears, lips, cheeks and chin etc. Acharya Bharat has described the functions of various parts of the face very minutely.

The appendages are considered to be six- eye, eyebrow, nose, lips, cheeks and chin. These appendages are important in enactment. In their absence, face enactment is not possible. The eyes are considered to have three pratyangas- Tara i.e. pupillary, Put i.e. eyelids and frown. In this way, Acharya Bharat has classified the entire body into parts, organs and appendages and has explained the method of using Angika enactment.

**Enactment Through Eyesight (Drishti Enactment)**

Bharat has given eight types of eyesight- Sama, Sachi, Anuvrutta, Alokita, Vilokita, Pralokita, Ullokita and Avalokita. In Natyashastra, these types of eyesight have been called 'Darshan Bheda' and it has also been instructed that they should be used according to different rasas and emotions. Under 'Drishti Abhinaya', he combined the three aspects of Rasa, Permanent feelings and communicative feelings into thirty-six types are mentioned.

Acharya Bharat has accepted that Rasa and emotions are refined only through drishtis. He has considered the number of Rasta as 08, Permanent Emotion also as 08 and communicative feelings as 21.

- There is mention of eight types of Rasa-drishtis- Kanta, Bhayanaka, Hasya, Karuna, Adbhuta, Raudra, Veera and Vibhatsa. These eight eyesights express the eight Rasas.

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- The expressive views of the permanent emotions are discussed as affectionate, happy, poor, proud, fearful, contemptible, angry and astonished.
- Along with this, the characteristics of twenty types of communicative eyesights and their usage are described- Shunya, Malina, Brantha, Lajjanvita, Glana, Shankita, Vishanya, Mukula, Kunchita, Abhitapta, Jivha, Sulalita, Vitarkita, Ardhamukula, Vighranta, Vilupta, Akekara, Vikosha, Trasta and Madira. Thus, a total of 36 postures of eyesight have been approved. Bharata has given definite instructions regarding when and how these eyesights should be applied practically.

### Pupillary, Eyelid and Eyebrow Movements

Three parts of the eye are considered- pupillary, eyelid and eyebrow. It is possible to perform 'Drishti Abhinaya' only with the actions of these Pratyangas. That is why, Bharata has also described their activities in detail. He has discussed the nine movements of Pupillary and their use in enactment. These nine efforts are-

1. Bhramana (rotation in the middle part of both eyelids)
2. Valana (moving diagonally)
3. Patana (to take down)
4. Chalana (vibration)
5. Sampraveshana (carrying into the eyelids)
6. Vivartana (looking sideways)
7. Samudravritna (Raising Up)
8. Nishkrama (to draw out and remove)
9. Prakrita- (normal state)

The pupillary are also activated with the movement of the eyelids. These mention the characteristics and uses of nine endeavors -

1. Unmesha (opening of eyelids)
2. Nimesh (to be closed)
3. Spread (widespread)
4. Kunchit (shrinking of eyelids)
5. Sams (natural State)
6. Vivartita (lifting of eyelids)

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7. Sphurata (twitching)
8. Pihit (inactivity of eyelids)
9. Vitalit (closure of eyelids due to fear of shock).

The number of actions of the brow that occur with the movements of the pupils and eyelids is said to be seven -

1. Utsep (Raising both the eyebrows together or one by one)
2. Patana (to fall down together or one by one)
3. Brakuti (raising the middle part of the eyebrows)
4. Chatura (to lift up gently)
5. Kunchit (slowly knocking down)
6. Rechit (elegant raising of one eyebrow) and
7. Sahaj (natural state).

In this way, 'Drishti Abhinay' is accomplished with the simultaneous operation of the pupillary, eyelids and eyebrows.

### Nostrils, Cheeks, Lips, Chin, Face Activity

Apart from the eyes, there are also nostrils, chin, lips, cheeks and face which are important mediums of Mukhaja enactment. Bharat has given six characteristics of nostrils movement-

1. Nata (sticking of both the nostrils)
2. Manda (natural posture)
3. Vikrishta (swelling of the nostrils)
4. Sochchavas (state of the nose while inhaling)
5. Vikunta (nasal congestion) and
6. Sama (natural state).

Acharya Bharat has also discussed their use in various expressions. Further, he mentioned the six characteristics of cheeks posture-

1. Kshama (pitched)
2. Fulla (swollen)
3. Ghoorna (extended)
4. Kampita (trembling)

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5. Kunchita and
6. Sama (natural state).

While describing these characteristics, he said to use Ksham in sorrow, Fulla in happiness, Ghurna in enthusiasm and pride, Trembling in anger and happiness, Kunchita in the state of thrill, touch, coldness, fear and fever and Sama in the remaining states.

