



RASA IN INDIAN POETICS

Dr. N. Sanatomba Singh

Assistant Professor,

Manipur University, Imphal, Manipur-795001

ABSTRACT:

Rasa-Pleasure or contentment procured by reading, listening or perceiving a literary piece is taken into consideration as the ultimate destination of that literature. The oldest Veda –The Rigveda spelled out the term as “Shadarasa” means the six tastes viz. Bitterness, sweetness, Sourness, Saltiness, Astringent and Pungency mixed together to form a single taste called Shadarasa or Sarbat. This taste was used by the Rishis in the days gone by to enrich their stamina and strength. Correspondingly the Sthayibhava (stagnant emotion and feeling setting down in the yolk of a person) mingles up (Sangyog) with Bibhava, Anubhava and Sancharibhava to get to (Nispatti) the Rasa. In the western literary criticism, it is anonymously accepted that giving pleasure to the audience is the soul aim of art and artistic things. Though it might have different in its nomenclature, the western and eastern perspectives of criticism are matching in its essence.

KEY WORDS:

Munibar, Sarbat, Shadarasa, Natyashastra, Kavyarasa, Bharatamuni, Kavyarasa, Sthayibhava, Rati, Krodha, Alaambana, Udipana, Swatic etc.

INTRODUCTION:

Bharat is rich and fertile in the field of art and literature from the time immemorial. Beda, Upanishad(text about meditation), Mahapuram (Oldest documents) were the handouts of our ancestor. Veda means knowledge which was composed of oldest layer of Sanskrit. There are four Vedas in Indian philosophy.-The Rig Veda, The Yajur Veda, The Sama Veda and the Artharva Veda. Natya Veda written in Natyashastra is considered as the fifth Veda. Taken lyrics from Rig Veda, Music from Sama Veda, the language and gesture from Yajur Veda and lastly Aesthetic value or the so called Rasa from Atharva Veda God Brahma formulated the Panchama Veda –the Natya Veda.

OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER:

Enduring the deep knowledge of Indian Shastras specially the Natya Shastra of Bharatamuni to accoutrements concerning literature is the pivotal objective. This paper also targets to incubate the elements of literature specially the Rasa. To go through the Rasa Theory of Indian Poetics enables us to get the knowledge revealing what is the untold pleasure i.e. rasa we get from literature. The abstractness of rasa can be materialized in a systematic way by defining, denoting the elements of attaining rasa and the step by step process of establishing rasa.

SCOPE OF THE PAPER:

To trace the origin of Rasa in the Indian Parampara of Aesthetic philosophy with particular references to Rasa to enlighten the readers specially the enthusiast writers, poets to pave their visionary path in their creativity. Literary critics may also get fundamental components in the meadow of literary examination specially of What is Rasa and how it is felt in the hearth of the audience unfathomably. .

METHODOLOGY OF WRITING THE PAPER:

Collecting various books, journals, biography and writings of Acharyas of Indian Poetics, e-journals, Wikipedia sites relating the Indian Poetics theory and related literary magazines and pore over them to correspond as secondary Resources are the methodology applied to chalk down this Paper.

WHAT IS RASA?

The Rig Veda is the book which is considered to be one of the oldest books in India and the world. In the Rig Veda, it is said that the Munibar(Shadhus or spiritual gurus) who are in search for the ultimate happiness and meaning of life would often consume a juice which allow them to remain in penance (tapasya) for years in the wilderness of the forests. The name of the juice is called as Sarbat which they store in their kamandalu pot. In this way, the Sarbat that the Gurus would consume consists of six tastes-sour, sweet, salty, pungent, bitter and spicy. Since it consists of six varieties of taste, this Sarbat is also known as Shadarasa. From the connotation of the word Sarbat-Shadaras, the derivation of the word Rasa comes in.

The enjoyment that comes from consuming the Sarbat-Shadarasa that the Munnis would consume has to be with our sensory organs. It comes from the external chemical reactions (Rasayan) which results into a wonderful taste on our lips when consumed. But when we talk of Kabyarasa we are only going to use the reference of the term Rasa from Shadarasa. In simple terms, Kavyarasa is the sweetness of poetry and literature. The characteristics of Kabyarasa can be said that it has to be tasted by the audience, the taste has to come from the literature, and its taste has to be consumed by the mind and felt by the heart. The pleasure that comes from external reactions like Sharbat is not permanent in nature. But the sense of sweetness that comes from Kavyarasa is everlasting and eternal. It can be passed on from generations to generations. It is also believed that the origination of the Natyashastra of Bharatamuni comes from the

culmination of Lyrics from the Rig Veda, Music from the Sama Veda, Acting from the Yajur Veda and Rasa(pleasure) from the Arthavaveda resulting in aNatyaveda. The Natyashastra talks in details about kavyarasa in the 6th and 7th parts of the book.

