

Drama: A Conceptual Framework

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Received : 30-11-2018

Accepted : 28-11-2018

ABSTRACT

A living being starves for two things; the basic needs (bread, clothes and shelter) and aesthetic pleasure. Basic needs can be earned by physical or mental efforts but when it comes to aesthetic pleasure; one of the means that supply aesthetic pleasure through speculative visuals from reading literature. This way Language and literature become an indisputable part of social life. While the use of language in literature is to supply culture as perceived and belief system of the society in a distinctive manner. Taking the concept of drama to the Indian milieu, it can be noted that English drama in India has charted its own long run since independence and has provided a detailed experience of the divergent Indian culture.

The paper peeps into some of the aspects of Drama as performing arts by detailing the conceptual framework of drama in Indian context i.e. concepts of drama, theory of drama, distinction between drama and theatre, elements of drama and theatre and literature in language classroom.

Keywords: *Drama, Representation, Theory of Drama, Empirical, Divergent Indian culture*

Introduction :

the gross needs of individuals alone are not sufficient for human existence, rather the subtle aspects of human life are the things that human being starve for their survival. Similarly, the world does not live by Bread, Cloths and Shelter alone; it also requires food for brain and heart. Literature is one of the several sources for aesthetic

needs as to enrich their soul, brain and emotions. On the contrary, passion and emotions essentially occupy a large space in molding the personality of individuals. Moreover, literature is the artistic expression of life based on truth and beauty. Fulfillment of abstract needs of human nature is possible through various arts. Literature is that art through which one can record the cultural

milieu and human behavior in particular manner.

When we consider literature as a source of subtler needs of human beings, there are different genres of literature like drama, poetry, fiction, prose, and the like. Each of these forms has its unique structure satisfying different needs. Therefore, teaching of various genres of literature should be in tune with the intended purpose of learning salient features essential for better experience of life.

Since time immemorial, drama has been utilized for different purposes like need for entertainment and recreation, addressing social taboos and generating social awareness and the like.

Till now the education system laid optimum focus on acquisition of knowledge even at the expense of skills, attitudes and values and concentrated on providing mere instructions through which learning was being adopted even in the case of drama teaching; Drama, being a form of performing arts, has to be practically taught where an individual's skills, strengths and capabilities are important for they help individuals adopt knowledge with skills, attitudes and values and face problems of everyday life with a positive attitude.

Drama: as one of the forms of performing arts:

Drama is display of emotions, a representation of relationships and the portrayal of different phases of human life. It sketches different personalities, events and issues happening in a society and appeals to the audience's emotions. Drama is doing. Drama is being. Drama engages in daily incidents. Drama has been a field of representation of the social issues that creates awareness among the people.

– Drama Brings Literature to Life:

- The first and foremost duty of an English teacher is to see that learners feel at ease in their speaking skills and that is why drama has to be taught for training the learner in developing speaking skills.

“Tell me & I forget, teach me & I may remember, involve me & I learn”

– Benjamin Franklin

- The quote highlights the importance of experience in the process of learning. Drama method is more dynamic as it addresses the verbal as well as nonverbal language of learners and overcoming shyness and fear of using English in formal situations.
- Learning through drama is a way to learn language with active fun activity. This makes the learner open to new concepts and learning is destined to occur.
- Moreover, being in the company of literature is like being in the company to life and drama.

– **Drama as a Powerful Teaching Tool**

- Drama facilitate the three major domains i.e. cognitive, affective and psychomotor at minute levels by involving learners into learner centric activities and allowing learners to experience the literary sensibilities. Drama teaches cooperation, creativity, cooperation, Empathy for others, decision making skills and encourages exchange of knowledge among the learners.
- The benefits of teaching through drama method are learning from each other (peer group learning), development of communication skills (verbal and non-verbal), leadership qualities, team work, and practice real life savior-faire, builds confidence and self-esteem, refines presentation skills, encourages self-acceptance and acceptance of others.

