

## DANCE AS A NON-VERBAL AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION

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**Abstract:** Dance is common to all cultures and every culture has its own system of dance. Dancing would describe as the liberal, humanistic culture of the emotions by motions. Feeling and movement not only fit, but intensify each other, and to a degree, by changing either we change the other. Herein lies the great potency of dancing, and this makes it the best of all illustrations of harmony between mind and body. The value of dancing it to enlarge the emotional life by making all the combinations of movements that it is mechanically possible for the body to make. Ordinary life, not only of work but even of play, leaves unused sets of activities, and as there atrophy the feeling –states that they express tend also to fade, and so life grows partial and fragmentary, and we fail to experience all that our heredity makes possible. Thus all should dance in the sense above described for their own psychic welfare, for it helps the young to orb out the soul and keeps that of the aged from shrivelling.

Dance is communication through physical movements not reliant on vocal elements or linguistics, and it is vital to human communication. Therefore, it is important to investigate the significant ways that dance is used as communication by humans. There is much literature to support the concept of dance as communication. Needless to say, dance has traditionally been viewed as a form of entertainment. Certainly, dancers have received accolades, and dance is credited as a means of artistic expression which involves technique, stamina, discipline, and creativity. However, dance is much more than one of the celebrated performing arts. It is a significant means of communication—communication in which the soul expresses itself through meaningful gesture—ubiquitous and important. Dance as communication is not always linked with music. Communication through dance is not music driven but rather body and soul driven. Dance involves the entire body, and the body can be a powerful agent of communication. Copeland even maintains that dance is “the conversion of bodily energy into something more spiritual, something worthy of the soul”. The soul of the dancer is inevitably tied to the expression communicated through the dancer’s movement.

**Dance** is captivating **nonverbal communication** that involves attention networks, motivation, and reward. **Nonverbal communication** includes the bodily conveyance of information through gesture and locomotion, proximity, touch, gaze, facial expression, posture, physical appearance, smell, and emotion.

Dance is human behavior composed of purposeful, intentionally rhythmical, and culturally influenced sequences of communicative nonverbal body movement and stillness in time, space, and with effort. Dance stylizes movements, some from everyday life, with a degree of conventionality or distinctive imaginative symbolization. Each dance genre has its own aesthetic (standards of appropriateness and competency).

We begin our approach with a view that a significant way of communication is non-verbal, the language of the body that can express emotions, thoughts, attitudes, without the need for words, postures, movements and gestures. Very important in non-verbal communication is the dance, which involves a specific way of communicating with others, but also with ourselves. Through dance, communication blockages are overcome. Movement and gestures, expressive or symbolic, along with certain postures, can “communicate” emotions, feelings, attitudes, giving us access to the inner world of the dancer. In this study, we want to argue in favour of dance, as a form of non-verbal communication, which allow us to communication and harmonization our relations among people.

Visual communication is the transmission of information and ideas using symbols and imagery. It is one of three main types of communication, along with verbal communication (speaking) and non-verbal

communication (tone, body language, etc.). Visual communication is believed to be the type that people rely on most, and it includes signs, graphic designs, films, typography, and countless other examples. All performing arts are an essential method of communication and learning, and are strongly linked to visual expression. We perceive the world through the senses, and the arts allows us to understand (observe), explore and experiment, and express ourselves: The performing arts provides another outlet for us to interact with others.

**Keeping the above views the author explores the field of dance and puts strong ideas in support of the fact that dance is a non-verbal and visual communication.**

**Keywords:** Dance, Communication, Non-Verbal Communication, Visual Communication,

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**Introduction:**

The more you know [, the more you sense [notice]

The more you sense; the more you select [you will pay attention more]

The more you select; the more you perceive [you will understand more]

The more you perceive; the more you remember [memory is enhanced]

The more you remember the more you learn [compare and contrast]

The more you learn; the more you know [use more of what you see]

From above lines it is quite evident that people remember 10%of what

They hear, 20%of what they read but 80%of what they see.

This shows that visual communication is more powerful. Visual Communication is a process of sending and receiving messages using images. Visual literacy can be defined as the “ability to construct Meaning from visual images.”

Being visually literate means working with a combination of syntax And semantics. Syntax is the actual form or building blocks of an Image, its structure and organisation. Semantics is concerned with How meaning or content is created through form, structure, contexts And symbols.