Rasa therefore can be defined as that universal, inexpressible feeling of pleasure that stems its roots in the heart when the reader/listener is an audience to the literature. This Rasa is an essential feature of any piece of literature and it can be said as its soul. But the degree of its presence varies from one another and hence the quality of the poetry and literature also differ from one another.

ON WHOM IS RASA GENERATED?

Whenever we are in a close proximity with any piece of literature and we enjoy it as we read or listen, there is an emergence of an extreme pleasure that stems in our hearts and soul which cannot be expressed in our limited vocabulary. This pleasure is referred to as Rasa. On whom is this inexpressible pleasure generated?

It can be said that it is the audience including both the listeners and readers who feel this immense pleasure. So, it is generated only in the audience who has experienced the poetry and the literature.

But, this view of the rasa being generated only in the audience was criticized by Dr.Nagendra. He questioned the authenticity of literature and asked how a literary work can generated Karuna Rasa (produced in the death of near and dear ones) when the writer themselves have not wept when they were writing it. In visual literary art forms, various actors would perform their characters as if it had happened for real in front of the audience. So, the actors need to be involved in the whole scheme of things and feel the grief and despair for the audience to feel the exact emotions of that tragedy.

Dr.Nagendra also classified three kinds of audience. The writers are considered to be the first audience. The audience that had enjoyed the literature in visual form are placed as the second audience. Third, the readers and listeners are classified as the third kind. A piece of literature is considered to be of high quality only when satisfaction occurs on all the three levels of the audience. Before writing a work of poetry and literature, a lot of thought goes through the minds of writers and to construct those streams of thoughts into literature is a heavy task for them. Moreover, they must have gone through the ups and downs of the varied emotions that are generated as they proceed with the literature. The writers must have been lost in the wilderness of the Rasa that he himself had generated when intricate thoughts had seeped into his mind when he was trying to write poetry and literature. Hence, they are considered to be the first audience. Then, to put life into the work of the writers, the actors would utilize all their skills to present the work of art to an audience. The actors themselves feel the emotions on stage and instilled with the rasa. And, they distribute the Kabyarasa to the audience. Thus, they have become the second audience to the literature. Lastly, the third audience is the conventional audience since time immemorial, that is, the listeners or readers.

Therefore, the Rasa that finds its roots in the ultimate trinity of the writer-actor-reader is considered to be the ultimate Rasa. A literary work becomes a work par excellence only when it touches the Kabyarasa that stems from all the three stages of the audience.

REQUIREMENTS OF CREATING RASA:

How does the Kavyarasa get generated in the minds and hearts of the readers? The answer to this question lies in the understanding of the materials that are required in the generation of the rasa. When then four major internal emotions in the hearts and the minds are instigated, when one experiences a ride in the feeling of one emotion to

another, finally it results into the creation of the Kavyarasa. These emotions are known as Bhab and Ihul in Manipuri. The four sentiments which are associated with literature and thereby giving us a pleasurable rasa are- Sthayibhava, Bibhava, Anubhava and Byabhicharibhava/Sancharibhava.

1. **Sthayibhava-** “Sthayi” means constant or stagnant. “Bhava” means the sentiments or emotions. So Sthayibhava means that the dormant emotions. Every audience member has 11 emotions in their hearts that lie still and stagnant. These inactive and constant emotions that lie secretly in their inner self find expression when the right moment comes. These emotions are referred to as Sthayibhava. In the field of Literature, Sthayibhava are divided into 11 parts-

- a. Rati- the emotions of love and desire
- b. Haas- the emotions of laughter
- c. Shok- the emotions of sorrow
- d. Krodh- the emotions of anger
- e. Utsah- the emotions of courage
- f. Bhoi- the emotions of fear
- g. Jagupsa- the emotions of contempt
- h. Bishmoi- the emotions of wonder
- i. Sham/Nirbed- the emotion of contentment
- j. Batsal/Sneha- the emotion of love and care of one’s family
- k. BhagabatAnurag/ Pujyarati- the emotion of devotion to God

2. **Bibhava:**

“Bi” means togetherness and “bhava” means sentiments. Those emotions which are in conformity and togetherness with the characters in the work of literature are referred to as Bibhava. Bibhava helps in the awakening of the Sthayibhava that lies dormant in the audience. It can be of two types- Aalambana and Uddipana.

