

ART AND MENTAL WELL BEING: ROLE OF INDIAN AESTHETICS THEORIES LIKE RASA IN MENTAL WELL BEING

Sushant Ambokar

M. A. (Archaeology), BFA (Painting), Mumbai



ABSTRACT

Introduction: *Rasa Siddhanta is a foundational concept in Indian aesthetics deeply tied to visual art, literature, music and performance. The term Rasa refers to the aesthetic experience or flavors that evokes emotion, transcending the physical stimuli that affect the mind and soul. Art intentionally or unintentionally evokes emotions. Art allows people to engage with their own emotions leading to personal insight and well-being. The concept of Rasa Siddhanta plays a crucial role in mental wellbeing as it connects with the emotional and spiritual fulfillment. Modern Art therapy often draws on principles similar to Rasa Siddhanta, where therapists encourage individuals to explore various emotions through creative expression aiming for emotional release and mental balance.*

The role of Rasa in art mental well-being/catharsis: *Art helps express emotions that might be difficult to communicate through words. Engaging with Rasa can lead to emotional release, a person can process emotions and gain a deeper understanding of their emotions. It helps to process feelings of self-awareness and emotional release.*

Spiritual growth and mindfulness: *The process of experiencing Rasa can lead to self-realization and emotional cleansing promoting mental peace and the process of creating the art demands focus which in terms fosters or state of mindfulness; gives a piece of mindfulness peace.*

Cultural and social engagement: *Art can be a shared experience providing opportunity for social interaction collaboration and community building and meaningful social interaction to contribute emotional health and reduce the feeling of loneliness.*

The current paper attempts to explore how 'Rasa' has the potential to balance and nurture the mind leading to a more harmonious and mentally healthy life.

Keywords: *Emotional, Rasa, Art, Emotions, Indian, Viewers, Siddhanta, Cultural, People, Feelings.*

Introduction

The topic is on Understanding the idea of Rasa Siddhanta, which has its roots in Indian aesthetics, helps enhance the discussion of how art serves as an emotional medium. The ancient methodology which has its roots in Bharat Muni's Natyashastra, defines rasa as the emotional basis that an artwork or performance creates in an audience.

Rasa Siddhanta examines how art may stimulate a variety of emotional reactions, helping people in connecting with the deepest part of their mental state, through particular emotional categories, or rasas such as shringara (love) hasya (joy) karuna (sorrow) and others. Rasa Siddhanta sheds light on the connection between psychology, emotion, and art by defining emotions and explaining how they might be experienced and transmitted successfully. It demonstrates that art is more than just entertainment, it is a powerful medium for emotional catharsis (release), emotional connection, deep feelings, and even a sense of peace. In the end, the idea emphasizes how art may mirror and enhance human psychological emotions, making it an essential instrument for audience and artists to explore and look into to understand the multifaceted nature of human emotions.

The idea is that art can reflect the advantage of human emotions and enable viewers to identify with them on a personal level. According to Rasa Siddhanta people are able to understand their emotional reactions and grow personally and mentally by relating with situations and characters portrayed in art. Rasa Siddhanta is a unique framework for understanding the relationship between art and mental health since it practically goes beyond the field of aesthetics and suggests that art has the capacity to heal, promote mental health, and act as a guide towards emotional awareness, balance, and calm.

This study attempts to answer important issues about the responsive rasas in modern situations by examining the emotional influence of art through the perspective of Rasa Siddhanta. The paper's format comprises a review of appropriate research, an investigation of methodology, and a discussion of the results. In the end, this study aims to

shed light on the deep relationships that exist between art and emotional experience, encouraging more reflection on the value of aesthetics in our lives as well as their feelings and thoughts.

Methodology

This artistic study will be carried out using textual materials, and the results can be compared with works of art. The grounded theory research methodology, which is based on a comparative analysis of the available sources. It is hard to include every aesthetic perception, artistic creation, and feeling produced during the course of a year in Indian art and Aesthetics. Therefore, in addition to essential written content, this article will use a few images as case studies.

Analysis

What is Rasa Siddhanta?