***In view of these ideas dance is a visual communication***

***Which uses symbols [mudras], gestures, postures and movements?***

**Key Concepts of Dance:** Dance can be conceptualised as human behaviour composed of purposeful, intentionally rhythmical, and culturally influenced sequences of nonverbal body movements and stillness in time and space and with effort. The may refer to them. For example, there are movements used to actually wash clothes and movements imaginatively used in dance to symbolize washing. Both motor activities may be culturally specific. Dance has inherent and aesthetic value (standards of appropriateness and competency.) dance is usually accompanied by music, with its range of sounds and rhythm, and sometimes by costume and props.

- Emotion, a significant source of human motivation, constrains or inspires people as they create dances and relate to one another. Dance is multisensory, and so it heightens the perceptual awareness that expands access to the meaning of different kinds of emotional expression. There is the sight of dancers moving in time and space; the sound of physical movement, breathing, accompanying music and talk; the smell of dancers physical exertion; the tactile sensation of body parts touching the ground, other body parts, people or props, and the air around the dancers; the proxemic sense of distance among dancers and between dancers and audience; and the kinaesthetic experience and sense of empathy with a performer’s bodily movement and energy. The eyes indicate degrees of attentiveness and arousal, influence attitude change, and regulate interaction. In addition, the eyes define power and status relationships.
- An individual’s creativity and culture influence her or him dance-making, performing, and viewing. Culture, another key concept in the discipline of dance, refers to the values, beliefs, norms, and rules shared by a group and learned through communication. The relationship between dance and culture is reciprocal. Culture gives meaning to who dances what, why, how, when, where, and with and for whom, in addition to the role of the dance audience. Such variables may bespeak sexual orientation and gender roles, as well as ethnic, national, and other group identities. These may reflect and/or

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influence culture, engendering visions of alternative possibilities. History attests to dance as a means of sending messages of grievance and remedy.

- Dance is a form of nonverbal communication. History points to dance as captivating nonverbal communication. Perceptual and motor systems play major roles in survival. The body gives clues. It “talks” and people “listen”. Human beings first learn through movement, and movement facilitates learning. Sensory-motor activities form new neural pathways and synaptic connections throughout life, and the merger of body, emotion, and cognition leads to effective communication.
- Dance and verbal language use the same component of Brain areas in the brain that control the hands and gesture overlap and develop together with the areas that control the mouth and speech. The **broca and wemicke** areas, located in the left hemisphere, have been associated with verbal language expression and comprehension, abstract symbolic and analytic functions, sequential information procession, and complex patterns of movement. The process of making a dance engages some of the same components in the brain for conceptualization, creativity and memory as do verbal poetry or prose, but not the same procedural knowledge.
- Dance helps in thinking process. we may also learn and think through dance, which can convey complex notions. Concepts arise from, and are understood through, the body, the brain, and experience in the world. Concepts get their meaning through embodiment, especially via perceptual and motor capacities. Directly embodied concepts include basic-level concepts, spatial-relations concepts, bodily action concepts (e.g., hand movement), colour, and others. Dewey in 1934 recognised that an art form may be able to convey some information better than other languages can.
- Dance uses the hand and the entire body to communicate. Dance has been recognized as powerful nonverbal communication in India for about 2000 years and in the west since the 1970s. The importance of the hand gesture in teaching and learning suggests the exponential impact of dance as it utilizes a multi-channelled gestural system to communicate: gestures of various body parts, and locomotion in time, space, and with effort, music and costume. Drawing from movements in everyday life, dance stylizes movement with a degree of conventionally or distinctiveness. A multi-channelled system, dance is embodied cognition that can convey declarative, procedural and emotional knowledge, apart from co-occurring with speech or being an element of a sign language.
- Dance helps Multiple Ways of Learning. The power of dance as a form of nonverbal communication, in some ways comparable to verbal language. The cognitive emotional power of dance in teaching and learning process has been recognized by scholars. Recent interdisciplinary research reaches beyond the insularity of the dance and arts worlds to reveal complex cognitive skills in dance-making and perceiving on myths in using neuro-science to inform teaching practice). Positing that there are eight intelligences that appear in some type of symbolic system, Gardener calls attention to different ways of learning through dance: Of these, bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence is a form of thinking, an ability to solve problems through “control of one’s bodily motions”. Surgeons, too, exhibit highly developed bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence. Some youngsters may be engaged to learn through bodily-kinaesthetic approaches; yet all youngsters may benefit from the creative processes of dance making and dance-viewing and learn to “write” and read the non-verbal, which is critical to human survival.
- Dance influences the Brain and mind. It influences the mind, causes positive plastic changes in the brain for young and old alike.
- Dance provides Declarative and Procedural Knowledge. In dance education students acquire various kinds of knowledge. They acquire declarative knowledge about dance, including concepts, history, movement vocabulary, and rules of building dances (grammar). Students can learn to express declarative knowledge in their choreography, visualizing movement ideas. Students gain procedural knowledge, also called “knowing-is-in-the-doing”; and bodily knowledge, called “knowing-in-the-body”, or embodied knowledge which is attained through multiple aspects of sensory perception, especially kinaesthesia –a revelation of the given essence of something by the moving sensual body. This knowledge involves motor skills and muscle memory, cognitive skills, and cognitive strategies that enable the application of pattern (a rule of grammar) in communicating ideas and feelings in dance. A difference between declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge in dance is that a

student can know the grammatical rules for a dance from and appreciate its denotations and connotations with ideas about appropriates and yet not have the skills for performance.