– **Drama Reveals Aspects of the human Conditions**

“All the world’s a stage and we all the men and women are merely players”

- As You Like It (Shakespeare)

- As the quote suggests there is no difference between the reality and a dramatic work. Whereas in a life span, an individual has to execute many different roles to successfully fulfill her/his dreams. Hence even if it is a fictional or

non-fictional work of art, drama reveals the varied aspects of human conditions in a comprehensive manner. Performing drama is dress rehearsal of the things happened or happening in the society.

– **Drama – A Tool for Developing Social Awareness**

- Drama has been an effective tool for generating social awareness. In society there are different social taboos, by representing them on the stage, Drama, actually attempts to **eradicate** the social issues prevalent in the society. Moreover, drama not only represents the reality of social taboos before the audience but also provides empirical solutions to them by doing so; they generate awareness among the audience.

Theories of Drama

The magic of drama is more than the representation of fiction via performance. The term literally means “Action” in Greek, the thought that sprung from the need for entertainment and recreation. There is no specific date to which the form of drama can be attributed but it is evident that the origin of Western Drama can be traced to the celebratory music of 6th-century BC Attica, the Greek region centered on Athens. Aristotle in his theory of tragedy (Poetics) says that

“Art contains the potential for “impossible probabilities “rather than “improbable possibilities”; art assists nature; it realizes what nature leaves undone. And literature completes what nature leaves undone.”

Aristotle in his Poetics talks about the different components of drama and identifies six elements of drama as explained below:

- **Plot (Mythos)**

To understand the plot let's understand the figure below:



- Aristotle denotes that “the plot is the soul of the play.” It means that plot is the foundation of play and it is created before the play is created. Basically a plot is the story line or the way a story is written. The plot is the reason for an action. Actions produce the quality and the quality which produces actions that particular quality is the plot of that character.
- The action of a tragic play which is based on the plot performed by the actors or performers includes several conflicts, which may create the drama more complicated by adding more conflicts. And as the conflicts get increased that particular situation is called the climax.
 - **Characters (Ethos)**

- Aristotle denotes that the tragical accident happens to a hero because of the mistake he makes instead of things which might happen randomly. A hero or protagonist may have made it knowingly or unknowingly. A hero may leave a deed which he should have done.
- The main characteristic of a good character according to Aristotle should be good, appropriate, consistent, and consistently inconsistent.
- **Thought (Dianoia)**
- The thought in the tragic play is supposed to be appropriate to the action of the character. It is necessary that the character must think in appropriate manner.
- Reasoning of human character can explain the characters or story backgrounds.
 - **Diction (Lexis)**
- Diction means the language the character or writer uses in the play. Here, Aristotle talks about how language of the play should be? He vouches for the language that is dignified, embellished, and symbolic.
 - **Melody (Melos)**
- Melody includes different kinds of sounds and music which are played in the play or drama. Melody pleases the emotions of the audience judicial. Aristotle says that music must not overwhelm other components of the play

and sounds, songs and music must not be exaggerated.

– **Spectacle (Opsis)**

- Here, Aristotle designates that the set and settings or the furniture in the play must be very appropriate to the situation, well managed so that the emotions could be augmented. It must not overwhelm the main action.

Aristotle in his work ‘Poetics’ refers to sensation, or literary effect, that would ideally overcome either the characters in a play, or an audience upon finishing watching a tragedy this is termed as “Catharsis” simply emotional cleansing of the audience and/or characters in a play. In relation to drama it is the extreme change in emotions resulting from strong feelings of sorrow, fear, pity, or laughter; this result has been described as purification or a removal of emotions.

Further discussing the point of catharsis in detail, Aristotle suggested that a tragic play must result in purgation of Pity and Fear. By this he is symbolizing that when the two feelings i.e. PITY and FEAR or EMPATHY and SYMPATHY or EMPATHY and ANTIPATHY are to be equivalent in the play then and then only a good play can be created. To describe these elements, Aristotle pointed out three Greek terminologies i.e. Hamartia, Peripeteia, and Anagnorisis.

- Hamartia can be translated as miscalculation or any layman can say it a tragic flaw or injuries that a person can commit against another person. It is a moral action related to hubris (excessive pride or self-confidence). Anything that makes the character face conflicts is called Hamartia.
- Peripeteia is nothing but a kind of reversal or we can call it climax or a harmful change of fortune.
- The third term Anagnorisis can be regarded as illumination or realization, recognition or identification.