Rasa Siddhanta refers to the Indian traditional theory of aesthetics primarily developed in the era of classical Indian performing arts literature and visual arts. It is based on the concept of rasa which means essence or flavor in Sanskrit. This theory was first expounded by Bharat muni in his work of Natyaveda later on its development into Natyashastra (around 200 BCE to 200 CE) in which he explained rasa as the emotional essence that an artwork or performance evokes in the audience.

According to Rasa Siddhanta there are eight primary Rasa.

- Shringara
- Hasya
- Karuna
- Raudra
- Veera
- Bhayanaka
- Bibhatsa
- Adbhuta

Later on the Ninth Rasa Shanta Rasa (peace, tranquility) was added by the philosopher Abhinavagupta, an influencer commentator on the Natyashastra. Each rasa is associated with particular emotional response in the audience and the aim of the artist is to evoke these through their work. It is continuous to be understanding the emotional and aesthetic dimensions of the artistic expressions. Rasa highlights the significant influence that art may have on the human experience and provides an essential framework for exploring the psychological elements of art. Developing an understanding of rasa helps us to better understand the complex connection between emotion and art.

The ideas of Bhava, Vibhava, Anubhav originate from visual and performing art.

Three primary elements are needed to evoke these Rasas: Vyabhicāri Bhāva (Temporary States), Anubhāva (The impacts), and Vibhāva (The factors). When these components come together, they create Sthāyi Bhāva (Major Emotion), a long-lasting emotional influence that eventually leads to Rasa, or the "essence" of the emotional experience.

The elements of Rasa Siddhanta are essential for developing mental health in addition to their aesthetic appeal. People can explore, express, and process complicated emotions in a way that promotes emotional healing, empathy, and self-awareness by invoking and experiencing various Rasas.

Vibhāva(The factors):

The fundamental element of Rasa Siddhanta is vibhāva. It includes the circumstances and events that precede the emotional experience. Vibhāvas include Uddīpana Vibhāva (the external stimuli or environmental factors that

enhance the emotional impact) and Ālambana Vibhāva (the main reason or characters in the art form). For example, Śṅgāra Rasa (Erotic) is based on the lovers (Ālambana Vibhāva) and the scene (moonlit night or lovely garden, as Uddīpana Vibhāva) in a romantic picture or dance.

Anubhāva (Impacts):

The term "anubhāva" describes the outward display of emotions through physical actions or expressions. These are the outer results or depictions of inner emotions in the art form, frequently expressed through movement, body language, facial expressions, and gestures. For example, in a theatrical performance, a character's happy gestures and facial expressions can communicate Hāsya Rasa (Comic), causing the audience to laugh or feel entertained.

Vyabhicāri Bhāvas (Temporary States):

The temporary feelings that support and strengthen the primary emotional state are called Vyabhicāri Bhāvas, or Sanchari Bhāvas. Though they are momentary or secondary emotions, they add dimension to the primary emotion being felt. Karuṇa (Compassion or Sorrow) can be strengthened in a tragic scene by a brief feeling of helplessness, fear, or longing (Vyabhicāri Bhāvas), which enhances the audience's involvement with the story.

Sthāyi Bhāva (The Major Emotion):

The primary emotional state created and maintained by the performance or artwork is known as the Sthāyi Bhāva. Vibhāvas, Anubhāvas, and Vyabhicāri Bhāvas increase and stabilize this current emotion, transforming it into Rasa and giving the spectator an experience beyond conventional emotions. The unbreakable courage of a hero, for example, can result in the Sthāyi Bhāva of Vīra Rasa (Heroic), inspiring courage and admiration in the audience.

The Role of Rasa Siddhanta in Visual Art:

Rasa Siddhanta's focus on emotional expression is one of its main functions in visual art. Through their art, artists frequently seek to evoke particular feelings, such as joy, sadness, love, or terror. Artists can intentionally include elements that speak to the nine rasas—Shringara (love), Hasya (humor), Karuna (sorrow), Raudra (anger), Veera (heroism), Bhayanaka (fear), Bhibhatsa (disgust), Adbhuta (wonder), and Shanta (peace)—into their works by knowing these rasas. For example, a painting depicting a love scenario would evoke Shringara with soothing colors and forms, whereas a dramatic depiction of a war might evoke Raudra with dynamic compositions and striking contrasts. This intentional manipulation of visual elements allows artists to create works that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also emotionally impactful.