- Dance helps in controlling our Emotions and Feelings which are inherent to successful dance and to education in general. Emotion may promote some goals and processes while inhibiting others.
- Dance helps in Critical Thinking. In the constructivist sense, youngsters participate in the creation of their own knowledge. The acquisition of critical thinking and learning skills, essential to education in any subject, is involved in learning a dance technique and performing creatively and, most productively, in making and analyzing dances that convey thoughts, feelings, or a perspective on movement itself.

#### **Benefits of Dance :**

- **Boosts Memory** Dance not only instils grace, but it also helps you age gracefully. According to a study in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, dancing may boost our memory and prevent you from developing dementia as you get older. Science reveals that aerobic exercise can reverse volume loss in the hippocampus, the part of the brain that controls memory. The hippocampus naturally shrinks during late adulthood, which often leads to impaired memory and sometimes dementia.
- **Improves Flexibility** Dance increases flexibility and reduce stiffness. The Increase in our flexibility will help ease joint pain and post-exercise soreness.
- **Reduce Stress** The technique of dance helps in reducing stress. **Dancing is a stress releasing process.**
- **Diminish Depression** Dance helps in diminishing depression. A person in depressed mood becomes happy by dancing.
- **Help Your Heart** Dance is a great activity for those at risk for cardiovascular disease. People with heart failure who took up dancing improved their heart health, breathing, and quality of life significantly compared to those who biked or walked on a treadmill for exercise, noted an Italian study.
- **Lose Weight** Dance training is just as helpful for losing weight and increasing aerobic power as cycling and jogging.
- **Increase Energy** Dance programs improve physical performance and increase energy levels among students.

Nonverbal communication involves a coding that is done by voluntary or involuntary contraction of muscles, using time and space, artefacts, etc. Miles L. Patterson defines non-verbal communication as passing information and influencing individuals through physical and behavioural reactions (apud Chelcea & Ivan & Chelcea, 2008, p. 28) Posture, facial expressions, gestures can support words or replace them. Thus, feelings are communicated by non-verbal signals rather than by words, revealing even more than what the person living them intends. (Borg, 2010, p. 19) In non-verbal communication, the signification of the transmitted signs is determined by the concrete social and cultural context and with a certain degree of probability.

**Use of Navaras:** “Dance as the narration of a magical story; that recites on lips, illuminates imaginations and embraces the most sacred depths of souls.” — **Shah Asad Rizvi**

The base of Indian classical dance is to elicit the *Rasa* (emotion) in the spectator. Dance without *Rasa* is incomplete. The Sangeet Natak Academy speaks of eight forms of Indian classical dance forms: Kathak, Odissi, Manipuri, Bharatnatyam, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, Bihu and Mohiniyattam. As I had mentioned earlier and also as per *Natyashastra* the pivotal function of all these dance forms is to kindle the *Rasa* (emotion) among the audience by using a particular *bhava* (facial expression, mudra or gesture). *Natyashastra* which was Written sometime in 200 BC – 300 AD identifies Navarasas (Nine emotions)

Which every dancer need to learn to give completeness to his/her dancing. They Also provide strength to a character in Indian aesthetics. The navarasas or the nine emotions include: Shringara (Love), Hasya (Happiness), Roudra/Krodha (Exasperation), Bheebhatsa (Abhorrence), Bhayanaka (Trepidation),

Shanta (Tranquility), Veera (Valour), Karuna (Pity), Shoka/Karuna (Dejection) and Adbhuta (Awe). These eight Indian classical dance forms are structured around these navarasas or emotions. Research says that every emotion of human stimulates a coloured vibe. Our emotions are like the seven colors of the rainbow denoting: Rage (Red), Avarice (Orange), Trepidation (Yellow), Love (Violet), Desire (Blue), Determination (Green) and Empathy (Indigo). However it also embodies absence of colour which is Death (Black) and the coalescence of colours which is Life (White).