Delineating the journey of a tragic play, Aristotle denotes that the beginning is an upward journey which Aristotle denotes as Hamartia, which is basically the duration period from the beginning till the climax. The climax is nothing but a more complicated situation that possesses more conflicts. And Aristotle gives a name called Peripeteia. This period is a very short because it is the peak of the play. Then these conflicts are needed to be solved and reach a prescribed destination that is a downward journey from the climax towards the end which is named as Anagnorisis. Aristotle also denotes that there are two kinds of ends i.e. 1) End which is straightly given by the writer or author & 2) End in which the author or the writer gives freedom to the

reader reading the drama that means the reader gives end to the drama.

Drama as described in Natyashashtra:

(Ghosh, 2012) Describing the representative nature of Natya, Bharatmuni in his Natyashashtra used Sanskrit term i.e. Rupa or Rupakam and Preksha which simply means representation and spectacle. The work emphasizes the importance of Representation and Spectacle unlike the Greek drama where the emphasis was on the action in the drama.

“Aristotle, in his Poetics, threw light on the fable or plot and considered decoration to be unimportant but heightening the importance of decoration, the philosophers believed that Pity and Fear are the essential elements of Greek tragedy and that can be aroused through Decoration.”

- Translation of
Natyashashtra by
Manmohan Ghosh

Natyashashtra is an ancient treatise on dramatics and is considered to be one of the most comprehensive works on dramatics. According to this ancient text and Indian theorist the definition of Natya as...

“A mimicry of the exploits of gods, the Asuras, kings as well as of householders in this world, is called drama”

The ancient treatise on Hindu dramaturgy and histrionics, Natyashashtra, attempts to describe every aspect of Indian drama including construction of a playhouse right from the selection of land and its utilization along with instruction regarding the various rituals of drama and the spectators is wished for. Covering virtually every aspect of stagecraft, Natyashashtra has offered a remarkable dimension to the development of Indian classical music, dance, drama and art.

Natyashashtra opens with the origin of theatre, beginning with inquiries made by Bharata's pupils, which he answers by narrating the myth of its source in Brahma. He also explains the very nature, objective, and expanse of Natya as a Veda through this unique myth. The basic principles of Rasa have been formulated by Bharata himself in his Natyashashtra, though the famous Rasasutra reads

**Vibhavanubhavyabhicharisamyogat
rasanichyasi** (Ghosh, 2012)

According to (Trivedi, 2012), the above mentioned sutra explains the genesis of rasa as the outcome of the combination of Vibhava, Anubhava, and Vyabhicharibhava.

- Vibhava stands for the determinates
- Anubhava stands for the consequents and
- Vyabhicharibhava stands for the transitory mental states.

Bharata informs in his work that there are eight permanent instincts that structures the human mental faculty and discovered the intangible nature of the rasa with the bhavas. The eight permanent instincts or Sthayibhavas consist of **Rati (Love)**, **Hasya (the ludicrous)**, **Soka (the pathetic)**, **Krodha (the heroic)**, **Utsaha (the passionate)**, **Bhaya (fear)**, **Vismaya (the wondrous)**, and **Jugupsa (the nauseating)**. Other aesthetic psychologists have in latter times added one more instinct which came to be known as **Sant (peaceful)**. The following table may clarify the discussion:

Sr. No.	Sthayibhava Permanent Instincts	Rasa	Rasa Varna Rasa Color	Rasa Devta Presiding Diety
1.	Rati (Love)	Sringar	Blackish Blue	Lord Vishnu
2.	Humor	Hasya	White	Pramathas
3.	Krodha (Anger)	Rudra	Red	Rudra
4.	Energy	Vira	Yellowish	Indra
5.	Fear	Bhayanaka	Black	Kaldev
6.	Disgust	Bibhatsa	Blue	Mahakal
7.	Wonder	Adbhuta	Golden yellow	Brahma
8.	Grief	Karuna	Bluish grey	Yama

Types of Rasa

As identified earlier the various rasas, in one or the other way, help a drama/or play to be

representative of various emotions and social events. (Savelyeva, 2011). Following discussion may provide an insight into the rasas:

1. **Sringar Rasa:** Bharatmuni begins with the most popular and relishrasa i.e. Sringar. The sthayibhava amour (Rati) develops into Srinagar. It is the mutual affection between men and women and is universal. It has two varieties (Savelyeva, 2011):

- Love in Union (Sambhog Sringar)
- Love in separation (Vipralambha Sringar)

2. **Hasya Rasa:** Humor develops into Hasya rasa as comic sentiments. It may arise from the situations, character or the conversation. Bharata mentions that humor evolves from the grotesque dress, crazy sensual pleasure, foul words etc. Humor can be of two kinds, existing in one's own self and existing in others. Abhinav Gupta depict in his commentary that incongruity is the very source of humor.

3. **Karuna Rasa:** being the essential part of Natyashashtra, Karun rasa. The dominant emotion/ sthayibhava is shoka/sorrow. The Natyashashtra states that the Karuna rasa takes its origin through different bhavas either at the sight of the death or murder of the dear

one or when unpleasant words have an adverse impact.

4. **Raudra and Vira:** The sthayibhava for Raudra is rage and the sthayibhava for vira is energy. Anger is natural to the naughty. Vigor is natural to the higher type, the noble. Bharata divides the rasa of vigor into three kinds (Savelyeva, 2011)
 - a. Valor of generosity (Danvira)
 - b. Valor of Virtue (Dharmavir)
 - c. Valor of war (Yuddhavir)
5. **Bhayanaka Rasa:** Fear is the Sthayibhava for Bhayanaka Rasa. In the opinion of our theorists, fear is not natural to noble characters and heroes. The poets usually depict the sentiment of fear with reference to ordinary people, women, and animals.
6. **Bibhatsa Rasa:** Disgust is the sthayibhava for Bibhatsa rasa. Sometimes, a doubt may arise as to how the sentiment of disgust can develop into a rasa. But if the poet is competent, s/he can convey the sentiment of bibhatsa without sounding obscene.
7. **Adbhuta Rasa:** Like Sringara, a rasa which is more widespread is adbhuta. Wonder is the sthayibhava. For this rasa, wonder begins from the time a child opens his/her eyes and lasts till the end of his/her life.

Distinction between Theatre and Drama:

Just to justify the point that theatre and drama are two different propositions, one can comprehend drama as a literary text; on the other hand, it can be conceived that theatre is not only a textual work of art but rather making live the dramatic work of art. It demands a lot of imagination and consideration of social limitations. Hence, it becomes essential to distinguish between theatre and drama as both of them have different roles to play. On one hand theatre implies the performance part where variety of actors play different roles and perform a dramatic work of art and with its dedicated purpose to communicate; on the other hand, drama implies the work designed for the stage representation and involves the imagination of the author and is not concerned with any function of communication with audience but rather with the text and self.

If Drama and theatre are different then the elements of both will be different. Theatre is the imitation of representation of life performed for other people; the performance of dramatic literature; drama; the milieu of actors, technicians and playwrights. It also suggests the place where dramatic performance takes place. The theatre takes into consideration the drama or play where drama actually refers to an improvisational process centered form of

theatre in which participants are guided by a leader (probably a director) to imagine, enact, and reflect on human experiences and social life of people living in a community. Here the emphasis is on the process of learning how to perform hence the following elements will provide an insight. The elements of theatre can be broadly categorized into three parts (Gheisserer, 2011) as follows:

- **Literary elements:** Literary elements are the elements that help to understand the literary aspect of a dramatic piece of art. This implies the meaning (Author's meaning) and not the signification (meaning created by various critics) of a text. The literary elements of theatre may include:
 - **Plot:** Plot structure starts with an initial incident which gets the story a start and moves on to the preliminary event that takes place before the action that is directly related to the play.
 - **Character:** Character refers to representation of a person/character in a drama, novel, or other artistic piece. It can either be realistic or fictional. The characters are physical entities who possess variety of things including expression, emotions, feelings, thoughts and much more.
 - **Exposition:** This literary element takes into consideration the "who, when, where and what" part of the play. This emphasizes the context for the place of action and the meaning created through whole surroundings. How everything comes into force and creates the whole environment for delivery of a scene.
- **Story organization:** This element takes into consideration the beginning, middle and end i.e. the flow of the work is flat, rising action, falling action, rising-falling, or constant.
- **Conflict:** This element is more subtle as it implies the development of the play towards the climax. Basically conflict may be internal or external struggle between opposing forces, ideas, or interest. It helps in creating a dramatic tension.
- **Suspense:** This element refers to the feeling of uncertainty as to the outcome and it builds interest and excitement. Here the author presents with an unexpected twist or event that changes the pre-conceived occupation with reference to the upcoming events.
- **Theme:** It is the main idea of a play. This essentially reveals a message to the audience concerning the current or ongoing social, political, economic, religious, regional practices.
- **Language:** It refers to the particular manner of verbal expression, diction or style of writing i.e. speech or phrasing suggesting class, profession or type of character. It is the language that identify the characters.

- **Style:** It refers to the shaping of the dramatic material, setting, and costumes in a deliberately nonrealistic manner. This essentially is the environment that is stipulated and inclined towards the story or character of a story.
- Some other elements may include Soliloquy (a speech by a single actor who is alone on stage), Monologue (a long speech made by one actor) and dialogue (conversation between actors).
 - **Technical Elements:** Technical elements are the elements that are required to transform a literary text into a stage performance. These elements are observable and required to generate an effect of specific environment of a past event. These are necessary as it escorts the audience in the time period for appropriate conveyance of the message. Some of the technical elements include the following
 - **Set (Scenery):** It is to believe that any action needs an environment. This element in a play is of vital importance, for it effectively affects the audience by ornamenting the environment for delivering a message. It includes the elements like curtain, flats, backdrops, platforms.
 - **Costumes:** Things like clothing and accessories worn by actors are called Costumes. This helps in portrayal of a character and period. This necessarily exhibits the lifestyle of a particular period as they differ from period to period.
 - **Props (Properties):** It refers to any movable object that appears on stage during a performance except characters or costume. They may be in the hands of a character or can be automatically moved on the stage to denote a scene.
 - **Lights:** the placement, intensity and color of light help communicate environment, mood, feeling and emotions. If used accurately, lights, adds to the environment conducive to the scene, theme of a play.
 - **Sounds:** This affects an audience during a performance to communicate character, context, and environment. Sounds may help in denoting the mood or emotions of a character. As in the sound of heavy drum beat in a scene of war denotes the excitement among the warriors and their enthusiasm for victory.
 - **Makeup:** This refers to the costumes, wigs, and body paint used to transform an actor into a character of the play. This element helps in adopting the aura of a particular character required for a play.
 - **Performance Elements:** these elements take into consideration the performance part that is necessarily

required for staging a play or dramatic form of art. The performance is basically the presentation or specifically representation of a past event. Some of the elements that fall in this category include the following:

- **Acting:** Acting refers to the psychomotor domain where variety of actors moves their body parts (Face, Body and Voice) in order to stage an event or a situation. Hence appropriate movement and appropriate gestures is a must when talking about theatre.
- **Directing:** It is believed that for a group to prosper there lays a need for a good leader. In this manner the leader or the creator of the play is called director who constantly sticks to the theme a play is going to disseminate and accordingly decides holistically the performance of a play.
- **Character motivation:** This element refers to the reasons or reasons for a character's behavior or an incentive for further action of a character. This is necessary as it keep the story moving to the next stage or scene.
- **Character Analysis:** Character analysis helps in responding to dramatic art or the process of examining how the elements of

drama (Literary, technical and performance) are used. This takes into consideration whether all the elements are communicating the message that it tends to communicate or not.

- **Empathy:** being different from sympathy, empathy refers to the capacity to relate to the feelings of another and performing the part assigned. This is essential as the actors are to adopt a character that is different from theirs and hence they need to transform themselves into a totally or partially different character. Being in this condition, they need to be in condition to empathize themselves into the characters they are assigned.
- **Speaking:** it refers to the communication and the mode of expression or delivery of lines.
- **Breathe control:** it is use of lungs and diaphragm for maximum capacity and efficiency of breath for speaking.
- **Vocal Expression:** this takes into consideration the vocal part of a character. This necessarily is important as it identifies how actors use their voice to convey character. The voice modulation is necessary to convey the right tone and meaning through dialogues.