Also, Rasa Siddhanta highlights how important cultural context is for the interpretation and production of visual art. Depending on the audience's and artists' cultural backgrounds, an artwork may stimulate a wide range of emotional reactions. For instance, cultural rules and regulations, habits and stories may have an impact on how love is portrayed in Indian art.

Understanding the cultural significance of various rasas allows artists to produce works that have a deeper impact on their audience. By encouraging viewers to interact with the artwork not only emotionally but also in the context of a larger cultural narrative, this cultural dimension strengthens the viewing experience.

Visual art's use of imagery and symbolism is influenced by Rasa Siddhanta. To express certain feelings or ideas, artists frequently use unique symbols. For instance, in Indian art, the lotus blossom is often linked to beauty and purity, often invoking images of Shringara. Likewise, Raudra may be portrayed through dark and disorderly imagery, producing a strong emotional reaction. Rasa also influences the compositions, colors, and forms used. Cooler hues like blues and greens can stimulate sentiments of peace and sadness, while warmer hues like reds and yellows may be utilized to evoke feelings of love and happiness. Artists can create deeper and expressive emotions when they appreciate how various materials might trigger particular rasas.

A lot of visual artworks have story elements that boost the emotional impact. Because the emotional connection of a story could greatly impact how viewers interact with the piece, Rasa Siddhanta improves the storytelling element of visual art. For example, a collection of paintings that portray a hero's life might arouse feelings of Veera in the viewer, arousing courage and admiration. Storytelling artwork frequently motivates spectators to become completely involved in the emotional experience displayed. Character reactions, scene placement, and the way

light and shadow interact can all contribute to this narrative richness. Viewers can experience the several rasas represented in the artwork by emotionally connecting with the story.

Rasa Siddhanta can be a very useful instrument in art education for teaching pupils how to express their emotions and appreciate beauty. Students can develop the ability to critically evaluate both their own and other people's work by understanding the idea of rasa. This structure pushes them to consider the emotional aspects of their work in great detail and to try out various methods to stir up particular rasas. Teachers can create a collaborative learning environment where students share their opinions and experiences by using Rasa Siddhanta to lead conversations about the emotional reactions evoked by different artworks. This method develops empathy and emotional intelligence in addition to technical proficiency.

Role of Rasa siddhanta in Human Emotion and Therapeutic Applications in Art Therapy:

The Rasas have important psychological origins in addition to being artistic elements. Because each Rasa symbolizes an everyday emotional state, this theory recognizes the variety and range of human emotions. According to Bharata Muni's theory, these feelings are hidden possibilities that every person carries and can be released via artistic expression.

Catharsis is one of Rasa's main functions in relation to human emotions. The Rasas' allow specific people to confront, express, and frequently let go of suppressed emotions when they come into contact with art. For instance, watching a tragic play or piece of art that represents Karuna (sorrow) allows the audience to let go of their own repressed sadness or sadness in a secure setting. With the principles of modern counseling, which typically involves processing and releasing suppressed emotions for psychological well-being, this can be a highly therapeutic experience. Similar to harmonizing emotional states in day-to-day living, Rasa Siddhanta stresses the importance of achieving a state of balance among the Rasas. Continuous exposure to a range of emotional expressions can build changes and toughness in dealing with life's many obstacles. The aim of self-realization and inner peace is embodied by Shanta Rasa, which is the peak of calm and the goals of many modern therapeutic and mindfulness techniques. Through the expressive arts, art therapy helps people examine their feelings, work out disagreements, relax, and boost their self-esteem. Using Rasa Siddhanta in art therapy provides a different way to use artistic experiences to comprehend and control emotions. In silent or socially able therapies, where clients may express themselves not only through spoken language but also through visual art, theater, dance, or music, this can be particularly effective.