Every dancer should have a tremendous exposure to Navarasas as it is the only way to observe change in emotions thus changing the behavior of the character. One of the main keys to happiness is dance, and this art is incomplete without *Abhinaya* or expression. It is mainly through *Mukh Abhinaya* or facial expressions that a dancer communicates with the audience on his/her thought process. The dancer creates visual impressions and communicates his ideas with navarasas.

**Shringara Rasa:** It is one of the most important *rasas* in classical dance. According to *Natyashastra*, *Shringara* can be classified as in union and in separation.

While *Shringara* in separation is represented by apathy, indifference, fear, anxiety, sleep, *Shringara* in union arouses the feeling of love and primarily revolves around the man and a woman relationship. But one must not confine the term love only between a man and woman. The dancer with their *Shringara rasa* can also describe the love between the parents and the child, between friends, between teacher and disciple, and also love towards God. Love is the quality which makes a human being beautiful, and hence *Shringara rasa* is considered the mother of all the *Rasas*.

**Hasya Rasa:** This *rasa* denotes joy. The dancer conveys happiness/laughter to the audience with the help of this *rasa*. There are six types of *Hasya* which a dancer uses as a tool of communication.

These are *Smita* (smile), *Hasita* (laughter), *Vihasya* (laughing), *Upahasya* (Satirical laughter), *Apahasya* (silly laughing) and *Athihasita* (excessive laughter). The dancer uses these six forms in his/her dancing to convey the audience the importance of laughter and joy in life.

**Roudra/Krodha Rasa:** This *rasa* implies anger, abuse, lies and fights. A dancer expresses this emotion by violent body movements, jumps, striking the floor forcefully with feet. Hence the anger within a character is conveyed by the dancer to the audience in such like way.

**Veera Rasa:** This denotes heroism. The mythological characters like Shiva, Krishna, Arjuna, Bhima, Bhavani, Chandi, Rudrama are performed by a dancer to explain this emotion.

**Karuna/Shoka Rasa:** Denotes pathos. The dancer with their facial expressions is supposed to convey the audience the feeling of sadness, grief, curse, pain, calamity etc. Often mythological characters like Prahlad and Bheeshma are performed to explain this form of emotion.

**Bhayanaka Rasa:** Implies fear. The eyes, lips and hasta mudras of a dancer play a major role to communicate to the audience a sense of trepidation. The mythological characters on which this *rasa* is based are Yama, Hiranyakashyapa, and the costume colour is black.

**Bheebhatsa Rasa:** Indicates disgust. The stimulus for this *rasa* is seeing/hearing evil things. The dancer with his/her *abhinaya* creates a feeling of repugnance in the audience. The mythological characters on which this *rasa* is based are Kubja Manthara, Shakuni.

**Adbhuta Rasa:** This *rasa* is used to show the sentiment of bewilderment, curiosity and wondering. Often characterized by gaping eyes, the dancer conveys the feeling of euphoria. The best example of

this *rasa* is the character of Lord Shri Krishna in his Vishwasroopa Darshana which was witnessed by Arjuna. Till today, a performer expresses *adbhutam anubhuti* while representing Arjuna, thereby passing on the same feeling to the audiences.

**Shanta Rasa:** This *rasa* depicts tranquility and peace. Accompanied by light music here the dancer makes a steady and slow tempo of body but maximum use of facial emotion to express the serenity. According to Bharata the author of Natya Shastra, all the eight *rasas* have origins from the Brahma but this ninth *rasa* the *Shanta rasa* is his particular contribution. Often the character of Lord Buddha is used in the dances to explain the *Shanta Rasa*.

To conclude, let's understand that *Shringara*, *Bhayanaka*, *Bhibhatsa* and *Shanta Rasas* are discerned on the basis of a dancer's entire facial expression. *Hasya Rasa* is recognized by lips. *Roudra*, *Veera*, *Karuna* and *Adbhuta Rasas* are indicated by eye expressions.

**Hasta Mudras in Dance:** The *Abhinaya Darpa* (a descriptive primer for dancers) mentions that the dancer should sing the song by the throat, express the meaning of the song through hand gestures, show the state of feelings in the song by eyes, and express the rhythm with his or her feet.

From the *Natya Shastra*, a text on the arts, this beautiful quotation and translation is often quoted by Indian classical dance instructors:

"Yato hastastato drishtih"..."Where the hand is, the eyes follow"

"Yato drishtistato manaha"..."Where the eyes go, the mind follows"

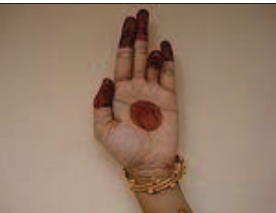
"Yato manastato bhavaha"..."Where the mind is, there is the feeling"






"Yato bhavastato rasaha"..."Where there is feeling, there is mood/flavour, sweetness (i.e., appreciation of art; aesthetic bliss)"




So vast are the subtleties expressed in the hand gestures of hasta that the vastness of what being human entails, and perhaps even what the entire universe contains, might be expressed by the dancer. Hence as 'hasta' form a distinct coded language which brings a unique poetic element while performing, so too when abhinaya (traditional facial expressions), pose (attitude), and rhythm complete the language, the dancer may express practically anything and everything to an attentive audience.