- **Inflection:** it refers to the change in pitch or loudness of voice. At some point of time in performing the drama actors need to change their tone and module their voice for effectively affect the audience.
- **Projection:** the dialogues uttered need to be reached to the audience and for that the projection. It is how well the voice carries during the dialogue delivery.
- **Speaking style:** it refers to the style in which dialogue are uttered or articulated by the actors. It takes into consideration expression or delivery of lines in rhetorical form.
- **Diction:** it refers to the langue being uttered. And looks at the pronunciation of words with clarity of speech being produced. If the language is not produced in a clear manner, the communication process may go in vain.
- **Non-Verbal Expression:** being a stage performance, along with the vocal expression and spoken part, non-verbal communication also is of vital importance. it is said that nonverbal expression communicates 80% of the message you are communicating. Non-verbal expression may include the following things:
 - **Gestures:** gestures refer to the non-verbal communication. this element takes into consideration any movement of the actor to express meaning.
 - **Body alignment:** this element refers to posture which basically is the static stand or position of the actor. It also looks for the use of body to ensure capacity or efficiency of breathing and movement.
 - **Facial Expressions:** facial expression in a very lucid manner refers to the physical and vocal aspects used by an actor to convey mood, feeling or personality.
 - **Character blocking:** this takes into consideration the director who essentially is attempting to create a meaning of every movement on the stage as perceived before. Character blocking is the path formed by actor's movement that is often written in a script.
 - **Movement:** this simply refers to stage blocking or movement of actors during performance or we can say that it is the action of the play as it moves from event to event.

Teaching Language through Literature:

Teaching language through literature is the easiest way to make the students understand the structure of the language as well as the sound patterns of the language. Using literature in the classroom is an effective way of providing input for vocabulary, grammar and real life language. The following discussion may clarify the doubts:

- Drama appeals to the emotions of the audience and hence it may develop emotional stability of the learners.

- It is the easiest way to get acquainted with the trend of particular age, for example, to identify the trend of Shakespearean play one can get acquainted with the socio-cultural environment of the Elizabethan age (England) that is presented in the play.
- Employing literature in the class may stimulate learners' curiosity of learning a distinguished culture.
- In conventional English classes, such an innovative genre (Plays) may facilitate learners with the enhancement of the language capacity by providing colloquial language input.
- Plays are rhetoric form of literature, it may enhance learners' affective domain (emotional, feelings), psychomotor domain (Physical abilities) and cognitive domain (analytical, critical and creative abilities).
- It a way to teach lessons of real life in a controlled environment but at the same time it leads students to simulate real-life issues and deals with them before actually facing it.
- Play also includes abstract images that are isolated form and irrelevant to their lives, such conceits will enhance their imaginative as well as creative skills.
- The learners are allowed to identify themselves with the characters of the play and can see them are real people with real dilemmas.
- A technique like 'Role-playing' may be given to perform a role and learn authentic language used by a person.
- The use of drama can reduce the pressure of learning a language through deliberate process as they themselves are involved in the process of problem solving.
- Drama provides an exposure for cultural language enrichment by revealing insights into the target culture and presenting language contexts.
- Drama skill also teaches students how to behave. Drama depicts the manners of society to students. Students can learn manners and attitudes that are acceptable in society.
- English language skill will be developed successfully if students' efforts are directed towards positive side of learning.
- To promote team-work and build up group dynamics.

Conclusion :

Drama is a creative form of art which basically a well-defined complete mixture of different genres providing a comprehensive picture of all other forms of literature. The basic purpose of discussing concepts of drama and theater is to provide adequate transition of theoretical aspect of drama as performing arts and as a literary text with flairs of genres of literature. Hence it is evident that the paper began its journey with some of the basic concepts of drama as prescribed in famous literature (Theory of Tragedy, Natyashastra and various elements of theatre). This way the author just wants to bring to the surface a detailed discussion of the theoretical background of Drama and Theatre and discuss how drama is destined to provide a wide-ranging exposure to the language learners in enhancing communication skills (Verbal/Non-Verbal).

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