To help clients express and process certain emotions through visual art forms, art therapists might benefit from knowing rasa. To help transfer and process their feelings in a safe manner, for example, encourage them to produce artwork that recalls Raudra Rasa if they are experiencing anger issues. The projective procedures used in psychotherapy, in which feelings are projected onto an external medium and subsequently reinterpreted by the client under therapeutic guidance, are similar to this idea. People might become more sensitive to emotion by being exposed to and creating different Rasas. By interacting with representations of various Rasas, they develop more sympathy and a better knowledge of their own emotional states. Drawing or painting scenes that represent Karuna (compassion) or Veera (heroism), for example, could inspire understanding, courage, respectively. These actions may aid people in processing life events and developing mental strength. When used in a therapeutic setting, Rasa Siddhanta has limits despite its multiple benefits. The usefulness of aesthetic theory in treatment has just recently been investigated and validated by contemporary psychological research; additional data is required to completely support its use. Moreover, though Rasa Siddhanta can serve as a foundation for emotional expression, individuals may need additional therapy approaches to address psychological problems that go beyond art and aesthetic experience. Rasa Siddhanta's implementation into art therapy merges classical aesthetic theory with modern therapeutic techniques. Art therapy provides a culturally relevant way to explore emotions, promote emotional release, and develop inner calm by using the rasas. This method has potential for developing overall emotional wellness as well as for culturally adaptable therapy. With more study, Rasa Siddhanta might be accepted as a strong therapeutic art instrument that invites people to set out on a path of emotional development, healing, and self-discovery.

Iconography Influence on Emotion:

Indian iconography has a significant influence on human emotions and therapeutic methods because of its rich symbolism and enduring cultural relevance. A special path for emotional inquiry and healing is offered by the artistic depictions of gods, spiritual ideas, and legendary stories. In therapeutic contexts, this interaction of psychology, spirituality, and art can be used to promote self-awareness, emotional release, and general wellbeing. Iconography, which is full of symbols, gods, and themes, has a big influence on people's psychology and emotional health. In addition to being aesthetically beautiful, this visual language has deeper meanings that offer solace, encourage reflection, and strengthen spiritual ties. It has long been known that these aspects of Indian iconography, whether they be the picture of a peaceful Buddha, vibrant colors connected to gods like Krishna, or the huge mandalas depicting the universe, have an important effect on the mind and emotions.

Deities and characters that represent a range of emotions and values, such as compassion, strength, love, and resilience, are frequently shown in Indian iconography. People are able to connect with their emotions on a deeper level since these visuals evoke significant emotional responses. Goddess Durga, for example, can be portrayed as empowering and strong, inspiring people to face their difficulties. By encouraging reflection, such imagery allows people to safely and supportively explore their feelings and experiences. Because it enables people to express their emotions and acquire understanding of their emotional landscapes, this reflective process is essential to therapy.

Art therapy techniques that use Indian iconography provide a concrete way to convey emotions. By creating their own interpretations of famous symbols or gods, clients might use art to externalize their feelings. Pent-up emotions can be released through the cathartic process of creating. For instance, a person experiencing loss might decide to represent a comforting or healing deity, which would help them acknowledge and let go. Additionally, the tactile quality of painting or sculpture stimulates the senses, bringing people into the present and lowering tension.

Images of protective deities, such as Durga or Ganesha, can evoke feelings of safety and reassurance. They promote a feeling of connection and belonging by reminding people that they are not alone in their challenges.

Sensitivity is fostered by the emotional expressions of Indian iconography figures, which frequently reflect human experiences. For example, portrayals of joy or misery can strike an emotional connection with viewers, helping them to relate their own emotions to those of others. The carved gestures are not merely decorative; they symbolize and arouse particular emotional states that can aid in emotion regulation, improve concentration, and foster sentiments of safety and confidence.

Indian art's symmetrical, repeating designs, such as rangolis and mandalas, are said to encourage focus and peace. By promoting mindfulness and a feeling of oneness with the cosmos, these patterns draw viewers into a reflective process. In Indian iconography, the vibrant hues of red, yellow, and blue that are connected to festivals and spiritual imagery also have a psychological effect; for example, warm hues are stimulating while blues are soothing. Indian iconography strengthens communal ties and cultural identification, which benefits mental health. People feel more connected to their cultural heritage and customs when they share symbols and themes. In communities, this shared identity fosters emotional support and unity in society, improving mental health in general.