Also, six symptoms of lips and their uses are found-

1. Vivartana (shrinking the lips to form a beak)
2. Kampana (shaking of lips)
3. Visarga (spreading the lips)
4. Vinighuhan (Shrinking the lips inwards)
5. Sandashtaka (biting the lips with teeth) and
6. Samudgaka (normal state)

In the context of teeth, lips and chin, the characteristics of seven chin movements were described. These are- Kuttan (clenching the upper and lower teeth together), Khandan (rubbing the teeth), Chhinn (sticking the teeth together), Chukkita (spreading the teeth far apart), Lehita (licking the lips with the tongue), Sama (a few moments apart Hona) and Dashta (biting the lower lip with teeth).

After this, he explains the characteristics of facial expressions and their uses. These facial expressions are- Viniivritta (widely parted), Vidyut (rectangular open), Nirbhugna (mouth tilted downwards), Bhugna (somewhat rectangularly open), Vivarta (lips open) and Udvahi (obsessed mouth).

The color of the face should be used in the context of rasa bhavas because no matter how grand the enactment done with the branches, limbs and appendage, it does not become complete without the facial expressions. According to the situation, four characters of the facial expression have been described- 1. Natural, 2. Prasanna, 3. Red and 4. Dark. Acharya Bharat mentioned the use of simple facial color in the performance of spontaneous state and ragashunyata, Adbhuta, hasya and sringarasa-Prasana colour, in the performance of veera, Raudra and karuna rasa-Red color, in the performance of Bhayanak, Vibhatsa rasa black color should be used.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2

1. Which appendages have been described by Acharya Bharat?



2. How should eyesight be used?
3. How many Rasagya visions are there?
4. How many permanent feelings are there?
5. How many types of vision have been described?
6. What are the facial expressions?

### 17.3 POSTURES AND FACIAL EXPRESSIONS IN DRAMA

It is a specialized visual structure that transmits visual signals to the audience. When a dancer or actor adopts a particular posture in a performance, it means that he wants to convey a particular signal or draw attention to it. For example, placing the palm on the nose while pretending to sneeze. Apart from this, any other posture may be possible to display sneezing. In this context, it is the primary posture. This explains the process of sneezing from beginning to end. The second is sneezing. Which is an untimely or sudden search done from the subconscious mind. In this way, the first posture is mechanical and the second posture is a disorder caused by breathing problems. This act of sneezing communicates a signal to the audience that the person sneezing has a cold.

#### Types of Postures Used in Drama

**Sudden Posture:** Such postures which are not created deliberately but are created suddenly, have been kept in this category. Like posture of eating food, posture of drinking water etc.

**Expressive Posture:** This is the posture that differentiates us from animals. Often one person uses this posture to express his views to another person. In this, he attracts the attention of the person in front of him with various facial expressions. For example-smiling, being sad, crying etc.

**Mimicry Posture:** In this posture, we copy another person. This posture is often used to demonstrate another person, object or animal. For example, while imitating a dog, immediately sit on your knees and put your palm in front and lick your tongue.

#### Simpolic Posture

It is mainly used to exchange feelings and thoughts. It is used to express unexpressed feelings. Apart from this, there are others also like Technical posture, koota posture etc. which are often used.



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### 17.4 SYMBOLIC POSTURE: CHITRABHINAYA

Regarding the postures, Chitrabhinaya is important. Bharata has not given it a separate name of enactment. He has formulated 'Chitrapinaya' by giving prominence to angika movements in the coordinated form of Chatardik Abhinayas. Due to this, such a combination of the postures originated in the hearts of the audience. This creates images. In its description, Bharat has discussed symbolic postures that can impart knowledge about any natural scene (day, night), underground objects, sun, fire, non-human beings like lion, deer, wild animals, special movements, specific mood etc.

- Bharat explains the method of awakening the imagination of the audience through drama. Make Swastika with both the hands straight in the flag posture. By placing it on the head in an open form and looking at it from different viewpoints, effects, night, Pradosha, seasons, clouds, forest areas, vast water bodies, directions and planets and constellations can be told through them. By maintaining this posture with the head tilted downwards, an object placed on the ground can be shown. To show moonlight, happiness, air, juice and fragrance, the hand in the same posture can be shown moving upwards along with touch. Similarly, Bharat has discussed the special postures of display of Sun, Fire, Noonday Sun, substances that give pleasure and pain, serious and sublime feelings, necklace, feeling of omniscience, electric meteor etc. respectively.
- Bharat also brings special postures to represent the seasons. In the context of Hemant Ritu, he says that Hemant Ritu should be displayed by the noble and medium characters by acting like bending, shrinking their limbs and 'sagrah sevan' the sun and fire. Similarly, he explains the methods of displaying winter, spring, summer, rainy season, rainy season night and normal seasons respectively.
- In this sequence, he tells the plan of men and women to perform the angika activities according to their respective nature. Bharat also describes the actions performed in joy, sadness, anger, fear, intoxication, etc. Further, he also tells the methods of showing animals, birds, ghosts, vampires, mountains and tall trees, ocean, etc.