In [Bharatanatyam](#), the Classical Dance of India, approximately fifty-five root mudras (hand/finger gestures) are used to clearly communicate specific ideas, events, actions, or creatures in which thirty-two require only one hand, and are classified as 'Asamyukta Hasta', along with twenty-three other primary mudras which require both hands and are classified as 'Samyukta Hasta'. [NB these fifty-five are the roots; the branches permit of many more mudra, some of which are used primarily as aesthetic or decorative enhancements.]



#### *Asamyukta hastas (single hand gestures)*

Name in Sanskrit	Translation(s) in English	Other meanings	Illustration
Pataka	Flag cloud,forest		
Tripataka	Flag in three parts crown,tree		
Ardhapataka	Half flag		
Kartarimukha		Scissors face	
Mayura	Peacock		


Ardhachandra	Half moon		
Arala	bent		
Shukatunda	Beak of a parrot		
Mushthi	fist		
Shikhara	Peak		
Kapitta	Elephant Apple		
Katakamukha	Opening of a bracelet		
Suchi	Needle		
Chandrakala	Face of the moon		
Padmakosha	Lotus bud		
Sarpashirsha	Snake head		
Mrigashirsha	Head of a deer		
Simhamukha	Face of a lion		
Langula or Kangula	Lily		
Alapadma	lotus		
Chatura	Four		
Bhramara	Bee		
Hamsasya	Swan head		

Hamsapaksha	Swan wing		
Sandamsha	Pincers		
Mukula	Flower bud		
Tamrachuda	Rooster		
Trishula	Trident		
Ardhasuchi	Half needle		
Vyagraha	Tiger		
Palli	Knot		
Kataka	Resting Place		

**Samyukta Mudras (Double Hand Gestures)** [\[Edit\]](#)

Name in Sanskrit ;'	Translation(s) in English	Other Meanings	Illustration
[[Añjali Mudra	Offering		
Kapotam	Dove		
Karkatam	Crab		
Swastikam	Auspicious sign		
Dola-Hastam	Drummer's hands		
Pushpaputam	bag of flowers		L
Utsangam	embrace		
Shivalingam	sign of Lord Shiva		
Kataka- vardhanam	chain		



Kartari-swastikam			
Shakatam	carriage		
Shankha	Conch-shell		
Chakram	Rotating disc		
Pasha	Ropes		
Kilaka	bolt		
Samputa	round shaped casket		
Matsya	Fish		
Kurma	Tortoise		
Varaha	Boar		
Garuda	Half-eagle, half-human mount of Lord Vishnu, a bird/birds flying		
Nagabandham	snakes entwined		
Khattva	cot		
Bherunda	A pair of birds		

**Poses In Dance:** Every Indian classical dance consists of many posters to convey meaning to their expressions. Every poster is unique in their own way. we have plenty of karanas in our classical dance system. Karana, a Sanskrit word which meaning ‘Doing’ is basically transitions in the classical Indian dances. It is described in The Natyashastra as “hastapaada samaayogaah nrrtsya karanam bhavet”. It is a

combination of three elements, namely Nita hasta (dance movement of the Hands), sthaana (a dance posture for the body) and a chaari (a dance movement of the leg). The karanas form the basis of the adavus. Therefore, each karana Was practised as a movement and not as a mere posture, as often misunderstood.

The karanas are said to be numerous, however 108 have been codified in the Natyashastra. They are found depicted in the stone carvings on the passage Walls in the gopurams of the **Nataraj** temples of **Chidambaram**, as Lord Shiva is said to be the originator of the Karanas. They have found to have influenced all the classical and folk dances of India, as well as bear resemblance to Egyptian, Thai and Indonesian dances. There are 108 karanaslike-Talapusaputam,, Valitorukam, Apavidham, Samanakham, Linam ,Swas Tikarechita, Mandalaswastikam, Nikuttakam, Ardhanikuttakam







**Conclusion:** From above discussions it is inferred that dance uses mudras, karanas jathis, advus etc... To create an expression and communicate with the Audience. No words are use frequently and visual impact is more Prominent and powerful thus ***dance is the very versatile technique of Non-verbal and visual communication***

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