The fine details, well-balanced proportions, and skilled craftsmanship that define Indian sculptures' visual appeal can inspire delight and devotion. A pleasant diversion from everyday stressors, interacting with art that speaks to one's aesthetic sensibilities can improve mood and spirits. Because people are drawn to concentrate on the details and narratives captured in the sculptures, this appreciation of beauty also promotes awareness. Sculpture is frequently incorporated into cultural and religious rituals. Observing artworks in temples or public areas creates a feeling of being valued and ties toward one's heritage. Because it gives people a framework for comprehending their place in the world, this cultural identity is essential to emotional well-being. These sculptures' mystical characteristics can also arouse emotions of transcendence and tranquility, providing solace in trying times. The ability to connect with spiritual & cultural icons via sculpture can be a source of strength and perseverance for individuals. A sense of belonging and shared experiences can be built by taking part in group therapy sessions that center on Indian imagery. People can connect with one another and reduce feelings of loneliness by working

together to create art or by talking about the meaning of particular symbols. As people share their experiences and perspectives, this social contact fosters a healing atmosphere that improves emotional well-being.

Indian sculpture has a significant effect on people's feelings and mental health, especially in therapeutic settings. Sculpture is an effective instrument for self-discovery and healing through social interaction, psychological resonance, mindfulness, cultural connection, and cognitive engagement. Indian sculpture promotes emotional well-being and personal development by enabling people to express and process their emotions, participate in creative projects, and establish a connection with their cultural heritage. Its ongoing impact on therapeutic procedures highlights how important art is for fostering the human spirit and improving general wellbeing. Here are some examples of Indian iconography with their distinct meanings, emotions, and expressions:



Buddha Icon



Mahisasurmardini Icon



Ravana Anugraha Icon



Narsimha Icon

Raja Ravi Varma Paintings Impact on Human Emotions:

Raja Ravi Varma's work is praised for its profoundly beneficial effects on people's mental health in addition to its aesthetic appeal and technical skill. His work combines Western realism with Indian mythology, presenting cultural subjects in a way that has profound feelings and positive psychological effects. At a time when Indian identity was being undermined by British colonization, Ravi Varma's artwork provided Indians with an uplifting view of their own culture. He helped Indians view their past with pride and dignity by idealizing and depicting historical and mythological people. By promoting a positive self-image among viewers and refuting colonial notions of inferiority, this increased cultural self-esteem. Varma made Indian mythology seem reachable and intimate by realistically illustrating gods, goddesses, and epic settings. Viewers felt a sense of continuity and belonging as a result of this link to mythology, religion, and folklore, which strengthened their sense of cultural pride and shared identity.

Love, grief, bravery, and commitment are universally relatable emotions that are depicted in many of Varma's paintings. Viewers who interact with these topics have emotional release, which is the releasing of repressed

emotions. While moments of success and strength create paths for appreciation and aspiration, works such as Shakuntala looking for Dushyanta allow spectators to process sentiments of desire and loneliness.

His work's realistic appearance heightens emotional involvement. By utilizing Western methods like chiaroscuro (light and shadow) and realistic dimensions, Varma was able to bring human emotions to life and enable viewers to relate to the characters on a deep level. Because viewers see their own feelings reflected and validated in his artwork, this emotional connection offers psychological alleviation and even healing. Indian heroes and heroines like Arjuna, Harishchandra, and Damayanti are portrayed by Varma as illustrating the values of courage, honesty, and bravery. These characters encourage viewers to imitate these qualities in their own lives by acting as representations of inner strength. Such positive imagery might encourage joy, and a sense of confidence.

In addition, Ravi Varma's artwork has been utilized in therapeutic contexts, specifically in art therapy with clients who are Indian or have cultural connections. Seeing his paintings can cause deep emotional reactions, frequently leading to learning about oneself and assisting people in expressing feelings about identity, pride, or unsolved personal issues. This procedure enables culturally appropriate emotional expression, processing, and healing.