### 17.5 IMPORTANCE OF ENACTMENT THROUGH POSTURES AND FACIAL ENACTMENT IN DRAMA

The drama consists of dialogues and various actions of the characters. When an actor brings those characters to life, it is the actor's responsibility to portray the character through body language, actions, posture, and facial expressions. In theatre, communication of emotions has primary importance.

If we look closely, this process of communication on stage takes place in two forms- verbal and non-verbal. Verbal communication includes the dialogues and sounds spoken by the actors in the drama. Under non-verbal communication, the actor expresses through his gestures, body posture, actions etc. Instead of presenting the character through dialogues, special emphasis is given on the use of the character's body language, posture etc. Body language plays an important role in nonverbal communication. Being an actor, we should have knowledge of posture and facial acting. Body language consists of gestures, body postures and facial expressions.

Indian theater has been prevalent in a stylized form mainly due to dance, music etc. The concept of posture and face acting appears in this context to a great extent in a stylistic form. The postures and facial expressions described in Natyashastra indicate a style. However, while pointing towards the folk religion, Acharya Bharata has also said that theater actors should use postures etc. according to the nature of the people. This indication of folk religion clarifies the use of popular forms of postures.

At present, the tradition of use of posture and facial expressions that we see is relatively more realistic. Leaving aside dance and music based plays, their form is generally simple, easy and people friendly. Postures and facial expressions should also be considered from this point of view.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.3

1. What is sudden postures?
2. What is emotional posture?
3. What is meant by mimicry postures?
4. What is symbolic posture?
5. What is Chitrabhinaya?



### WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT

- In the Natyashastra written by Acharya Bharata, a detailed discussion of mudrabhinaya and mukhabhinaya is found under Angika abhinaya.
- Physical postures refer to those specific movements of the body through which a certain feeling or meaning is communicated to the observer.



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- In Natyashastra, the actions and postures of the main body parts have been discussed in detail under Angika Abhinaya.
- The way in which the detailed and minute description of hand acting is given, it seems that it must have been the main medium of Angika Abhinaya. Acharya Bharat has described two types of Hastabhinyā- Sanyut and Asanyut. The number of non-joined hand gestures is 24 and the number of joint hand gestures is 13.
- The process of facial expressions is accomplished through various gestures and postures of the facial organs- eyes, eyebrows, ears, lips, cheeks and pair of lips.
- In Natyashastra, these differences of vision are called Darshan Bheda i.e. ways of seeing. They should be used according to different rasas and emotions. Under Drishti Abhinay, thirty-six types including Rasa, Permanent feelings and communicative emotion have been described.
- In the context of postures, acting is also important. It is related to Angika Abhinaya only. In its description, Bharat has discussed symbolic postures. Through which knowledge can be imparted about any natural scenes (day, night), underground substances, sun, fire, non-human creatures like lion, bear etc., wild animals, special movements, special mood etc.
- At present, two methods of postures and face acting are prevalent- realistic and stylistic.



### TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. What is meant by postures?
2. Write about the functions of appendages in facial expressions?
3. Write about the lokdharmi use of gestures and facial expressions?
4. Discuss the postures and facial expressions described in Natyashastra?



### ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

#### 17.1

1. Use of facial appendages like eyes, feet, ears, lips, cheeks, chin etc. in case of expression.

2. Six organs: head, hands, chest, waist, pelvis and legs.
3. Thirteen
4. Nine
5. 13 and 24 respectively
6. 20 actions
7. Corresponding to classical characteristics

**17.2**

1. Six
2. According to rasa and emotions
3. Eight
4. There are eight types.
5. Eight
6. Natural, Prasanna, Red and Dark.

**17.3**

1. Such postures which are not created deliberately but are created suddenly, have been kept in this category.
2. Through it, actor attracts the attention of the person in front of him with various facial expressions.
3. In this posture we imitate another person.
4. This posture is mainly used to exchange feelings and thoughts. It is used to express latent feelings.
5. In this, some combination of postures of particular body parts is done which creates imaginary pictures in the heart of the audience. In its description, Bharat has discussed symbolic posture.



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## **MODULE - 6**

### **Form and Types of Folk Theatre**

In this module, learners have been introduced to the nature and different types of folk drama as well as the role of music and dance in folk drama.

18. Major Folk Theaters and Folk Dances of India
19. Role of Music in Folk Theatre