- a. **Aalambana-** Aalambana refers to the character or the actor present in the piece of literature. The main character that carries the whole plot on his shoulder and remains the protagonist is known as the AalambanaBibhava. For example, in the epic of Khamba and Thoibi of Manipur, the characters of Khamba and Thoibi are AalambanaBibhava.
- x. **Aashroi-** Aashroi means the instigator. In order to create a rasa/pleasure in the minds of the readers and listeners, there is a presence of one instigator that makes the rasa bloom beautifully in the work of literature. That instigator is referred to as Aashroi. For instance, When Khamba came to the house of Telhei to perform some work at his courtyard; it instigated the feeling of love and desire in the heart of Thoibi. Thereby, the presence of Khamba had instigated the Sthayi Bhava Rati in Thoibi. The active

instigator Khamba can be called Aashroi and the passive instigated Thoibi remains Bishoi.

- y. **Bishoi**- it means the inactive and passive one who was instigated by the Aashroi. The second person which has been instigated to give a deeper meaning to the literary work is the Bishoi. The example of Thoibi is presented as above.

- b. **Uddipana**- This is the kind of Bibhava which helps in the awakening of the Sthayibhava and it is associated with the environmental surroundings and conditions and referred to as UddipanBibhava. It is of two types- Aalambangat and Watabarangat.
 - i. **Aalambangat**- Those associated closely and in close proximity with the Aalamban are called Aalambangat. Aalamban is the main character of a given plot and Aalambangat is the close things associated with the protagonist himself. For instance, when Khamba was mercilessly tortured in the epic of Khamba and Thoibi, all his blood that was scattered in the roads, the skin that got torn, the flesh that was lying, the wounds on head with all the bruises and all add to the formation of the Aalambangat. These were quite in unison with Khamba but separated from him and were there all around him. These are known as Aalambangat, those which were closely in nearness with the Aalamban.

 - ii. **Watabarangat**- Those which are quite different from the Aalamban yet lies near to it are known as the Watabarangat. Though it remains separate from the Aalamban, it helps in the improvement of the quality of the Kabyarasa. For example, in the epic of Khamba and Thoibi, when Khamba was inhumanely tortured and tied around the legs of an elephant, there was the presence of a very grim environment. Some of them can be that of the dogs barking loudly, the winds blowing heavily and the frightening darkness of the night would produce Karuna Rasa (the emotions of melancholy) and create a feeling of fear and grim environment which is a form of Batabarangat.

- 3. **Anubhava**- “Anu” means acting and “bhava” means emotions. Hence, the emotions that are generated with acting are defined as Anubhava. So, through the characterizations of the able skilled actors and generating a rasa in the hearts of the audience. The awakening of the dormant emotions by the Bibhava generated when the actors become one with the stage results into the Anubhava. It can be divided into four types. They are-
 - a. **Anggik**- Those acting of the characters in the literature that are expressed with the parts of the body. It may include winking and various other facial expressions which become a part of AnggikAnubhava.

- b. **Bachik**- Those acting of the actors present in the literary work which are expressed by the way they converse or talk with the other characters. The words of love, hatred and disgust are all parts of the BachikAnubhava.
- c. **Aharya**- The dressing sense of the characters in the plot which expresses different emotions is also a form of acting referred to as AharyaAnubhava. It includes the costume and the make-up. For example, there are different kinds of dresses that the actors wear to express mourning. In Manipur, the ladies would wear white and pink and malem-leisha (a form of traditional sindoor applied on the forehead). Then, on happy occasions people would apply powder and lipstick to express their feelings. These are known as AharyaAnubhava.
- d. **Shwatic**- It refers to the inborn and raw talent that emerges in the characters of the literary work which reaches its zenith at one point and fades all of a sudden again. It is about how when the actor becomes one with the art form. For example. When the actor actually cries in the play or when his voice shakes as he was too emerged to it. He sometimes experiences a great level of Karunarasa that he loses his mind in the absolute emergence into his character and a sense of fear and hesitation can be seen in his eyes. These are called ShwaticAnubhava. There are eight kinds of ShwaticAnubhava. They are as follows-
- a. Stambha- the feeling of tiredness
 - b. Swed – the feeling of hesitation
 - c. Romanch- the feeling of fear
 - d. Sworsad- the breaking of flow of speech
 - e. Bepthu- trembling voice
 - f. Beibarnya- becoming purple skinned
 - g. Ashru- the feeling of crying and weeping
 - h. Praloi- the feeling of confusion
4. **Bybhicharibhava/Sancharibhava**- We know that the dormant Sthayi Bhava are awakened by the Bibhava and the emotions of the actors transcends from the actors to the audience. Hence the emotions that are expressed in the transitory position between the characters in the literature and that of the audience can be referred to as Bybhicharibhab. Similar with that of the SwatikAnubhava, Bybhichari Bhava is also a sentiment which is temporary in nature and emerges all of a sudden and does not last for long. In the field of literature, there are 33 kinds of Bybhichari Bhava. Some of them are- Nirbed (the feeling of loneliness), Glani (the feeling of tiredness and dullness), Shangka(the feeling of doubt), Asuya(the feeling of jealousy) and Shad(the feeling of intoxication).

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