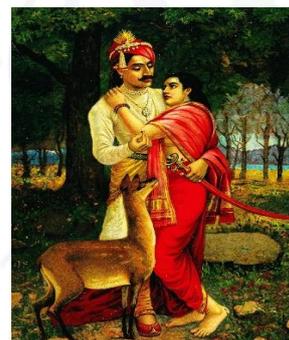
The influence of Raja Ravi Varma's painting on mental health is multifaceted covering everything from providing emotional and spiritual comfort to fostering cultural pride and identity. His skill in fusing beauty, realism, and legend enables viewers to relate to the artwork on a deep emotional level. Viewers can find emotional comfort, cultural continuity, and aesthetic joy in Varma's paintings, which boosts their spirits and has a long-lasting good impact on their mental and emotional well-being. Here are some examples of Raja Ravi Varma's paintings known for their expressive emotions.



Laxmi



Shiva Parvati and Ganesha



King Dushyanta Proposing Marriage to Shakuntala



Harishchandra



Shakuntala Lost in Thoughts



Jatayu Vadha

Movie Impact on Human Emotions:

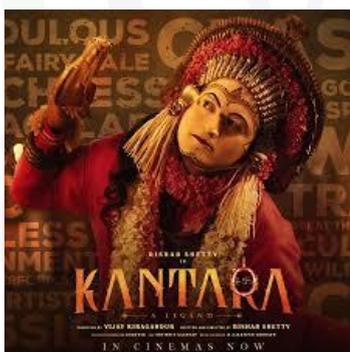
The film Kantara, which was directed by Rishab Shetty, skillfully combines aspects of spirituality, folklore, and cultural identification into a story that profoundly touches viewers' emotions. The film is a potent examination of human emotions since it skillfully uses the concepts of rasa (aesthetic experience) to arouse a variety of emotions

in viewers. The film features romantic elements and interpersonal relationships that reflect love in its various forms. Feelings of affection and compassion are generated by the portrayal of characters' love for one another, particularly in a culturally diverse setting. Viewers are able to recognize the value of human relationships and their importance in the overall story because of this emotional connection.

Kantara explores moving themes of loss, particularly as they relate to relationships and cultural heritage. Viewers are moved by the protagonist's struggles and sadness, and they feel Karuna (compassion) when they identify with his struggles. The depiction of individual and collective sorrow encourages viewers to consider their own loss experiences, increasing their emotional bond with the characters.

The film shows the protagonist's battle against powerful forces and emphasizes the conflict between tradition and modernity. Raudra (rage) is evoked by this portrayal of conflict because spectators are drawn into the actors' position. The emotional impact of injustice strikes a deep feeling, inspiring viewers to consider society's problems and their own moments of passion in the face of hardship. Heroism and bravery are themes that inspire viewers as they undergo the path that illustrates Vīra (courage). By demonstrating the stamina of the human spirit, his will to defend his homeland and culture inspires viewers to make comparisons to their own experiences. A sense of pride and motivation are fostered by this emotional empowerment, which encourages viewers to face their obstacles head-on. A sense of Bhaya (fear) is introduced by the use of folklore and supernatural beings, which improves the suspense. Legendary beings and the fear of the unknown give the story variety and engage viewers' emotions as they follow the characters' beliefs and concerns. The audience is prompted to face their own fears and doubts by the study of terror. In the end, Kantara aims to bring humans and environment back into peace, evoking Śānta (peace) as the story solves tensions. A sense of peace and fulfillment is encouraged by the characters' journeys resulting in a return to their cultural roots. Viewers are able to consider the significance of balance and harmony in their own lives as a result of this emotional resolution.

From love and sorrow to frustration and confusion, Kantara effectively uses the concepts of rasa to evoke a wide range of human emotions. The video encourages deep analysis on cultural identity, social justice, and the interconnection of human experiences by the interest of viewers on several emotional levels. In addition to entertaining viewers with entertainment, Kantara's examination of these subjects strikes a deep emotional connection with them, inspiring thought and a sense of closeness.



Conclusion

In art, film, and therapy, Rasa Siddhanta provides an eternal perspective through which one can understand and create human emotions. Artists, filmmakers, and therapists can connect people with the common depth of human

experience by examining and awakening particular rasas. This allows them to learn the universal language of emotion. By connecting individual and societal emotional landscapes, this shared journey turns art from a purely aesthetic experience into a potent tool for emotional involvement and healing. The universal significance of art as a vehicle for catharsis, emotional expression, and, ultimately, a link to our common humanity is brought out by the huge impact of rasa.

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